

SPEYSIDE WILDLIFE

Est. 1991

Bird and Wildlife Watching Holidays in the UK and Overseas **2022**





2022 holiday schedule

This is our 2022 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 or phone us on +44 (0) 1479 812498.



Steve Batt, Greater Flamingos, Catalunya

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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.

Phone	+44 (0) 1479 812498
Email	enquiries@speysidewildlife.co.uk
Web	www.speysidewildlife.co.uk
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MEET OUR GUIDES

"Roy is a walking encyclopedia and seems to know what almost anything we find is (whether it is insect, plant, bird or something else)."

Alex, Jessica and Tom Rafinski 2021



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 Beatty 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.



"Craig arranged an excellent boat trip to Noss when the other trip was cancelled and was very informative about the history."

Karen Bolton & Paul Holtam 2021

"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.



"Stuart could not have put more effort into ensuring that we had a great holiday and that we saw all of the birds."

Lynne and John Tidmarsh 2021

"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 deserves special thanks as she was brilliant, couldn't have been better. Expert at everything. Lovely and considerate."
Jean Cox 2021



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.



"David made huge efforts to tailor the trip to our interests. He was extremely knowledgeable about the flora and fauna in the Cairngorms and showed us things we hadn't seen before."
Jonathan Dempsey 2021

"Harris was very good and knowledgeable. Seeing 6 Badgers was wonderful but the Pine Marten was amazing. Would thoroughly recommend this trip to others" Mandy Peay 2022



Harris Brooker

Growing up around Banff in Aberdeenshire, Harris is a well-rounded naturalist with a wide interest in nature and a particular passion for wildlife, botany and astronomy. His fascination with wildlife has taken him all over Scotland and the wider UK as well as overseas. Harris is our Evening Mammal Hide guide and you will also find him supporting our Wildlife Identification Courses and Guided Day Out..

Wayne Gourlay

Wayne has been intrigued by the natural world from an early age and has a particular passion for Scottish wildlife. He studied Zoology at the University of St. Andrews and joined a summer long expedition in Guyana to monitor mammals such as Jaguar using camera traps. Wayne can be found sharing his enthusiasm for flora and fauna on our Guided Days Out and at the Evening Mammal Hide.



"Wayne was excellent, prompt, thoughtful, informative and took care to make sure we were comfortable throughout the day."

Andrew Ferris 2022

"Tim is a lovely guy, he even just identified a bird I emailed him yesterday. Great to have guides that love the area, the wildlife and their spotting knowledge blows my mind."
Chris and Lisa Hayes 2021



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.

"Oliver was clearly knowledgeable on birds very aware of the different calls. He kept in mind our focus on photography and told us what we were to expect at each location." Peter Glover 2022



Olly Slessor

Olly has been bird watching all his life, spending much of his youth birding along the Suffolk and Norfolk coast. He has travelled extensively in the UK and abroad in his pursuit of birds and has guided in Costa Rica and Ecuador. He is a licensed bird ringer, a skill that has allowed him to study birds closely. An accomplished bird artist, he is also a keen wildlife photographer.

Ailie Brown

Ailie grew up in the Highlands and studied Zoology at Aberdeen University before interning at Wicken Fen National Nature Reserve as a Grazing warden and more recently she managed the Tropical Butterfly House at Landmark, Carrbridge. Ailie leads on the administration of our Guided Days Out as well as guiding our local guests in the Cairngorms during their days out.



"Ailie was most helpful both on the study day and out in the field - and good company."
Hazel and Alistair Campbel 2022

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.

"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 hire and vehicle logistics, all of which help to keep her busier than ever!

"Besides having a wonderful time in Nova Scotia with Darren we had a brilliant time before with family; all the arrangements you made worked perfectly. We really appreciate all your trouble." John Tidmarsh 2019



"We are so looking forward to tomorrow evening and would like to say a big thank you for your help. It has put our mind at ease. Wonderful!"
Lesley Smith 2021

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.

"I just wanted to email to say thank you so much for all your help, kindness, and support with the filming last week and over the last few months in the build-up." Hello Halo TV, 2021



"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 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.

EVENING MAMMAL WATCHING



"We can witness a wonderful variety of wildlife encounters close-up at our Evening Mammal Hide. These special experiences both excite and thrill our guests. The elusive nocturnal animals that come to visit us throughout the year never fail to impress!"
Harris Brooker

Cost £25.00 per adult, if booked online (£30.00 if booked manually via our office)
£10.00 per child 8-14yrs, if booked online (£15.00 if booked manually via our office)

Not suitable for children under 8yrs

Exclusive Use £250.00 per evening, if booked online (£300.00 if booked manually via our office)

Opening Times Nightly from Easter to October on an exclusive basis or as part of a group.
From November to Easter on a request basis only for exclusive use or parties of 2 people or more. Pre-booking is essential. Start times vary with the seasons. In summer we don't start until 9:00pm, in winter we meet around 6:00pm

Group Size Maximum 12 people in the hide

Insects Biting midges possible during summer

Walking 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

Terry Lee: 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, with easy access
- 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 our location just outside Aviemore 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. Every evening provides a new experience and exciting close encounters with our precious native mammal species.

Roe Deer may be seen whilst it's still light, but the visits by Badgers and Pine Martens will usually only occur at dusk. The hide has outside spotlights, allowing the animals to be seen clearly from the large picture windows without interference on the darker evenings.

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	£150
Exclusive Use	Only one booking per night, ideally for one person, but can accommodate two.
What to Expect	Your booking confirmation will give extra handy hints about the evening so that you can maximise the enjoyment from your visit.
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



DAY TRIPS IN THE CAIRNGORMS



"Whether this is your first trip to the Cairngorms or not, a Guided Day Out can be a fantastic way to use our local knowledge in order explore the diverse range of species and habitats the Cairngorms National Park has to offer."
Kate Mennie

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	£225 standard day if booked online (£275 if booked manually via our office) £295 extended day if booked online (£350 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	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.



"Our day guiding can be used to target specific species you may wish to see, such as Pied Flycatcher in spring, Ospreys in summer, Red Deer ruts in autumn and Ptarmigan in winter. Or you may wish to have just a general introduction to the area. Either way, day guiding could be a great gift to treat yourself or someone special to." Kate Mennie



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 and Crossbill. 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. 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.

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.

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.

All Abilities Cairngorms National Park - This tailored day will ensure where possible, that everyone in your group can experience the scenery and wildlife that our National Park has to offer. We shall visit places that require little walking or are suitable for wheelchair access to help you experience wildlife in comfort. It may mean some of the day involves more travelling by vehicle than other itineraries, but some short walks or lookout hides will be utilised and the guide will structure the day to best suit your needs. The wildlife you experience may include Dippers, Red Squirrel, raptor species such as Red Kite and eagles, grouse and Roe and Red Deer.

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



"Many thanks for arranging everything for us. The accommodation was absolutely great and our guided day with Kate and Hollie was brilliant. Our evening visit to the Mammal Hide was brilliant too – all so impressive and our guide Eve, was a mine of information. Again our thanks and we look forward to more holidays with Speyside."

Mary and David Penton,
Cairngorms bespoke holiday, 2021

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

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

Guides We have a pool of guides, each with specific knowledge and interests, covering birds, mammals, cetaceans, plants and insects, who have guided around Scotland and Overseas

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

Included Your package can include any of the following: flights; ferries; trains; guides; accommodation; transport; meals; and any activities or entrance fees.

We make all the arrangements, so you are left just to enjoy yourselves

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

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.

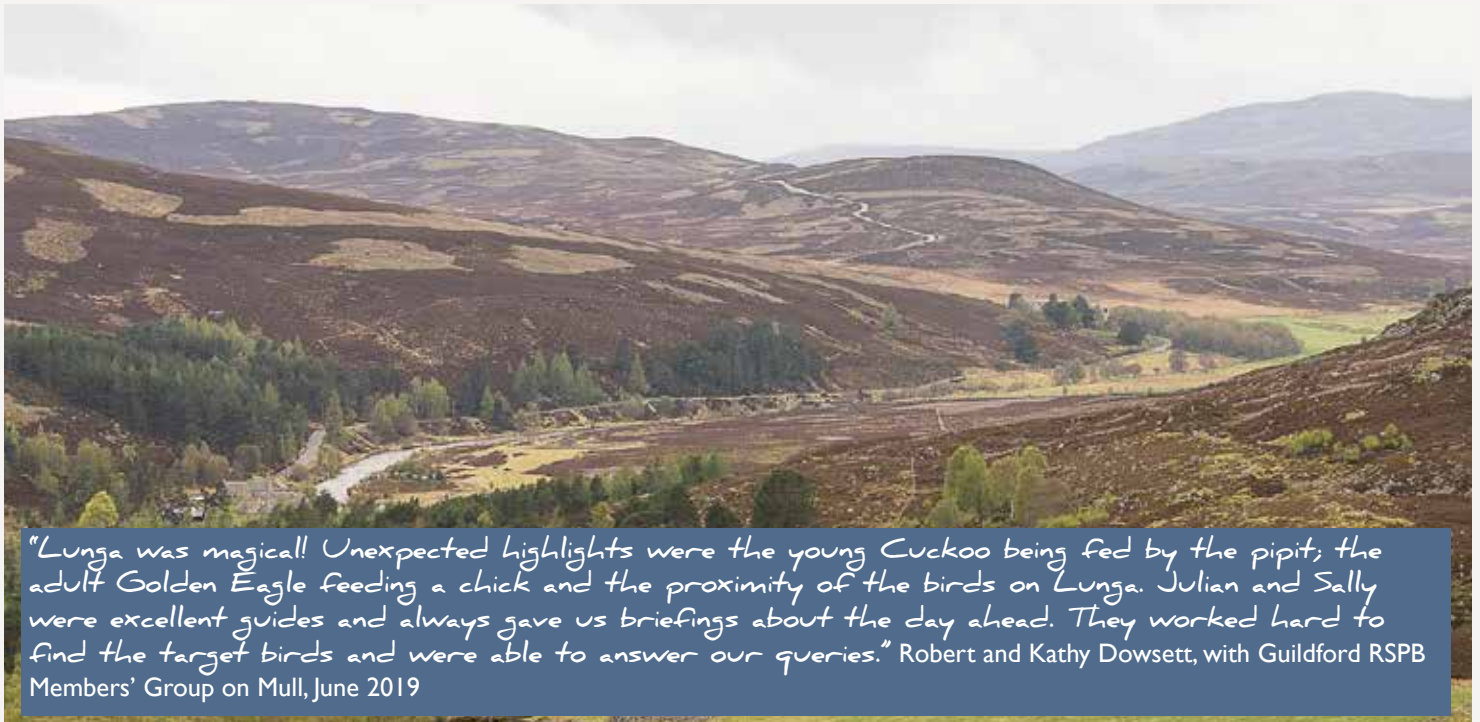
Within Scotland, enjoy the spectacular mountains, moorlands and pine forests of the Cairngorms National Park, looking for all the grouse species, plus Dotterel, Ptarmigan, Scottish Crossbill and Crested Tit, together with mammals such as Red and Roe Deer, Red Squirrel and Pine Marten; experience the 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





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

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



NORTH NORFOLK



"An exciting week, with the spectacle of big flocks of waders, swans and geese, plus scarce wintering birds such as Shorelark, both Bean Geese, Rough-legged Buzzard, Firecrest, Water Pipit and the local residents Bittern, Bearded Tit and Common Cranes - this is surely the best winter birding the UK has to offer."
Roy Atkins

Dates Sat 5 - Sat 12 Feb 2022
Price £1,995
Deposit £375 Single Supp £150

Leaders Roy Atkins and Jane 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 12

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



"There is a fabulous spot to go at dusk where, as the light slowly fades, you can hear the sound of Common Cranes as they slowly fly in to roost against the evening sky. Harriers - both Marsh and Hen - will circle together in surprising numbers before dropping in, with the chance of hunting Barn Owl too... it is a magical way to finish a day's birding." Roy Atkins



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

Susan Ripley: Bearded Tit,
 Frances and David Perry: Snettisham, Wells
 Roy Cowley: Whooper Swans
 Simon Eaves: Marsh Harriers
 James Stevens: Shorelark
 Roy Atkins: Spotted Redshank



SOLWAY FIRTH



"This trip will literally give you 'goosebumps', who can fail to be thrilled by the sight and sound of thousands of beautiful Barnacle Geese chattering away as they feed, or as they take to the air. This has to be one of the highlights of this holiday."
Sally Nowell

Dates Sat 19 Feb - Sat 26 Feb 2022
Sat 5 Nov - Sat 12 Nov 2022

Price £1,795

Deposit £350 Single Supp £100

Leaders Sally Nowell 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.

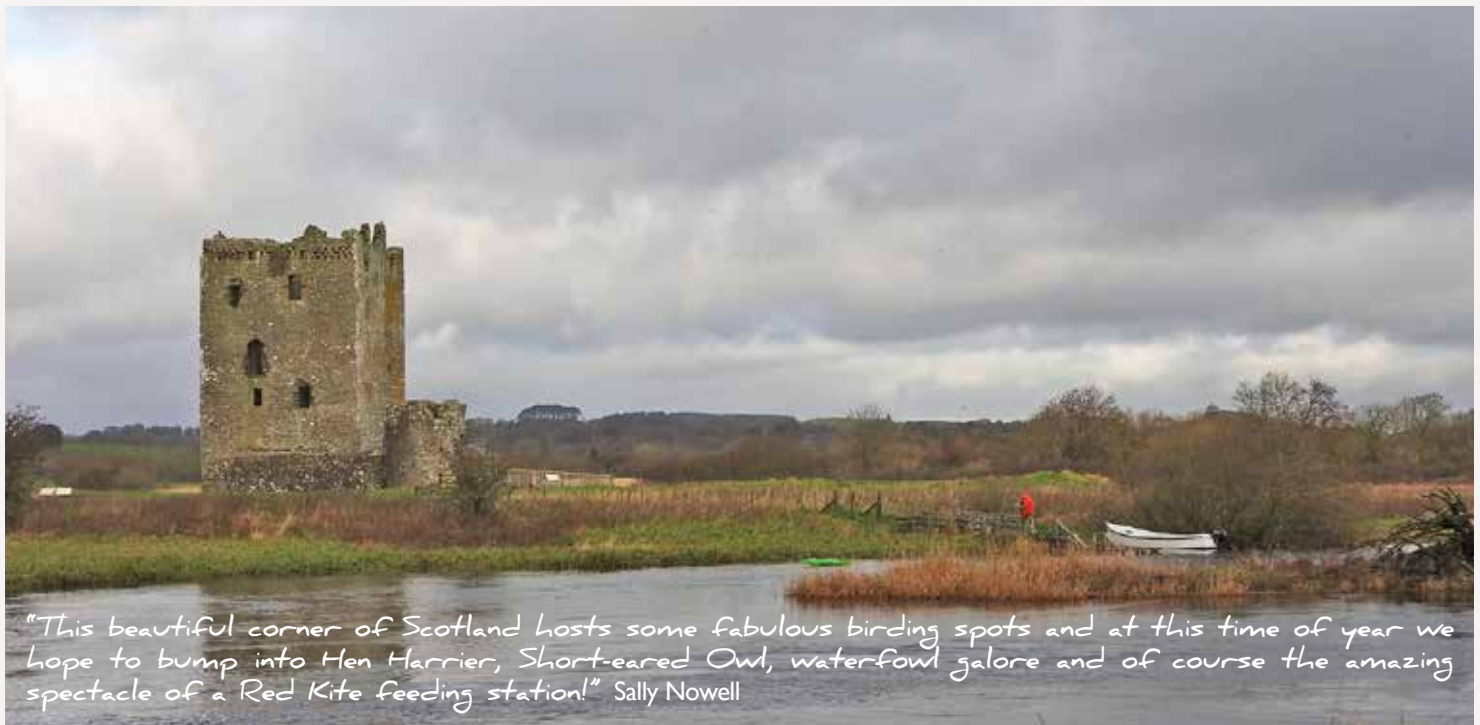
2-7 The Solway now hosts approximately 40,000 wintering Barnacle Geese - the entire Svalbard population!! This astonishing number is all the more remarkable when you realise numbers crashed to just 400 in the 1940s, before WWT bought land at Caerlaverock, instigating the start of their recovery. We hope 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





"This beautiful corner of Scotland hosts some fabulous birding spots and at this time of year we hope to bump into Hen Harrier, Short-eared Owl, waterfowl galore and of course the amazing spectacle of a Red Kite feeding station!" Sally Nowell

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. 7 nights Kings Arms Hotel, Castle Douglas
- 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, Threaves Castle, Caerlaverock Castle, Peregrine
Morag Rea: Caerlaverock
Chrissie Nicholson: Golden Plover, Pale-bellied Brent Geese



MORAY FIRTH IN WINTER



"My favourite sight of all on the Moray Coast has to be the rafts of Long-tailed Ducks just off the shore diving in unison and then suddenly popping back up to the surface like corks!"
Sally Nowell

Dates Sat 12 - Sat 19 March 2022

Price £1,995

Deposit £375 Single Supp £275

Leader Sally Nowell

Weather The weather will be mixed (0-15°C). Expect sun and showers, snow in the mountains and gusty wind on exposed headlands

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

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

Insects Not anticipated this early in the season

Accom Double, twin and single rooms all ensuite

Group 7

Just some of what we hope to see:

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

Need to get away for a relaxing week in the Scottish Highlands?
We have just the thing for you. Fabulous winter seawatching on the Moray Firth and the iconic wildlife of the Cairngorms National Park.

- 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
- Cairngorm Mountain for Snow Bunting and Ptarmigan
- Mountain Hare, Red Deer, Bottlenose Dolphin and much more
- Beautiful hotel with easy access to the Nairn seafront and promenade

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 is located on the seafront with easy access to Nairn beach and promenade walks. We'll keep the itinerary flexible throughout the week to maximise our birdwatching opportunities in varied habitats; coast, river, mountain and forest.

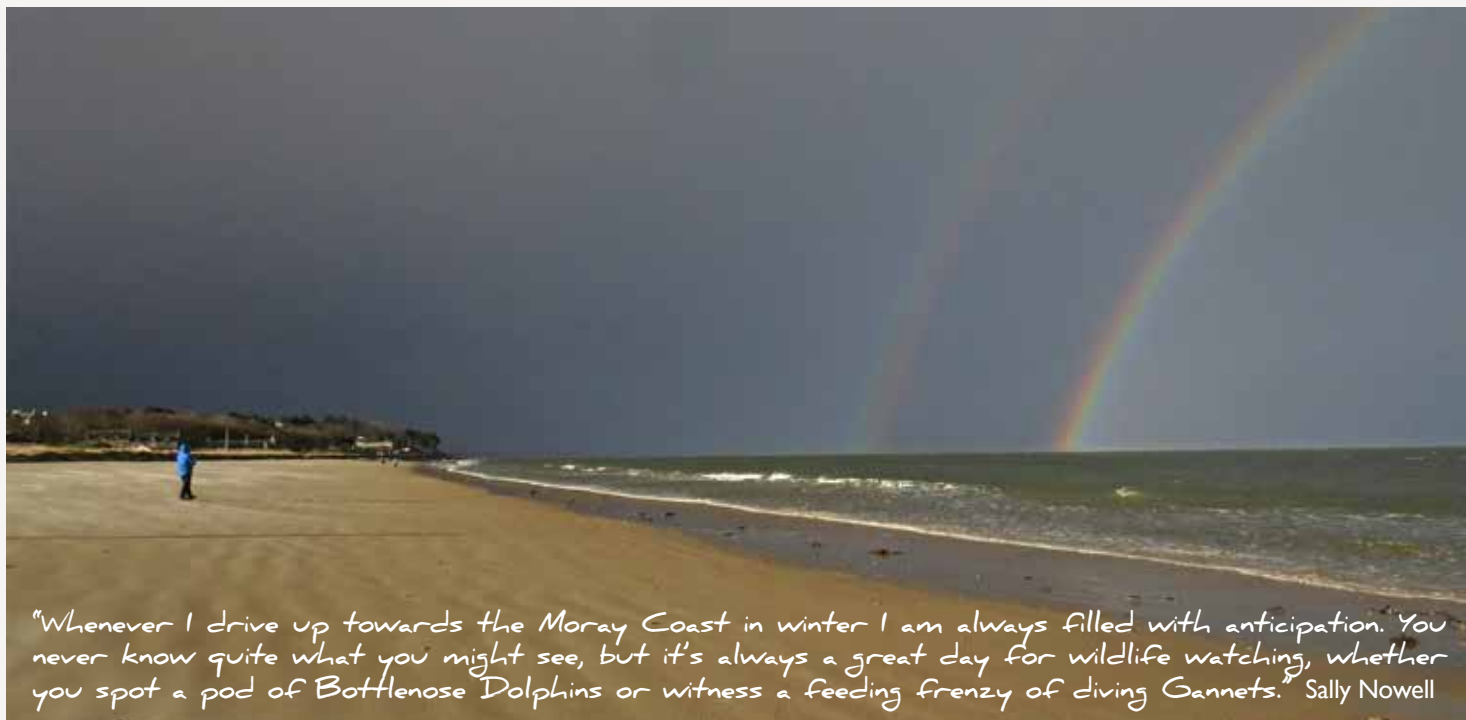
2-7 On the Moray Firth, Britain's finest gathering of seaduck can be seen - with vast rafts of Common Scoter; an occasional Velvet Scoter; parties of Scaup, Red-breasted Merganser. Long-tailed Duck and Eider. We also hope for Slavonian Grebe and Red-throated and Black-throated Diver.

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

This season can bring scarce shorebirds, with beautiful seaduck and divers coming into the harbours where we shall also search out Purple Sandpipers. Rare Glaucous and Iceland gulls often follow the fishing boats and Little Auk can be driven down from the north and spotted off-shore.

Venturing along the north banks of the Moray Firth, we'll spend time on the the beautiful and





"Whenever I drive up towards the Moray Coast in winter I am always filled with anticipation. You never know quite what you might see, but it's always a great day for wildlife watching, whether you spot a pod of Bottlenose Dolphins or witness a feeding frenzy of diving Gannets." Sally Nowell

slightly milder Black Isle, including the picturesque village of Cromarty. This area has one of the driest climates in Scotland. The rolling farmland is interspersed with plantation and scrub. It is also 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 we shall always be on the lookout for something unexpected.

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

We'll visit the vast, internationally important inlet that is Udale Bay, where waders and seaduck abound and can be seen scattered across the sea like nowhere else in Britain. We'll be looking all the time for rare ducks such as King Eider and Surf Scoter.

Weather permitting, we'll venture into the mountains of the Cairngorms National Park, looking for all things white! Snow Bunting may be picking amongst the boulders of the ski area car park, as we scan for white Ptarmigan amongst the snow-covered tundra of the Cairngorms mountains! We shall also make our way to Insh Marshes where large numbers of Whooper Swans spend the winter. A late afternoon visit may, with luck, turn up a Hen Harrier on its way to a winter roost. In the Caledonian pine forests we shall listen

out for passing and feeding crossbills and groups of mixed tits moving through the canopy, of course hoping for sight of Crested Tits who can be quite vocal at this time of year.

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.

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



Outline Itinerary

- Day 1 Arrive Nairn
- 7 nights at Golf View Hotel, Nairn
- 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 and glens
- Day 8 Depart after breakfast

Mark Denman: Whooper Swan, Long-tailed Duck, Snow Bunting

Jane Hope: Nairn Beach, White-tailed Eagle, Mountain Hare, Purple Sandpiper

Colin Scott: Eider Duck



SPANISH BIRDS AND BOTANY



"With Martin Kelsey we are in the best possible hands for botanising in this wonderful region. He and his family have lived near Trujillo for nearly 20 years and his knowledge of plants and where to find them is second to none. I have had the pleasure of working with him on a few occasions and learn so much." Julian Sykes

Dates Sat 26 Mar - Sat 2 Apr 2022

Price £2,195

Deposit £425 Single Supp £200

Leaders Martin Kelsey and one from our team

Flights EasyJet, scheduled, Speedy Boarding and extra legroom included
Outbound: Morning, Gatwick-Madrid
Inbound: Afternoon, Madrid-Gatwick
Other UK airports may be available

Weather Variable in spring, a mixture of sun and showers (12°-25°C)
— can be cool on the plains

Walking Generally on level firm ground, less than a mile and at an easy pace. There will be some paths with steeper gradients

Meals All included from lunch on Day 1 to lunch on Day 8. Simple, interesting Spanish fare at the hotel and at local restaurants

Insects Unlikely to be a problem

Accom Double, twin and single rooms all ensuite

Group 12

Just some of what we hope to see:

Black Vulture	Black Wheatear
Spanish Imperial Eagle	Iberian Grey Shrike
Bonelli's Eagle	Spectacled Warbler
Short-toed Eagle	Penduline Tit
Lesser Kestrel	Pink Butterfly Orchid
Black-winged Kite	Bumblebee Orchid
Scops Owl	Sawfly Orchid
Azure-winged Magpie	Mirror Orchid
Great Bustard	Yellow Bee Orchid
Little Bustard	Naked Man Orchid
Black Stork	Spanish Festoon
Black-bellied Sandgrouse	Large Tortoiseshell
Pin-tailed Sandgrouse	Provence Hairstreak
Western Swamphen	Nettle-tree Butterfly
Red-rumped Swallow	Stripeless Tree Frog

A relaxed holiday for the general naturalist, taking in plenty of the wonderful birdlife of Extremadura, but also some of the special orchids, other flowers and butterflies too.

- Many of the wonderful birds this well-known birding destination has to offer
- Spanish Imperial Eagle, Black-winged Kite, Azure-winged Magpie
- Great Bustards performing their 'foam-bath' display
- Stunning orchids such as Mirror, Naked Man, Sawfly, Champagne and Pink Butterfly
- Visit to raptor central - Monfragüe with eagles, Black Vulture and perhaps Eagle Owl
- Black Wheatear, Black-bellied and Pin-tailed Sandgrouse, Little Bustard and more
- Early butterflies - Spanish Festoon, Cleopatra, Provence Hairstreak and Nettle-tree

After our flight to Madrid, we travel to our base at Hotel Rural Soterraña, Madroñera. This charming, traditional style accommodation is the perfect base to explore the Extremadura region and our hosts will be very welcoming. Birding near the hotel and nearby lanes will provide plenty to enjoy, with White Stork, Black Kite, Hoopoe, Sardinian Warbler, Iberian Grey Shrike and immaculate Azure-winged Magpies, plus the chance of Scops Owl calling at night.

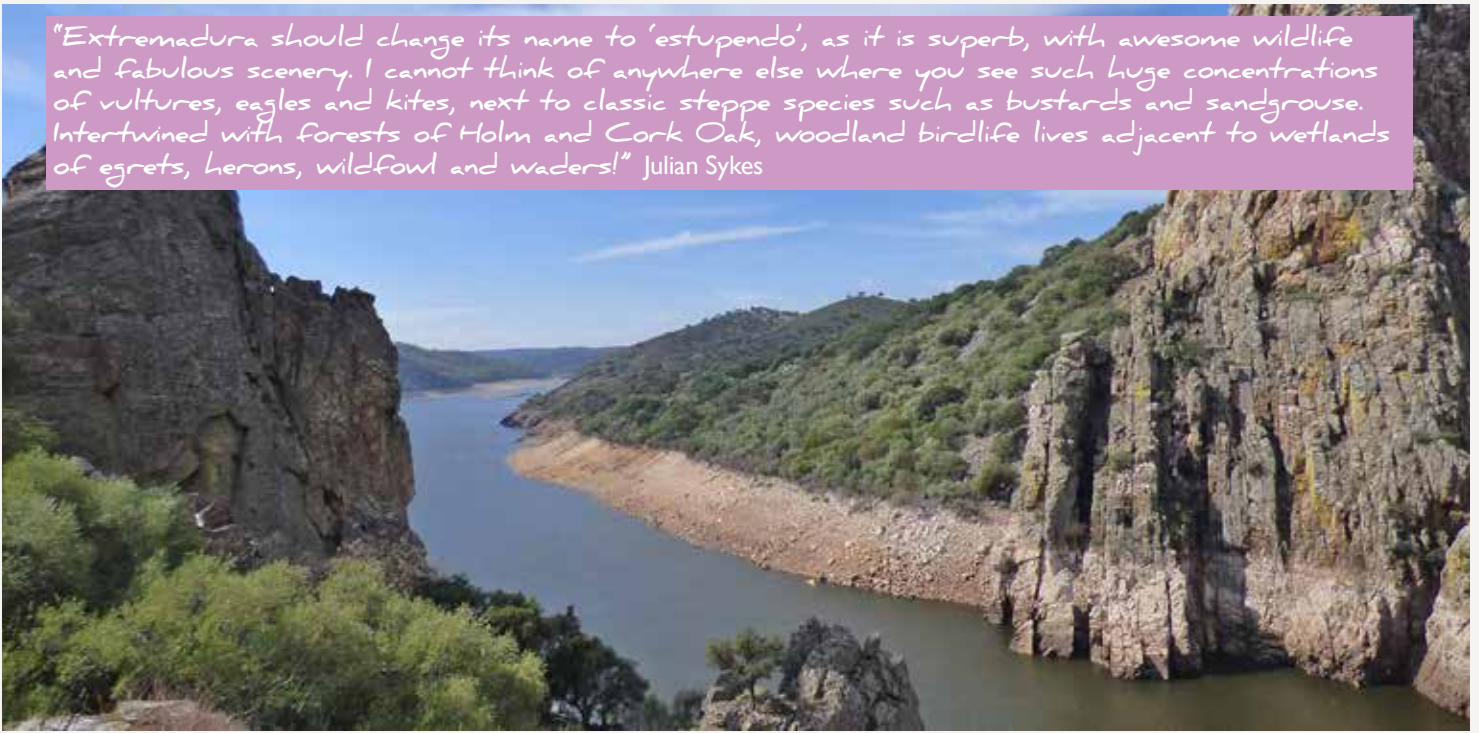
2-7 The coming week will include some wonderful birding, in sites we know well from our birdwatching breaks here - but we also explore new territory where, as well as great birding, we shall look out for a selection of fabulous orchids and butterflies.



Our exact itinerary will depend on the weather, but we may start around Alange and Mérida, where a walk beside the Alange Reservoir may produce Black Wheatear, Rock Bunting and Alpine Swift. Rocky slopes nearby are worth a look as several exciting orchids can be found here, including Woodcock, Conical, Pink Butterfly and if we are lucky, the first Bumblebee Orchids.

At nearby Sierra de Utrera large numbers of Lusitanian Fritillaries should be in flower, as well as Yellow Anemones and Champagne Orchids. It is a good site for Spanish Festoon butterflies and we'll visit the longest Roman Bridge in the world - in the centre of Mérida. Birding from this 2000 year old structure should yield species such as Penduline Tit, Little Bittern and Western Swamphen.

"Extremadura should change its name to 'estupendo', as it is superb, with awesome wildlife and fabulous scenery. I cannot think of anywhere else where you see such huge concentrations of vultures, eagles and kites, next to classic steppe species such as bustards and sandgrouse. Intertwined with forests of Holm and Cork Oak, woodland birdlife lives adjacent to wetlands of egrets, herons, wildfowl and waders!" Julian Sykes



The plains near Trujillo are famous for their steppe species of birds and this is the time when aristocratic Great Bustards perform their spectacular displays, as huge males turn themselves inside out in an attempt to attract a mate! Smaller Little Bustards, which prefer blowing raspberries and nodding their heads to attract their mates, will still be in winter groups. Pin-tailed and Black-bellied Sandgrouse, Montagu's Harrier, Calandra and Crested Larks and with luck Stone Curlews are here and, in mid March, spring flowers such as Barbary Nut Iris and Hoop Petticoat Narcissus are in flower. Butterflies such as Green-striped White and Western Dappled White should be easy to find.

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

Both Black and Griffon Vultures nest here, while overhead may be Egyptian Vulture, Peregrine and the unusual Black Stork. Smaller birds such as Crag Martin, Hawfinch, Blue Rock Thrush, Black Redstart, Subalpine Warbler and Rock Bunting occur and butterflies could include Nettle-tree and Chapman's Green Hairstreak. We may be able to see some prehistoric cave paintings here too.

South of Trujillo is an area near Zafra rich in orchids. We should find colonies of Giant Orchids still in

flower (they start in late January) as well as Hill Orchid, growing in old limestone quarry workings. To the east, following a drovers' trail, we shall find colonies of Sombre Orchids and if we are lucky the very similar "bilunulata", treated by some as a separate species. The area also has Conical and delightful Pink-butterfly Orchids and we hope to find Provence Hairstreak on the wing.

Extremadura has large areas of rice-cultivation - good habitat for passage waders, while small populations of Red Avadavat and Common Waxbill work the field margins. A walk in a dehesa here is always productive for a variety of wildlife, such as Sawfly Orchid and the possibility of early Tongue Orchids. Birding can be excellent, with chances of Black-winged Kite, nesting storks and Spanish Sparrows. The Arrocampo Reservoir is the most important single site in Extremadura for breeding herons and egrets and is also rich in other reedbed species, such as Savi's Warbler; Western Swampphen and Penduline Tit. Close by is the most important site for orchids in the north of Extremadura, with large colonies of Naked Man Orchid, Champagne Orchid and Ophrys species such as Mirror, Yellow Bee, Woodcock and Sawfly. A total of 18 taxa of orchids grow here and we shall visit the impressive Orchid Information Centre at the edge of the Almaraz town.

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



Outline Itinerary

- | | |
|----------|---|
| Day 1 | Fly to Madrid
3 hour transfer to Madroñera
7 nights Hotel Rural Soterraña |
| Days 2-7 | We explore the steppes, woodlands, wetlands and mountain regions of one of Spain's premier wildlife locations, including Monfragüe National Park, Embalse de Arrocampo and Caceres Plain, in search of birds, orchids, butterflies and other wildlife |
| Day 8 | Transfer to Madrid for our flight to Gatwick |

Martin Kelsey: Pink Butterfly Orchid, Monfrague, Sawfly Orchid, Spanish Festoon Butterfly
Steve Batt: Azure-winged Magpie, Great Bustard
John Hawkins: Spanish Imperial Eagle mobbing Griffon Vulture



TARIFA AND DOÑANA



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

Simon Eaves

Dates Wed 30 Mar - Fri 8 Apr 2022

Price £2,995

Deposit £595 Single Supp £200

Leaders Simon Eaves and Manuel Morales

Flights British Airways, scheduled
Outbound: Afternoon, Gatwick-Seville
Inbound: Evening, Seville-Gatwick

Weather Variable in spring, a mixture of sun and showers (15°-30°C)

Walking There will be some short walks up to 2km, with plenty of breaks

Meals All included from lunch on Day 1 to lunch on Day 10
Lunches will mostly be picnics, with some taken at local restaurants

Insects Biting insects may occasionally be a nuisance, so bring repellent

Accom Twin and single rooms all ensuite

Group 12

Just some of what we hope to see:

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

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

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

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

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

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



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

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

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



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



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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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



Outline Itinerary

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

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





"I am delighted to be guiding with an old friend, recently retired RSPB warden, Zul Bhatia. He is Tanzanian, speaks fluent Swahili and has been leading trips here for 25 years! His experience, local knowledge and understanding of the culture, will make this wildlife adventure even more special." Roy Atkins

Dates Sun 3 - Sun 17 April 2022

Price £7,995

Deposit £1,600 **Single Supp** £500

Leaders Roy Atkins and Zul Bhatia

Flights Ethiopian Airlines, scheduled
Outbound: Overnight, Heathrow-Kilimanjaro
Inbound: Overnight, Kilimanjaro-Heathrow
(Outbound and inbound via Addis Ababa)

Weather Expect good weather but with some rain, perhaps heavy at times, as April is during the 'Long Rains'. It's difficult to predict how much rain but it should not hamper us. Temperatures can range from 20°-30°C, depending on altitude. Ngorongoro can be chilly

Walking Most of the wildlife watching is from vehicles, but we shall takw easy walks in the grounds of the lodges and also occasional walks in the NPs. Most are on easy and flat terrain

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

Health High risk Malaria area. Please take advice from your local travel clinic/doctor about Malaria Prophylaxis

Insects There may be a few mosquitoes, particularly in lower lying areas and other biting insects so bring repellent

Accom Comfortable safari lodges/cottages and tented camps, all ensuite

Visa E-visa to be obtained before travel, additional £45

Goup 12

Just some of what we hope to see:

Thousands of Wildebeest	Black-and-White
African Elephant	Colobus Monkey
Black Rhinoceros	Secretary Bird
Lion	Ground Hornbill
Leopard	Kori Bustard
Cheetah	Grey Crowned Crane
Coke's Hartebeest	Palm-nut Vulture
Masai Giraffe	African Fish Eagle
Bat-eared Fox	Bateleur Eagle
Thousands of Flamingos	Purple-crested Turaco
	Narina Trogon

The famous Ngorongoro crater and the Serengeti, where Wildebeest and Zebra are present in vast numbers, as well as other antelopes and predators, plus exceptional birds.

- Wildebeest, Zebra and gazelles in their tens of thousands!
- Stunning scenery throughout, particularly in the Ngorongoro Highlands
- Astonishing wealth of larger mammals from Elephant to the tiny Dik-dik
- Top predators - Lion, Leopard, Cheetah and smaller ones such as Serval and Bat-eared Fox
- Around 300 bird species likely from Ostrich to tiny sunbirds - tens of thousands of flamingos!!
- Tanzanian guide and personal friend - Zul Bhatia, with 25 years' experience here
- Safari Lodges and luxury camps with private facilities and comfortable safari vehicles

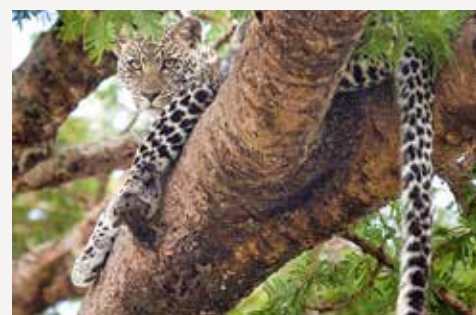
1-2 We depart London on an overnight flight, change planes in Addis Ababa and arrive in Tanzania in the afternoon of day 2, where we spend the rest of the day relaxing and birding in the wonderful grounds of our lodge.

3 Arusha National Park is little visited compared to the more famous Parks, but its freshwater and soda lakes, lush forests and Alpine areas are rich in wildlife. Mammals are very obvious with Buffalo, Giraffe, Warthog, Kirk's Dik-dik, Zebra, Black-and-White Colobus and Blue Monkeys, while birds include a mix of local residents and migrants such as Blacksmith Lapwing, Avocet, egrets, ducks, warblers and flycatchers. Little, Cinnamon-chested and White-fronted Bee-eater occur and forest birds may include White-eared Barbet, Narina Trogon, various greenbuls and Crowned Eagle. Lesser and Greater Flamingos can occur in tens of thousands on the soda lakes!



4-5 We explore Tarangire National Park to spend quality time with African Elephants at their highest density in the world! Magnificent, ancient Baobab trees, some over a thousand years old, dominate the landscape and the River Tarangire is a magnet for mammals including Bohor Reedbuck. The density of mammals attracts Lions, Leopards and sometimes Cheetahs - even the rare Wild Dog has appeared in recent years. We'll look out for Helmeted Guineafowl, francolins, sandgrouse, hornbills, waders and raptors including Brown Snake, Martial, Tawny and Bateleur Eagles, plus Tanzanian endemics such as Yellow-collared Lovebird and Rufous-tailed Weaver.

6 Lake Manyara National Park is our next stop and we spend time exploring the forests, savannah woodland, marshes and Lake Manyara itself. Birdlife is exceptional with Palm-nut Vulture, African Fish



"The Serengeti and Ngorngoro Crater are so famous it is astonishing we have not been before! You will have seen these places on TV, but seeing them for real is going to be incredible - with literally millions of animals on the plains, exciting predators and a fantastic range of birds - this is a great time to be there with so many mammals, many resident birds in breeding plumage and migrants passing through too - I can't wait!" Roy Atkins



Eagle, Purple-crested Turaco and Broad-billed Roller, while the Hippo Pool and swamps hold waterbirds including Long-toed Lapwing, Black Crake and African Jacana. On leaving the Park, we climb the Rift Valley escarpment with stunning views and enter the beautiful Ngorongoro Highlands.

7 In the early morning, a short drive brings us to the end of the tarmac, where we enter the Ngorongoro Conservation Area. Climbing through highland forest we get our first views of the breathtaking Ngorongoro Crater and from the viewpoint we'll see many distant animals 2,000 feet below - perhaps even a Black Rhino through the telescope. We'll look out for Eastern Double-collared Sunbird, Olive Thrush and Hunter's Cisticola. Traversing the crater rim we'll enjoy the spectacular scenery, before dropping down to the vast Serengeti Plains.

8-10 Up to two million animals may be on the plains of the Serengeti, with Wildebeest the most numerous, then Plains Zebra and Thomson's and Grant's Gazelles. Woodlands hold Waterbuck, Coke's Hartebeest, Impala, Masai Giraffe and Topi with hunting Lion, Leopard, Cheetah, Spotted Hyaena and Black-backed and Golden Jackals. Serval, Bat-eared Fox and rare Caracal may be seen. The many birds include residents, plus migrants from Europe, Asia and elsewhere in Africa, with species such as Montagu's and Pallid Hamiers, waders and wheatear species, mixing with striking resident birds such as Secretary Bird, Ground Hornbill, various kingfishers, vultures, coursers, francolins, barbets, weavers and endemic Grey-breasted Spurfowl and Fischer's Lovebird. The Western Corridor is where Wildebeest



and Zebra congregate, while special birds along the rivers include Karamoja Aapalis, Black-headed Gonolek and Swamp Flycatcher - expect some very large Crocodiles!

11-12 Enroute to the famous Ngorongoro Crater, we'll visit Oldupai Gorge, the 'Cradle of Mankind', where two million year old remains of early man were unearthed - the museum here is a must! Our accommodation on the crater rim is special, with a magical atmosphere and outstanding views. Next day, we descend into the crater proper, with its varied habitats of grassland, swamps, dry forest, evergreen forest, freshwater and alkaline lakes - home to huge numbers of mammals, with many predators and, with luck, endangered Black Rhino. Birdlife is prolific and species normally seen include Crowned Crane, Kori and Black-bellied Bustard, Yellow-billed Stork, Black-winged Plover, Rosy-throated Longclaw and Fischer's Sparrow Lark. Even the lodge grounds are wonderful, with birds such as Cinnamon-chested Bee-eater, African Stonechat, Cape Robin Chat, Tacazze and Eastern Double-collared Sunbird - it is all an incredible wildlife experience!

13-15 We travel to Arusha for some relaxed birding around our lodge, where we spend our final night in Tanzania. The following morning we'll spend time on the Masai Steppe in search of any final birds and mammals, before heading to the airport in the afternoon and our flight back to the UK, arriving on day 15.



Outline Itinerary

- Days 1-3** Overnight flight to Tanzania, via Addis Ababa. Full day in Arusha NP
2 nights at Ngare Sero Lodge
- Days 4-5** Travel to Tarangire NP for game drives
2 nights at Tarangire Safari Lodge
- Day 6** Drive to Lake Manyara NP
1 night at Karatu Country Lodge
- Days 7-8** Visit Ngorongoro CA and full day game viewing on the Serengeti
2 nights at ThornTree Camp
- Days 9-10** Drive to Western Serengeti, game viewing on way. Birding in lodge grounds
2 nights at Speke Bay Lodge
- Days 11-12** Visit Oldupai Gorge then on to famous Ngorongoro Crater
2 nights at Ngorongoro Sopa Lodge
- Day 13** Drive to Arusha, birding at the lodge
1 night at Ngare Sero Lodge
- Days 14-15** Birding Masai Steppe before overnight flight to UK, via Addis Ababa, arrive day 15

Zul Bhatia: Wildebeest, Lesser Flamingos, Lion, Elephant, Leopard,
Christine Maughan: Secretary Bird



"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 23 - Sat 30 Apr 2022
Price £1,845
Deposit £350 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 7

Just some of what we hope to see:

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

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



"Crested Tits in the Caledonian Forests, divers breeding on local lochs, Ptarmigan in the mountains, skua and Puffin on the remote west coast island of Handa - this holiday really showcases spring wildlife at its peak." Kate Mennie

Dates Sat 30 Apr - Sat 07 May 2022
Sat 21 - Sat 28 May 2022

Price £1,795

Deposit £350 **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 or with private facilities

Group 7

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 lochans 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 lochans 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.





"Spring in Speyside, full of breeding species such as Osprey, Wood Warbler, Slavonian Grebe and so much more. Breath-taking landscapes and wildlife galore to experience on this popular holiday."
 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!

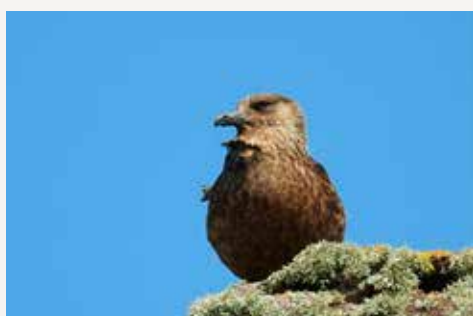
8 On Saturday after breakfast we say our farewells.



Outline Itinerary

- Day 1** Arrive in time for dinner and a chat about our plans for the coming week.
 7 nights at Tigh na Sgiath Country House - Week 1
 7 nights at Garth Hotel - Week 2
- 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

Mark Denman: Crested Tit, Dotterel
Craig Round: View from Handa
Colin Scott: Slavonian Grebe
Jane Hope: Black Grouse
Mike Pearcey: Great Skua
Simon Eaves: Crossbill



NORTH WALES



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

Dates Sat 7 - Sat 14 May 2022
Price £1,795
Deposit £350 Single Supp £275

Leaders Simon Eaves and one from our team
Weather The weather will be mixed (10°-20°C). Expect sun and showers, with gusty wind on exposed headlands
Walking Varied, from wide forest tracks, to clifftop paths. Walking boots are recommended
Meals All included from dinner on Day 1 to breakfast on Day 8
Insects Not anticipated this early in the season
Accom Double, twin and single rooms all ensuite
Group 12

Just some of what we hope to see:

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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



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

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

Melanie Parker: Black Grouse, Cwm Idwal
Roy Atkins: Red Kite, Dipper, Sandwich Terns, Wood Warbler
Mary Braddock: Hen Harrier
Sally Nowell: Redstart



THE OUTER HEBRIDES



"After over 22 years of leading trips to the Outer Hebrides, the sheer beauty of the landscape and incredible wildlife these islands hold is as special to me as the very first time I visited all those years ago. Every new visit just makes me appreciate the unique and fabulous wildlife and birdlife of the islands even more. I can't wait to get back out there!" Craig Round

Dates Fri 6 - Sat 14 May 2022
Price £2,295
Deposit £450 **Single Supp** £300

Leaders Craig Round and Sally Nowell

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

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

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

Insects Biting insects are unlikely to be a problem

Accom Double, twin and single rooms all ensuite

Group 12

Just some of what we hope to see:

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

Julian Sykes: Corncrake
Christine Maughan: Hebridean landscape, Corn Bunting, White-tailed Eagle
Craig Round: Machair
Tim Drew: Great Northern Diver, Otter

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

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

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

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

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

by wind-blown shell sand and in the 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 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



"Spring on the Outer Hebrides is quite simply breathtaking. Corncrakes rasp from meadows full of wildflowers and the air is filled with the sounds of displaying waders, an incredible soundscape sadly lost from much of mainland Britain these days. The beautiful deserted white shell sand beaches can be alive with thousands of migrant waders, as Arctic Terns sweep over-head, whilst the mountains and moorland is home to stunning Hen Harrier, Short-eared Owl and both Golden and White-tailed Eagles." 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



WILD HEBRIDES



"The Western Isles have amongst the highest density of breeding raptors and waders in Europe - all set in a stunning landscape! The sound of birds calling is a constant companion. Add dramatic migration of waders, nesting seabirds and Corncrakes and you understand why this is such a favourite destination"
Stuart Housden OBE

Dates Sun 22 May - Wed 1 Jun 2022

Price £2,995

Deposit £500 **Single Supp** £350

Leaders Stuart Housden OBE and one of our team

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 the Shiant Isles lasts around 4 hours

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

Insects Biting insects unlikely to be a problem

Accom Double, twin and single rooms all ensuite

Group 11

Just some of what we hope to see:

Corncrake	Arctic 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, Berneray, Harris and Lewis
- A chartered boat to the Shiant Isles, 80,000 Puffins with close viewing of seabirds
- 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 and other historic sites

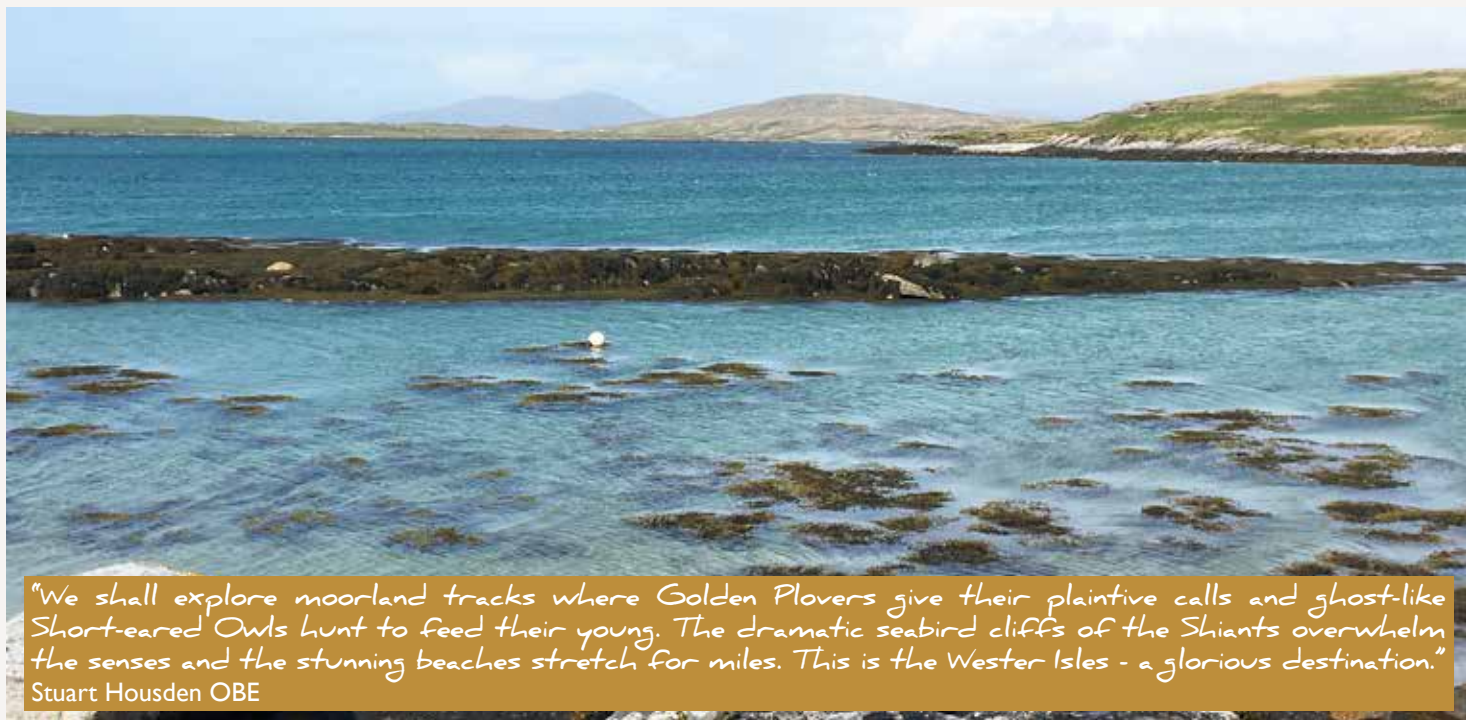
1-2 We overnight in Inverness, to give us an early start for our journey through the Great Glen and across the Isle of Skye to Uig and the ferry to Lochmaddy on North Uist. Arctic Tern, Puffin, Guillemot, Razorbill, Kittiwake, Gannet, Great and Arctic Skuas, Manx Shearwater and with luck even cetaceans 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





"We shall explore moorland tracks where Golden Plovers give their plaintive calls and ghost-like Short-eared Owls hunt to feed their young. The dramatic seabird cliffs of the Shiant's overwhelm the senses and the stunning beaches stretch for miles. This is the Wester Isles - a glorious destination."
Stuart Housden OBE

and Golden Eagle, with Otter possible whenever we are on the coast.

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. Breeding waders are everywhere including Lapwing, Oystercatcher, Snipe, Ringed Plover and Dunlin. We shall search for Purple Sandpipers and other rarities on the headlands and beaches.

We shall visit remote areas of dunes and machair where Arctic and Little Terns nest on sandy fields, waders display overhead and we have a chance of finding Twite, Corn Bunting and wild Rock Doves. Optional early morning walks will be offered on some days to experience this special location.

7-9 We head, via Berneray, to the ferry across to Harris with its rugged and forbidding mountains. A healthy population of Golden Eagle means we'll keep our eyes peeled wherever we travel. We'll visit Rodel 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 shall work hard to get good views of the seabirds and may see Manx Shearwaters, seals and perhaps dolphins. There were six White-tailed Eagle present in 2021! 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 visit Dun Carloway, one of the best iron age brochs in Scotland and Loch na Muilne RSPB Reserve nearby. On our final full day we shall explore the mountains and moorlands in search of eagles and more, with a visit to the Butt of Lewis.

10-11 Today we say goodbye to these wonderful islands, but if our ferry schedule allows we shall visit Tiumpán Head, east of Stornoway to scan for cetaceans and seabirds before making 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 and Benbecula 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 half day 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 |

Christine Maughan: White-tailed Eagle, Little Tern
Kate Mennie: Port na Long, Corncrake
Stuart Housden: Dry Machair, Luskentyre Beach
Adam Moan: Puffin



SUTHERLAND AND SPEYSIDE



"The long summer daylight hours will allow us to explore some of the far reaches of the Cairngorms National Park and Sutherland. The geology of Sutherland will take your breath away, whilst the scenery around Speyside will leave you wanting more."
Kate Mennie

Dates Wed 1 - Sat 11 Jun 2022
Price £2,475
Deposit £450 Single Supp £200

Leaders Sally Nowell and Kate Mennie
Weather Mixture of sun and showers (10°-25°C) although it can be cooler in the mountains and on the boat crossing
Walking Most walks are 1-2 miles on wide, sandy tracks, although there is the possibility of a forest walk of up to 4 miles

Our Cairngorms walk is more steep and uneven but low-level unguided alternatives are available. Walking boots will be needed on the holiday and walking poles will be useful
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 12

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.



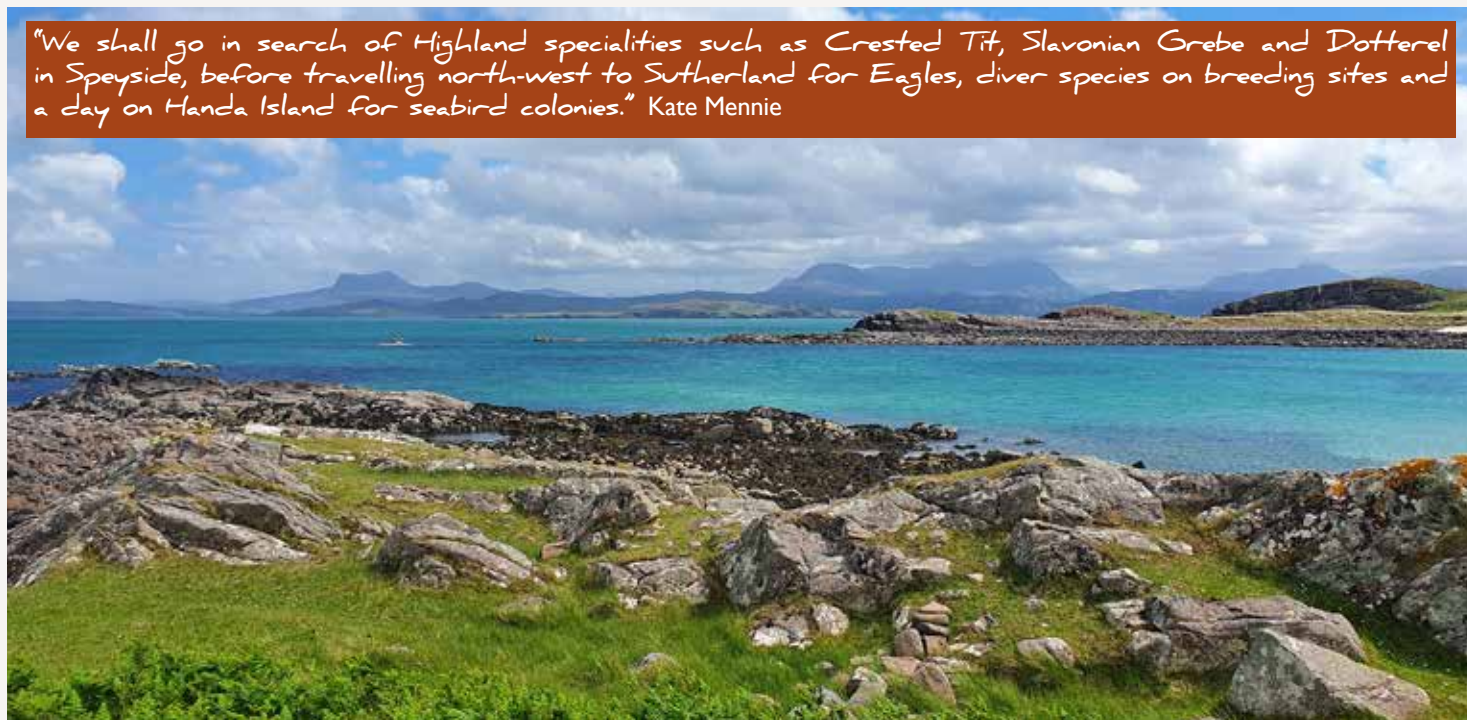
We'll also venture into the foothills of Cairngorm in search of Ptarmigan and Dotterel and with luck we may find Snow Bunting too. One evening we'll visit our hide for Pine Marten and Badger and the chance of a Tawny Owl or a roding Woodcock.

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



"We shall go in search of Highland specialities such as Crested Tit, Slavonian Grebe and Dotterel in Speyside, before travelling north-west to Sutherland for Eagles, diver species on breeding sites and a day on Handa Island for seabird colonies." Kate Mennie



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

Jane Hope: Slavonian Grebe
Kate Mennie: Sutherland
James Stevens: Dotterel, **Colin Scott:** Eider
Roy Atkins: Common Crossbill
Tim Drew: Great Northern Diver
John Grierson: Handa Fulmar



ULTIMATE UISTS



"The Uists are a paradise - few places in the UK compare with the numbers of birds, including many scarce species found in such an unspoilt landscape. The variety of raptors, the beautiful machair flora and the endless shell-sand beaches - with the sound of the sea and constant birdsong, make this a trip to truly savour." Stuart Housden OBE

Dates	Fri 3 - Sat 11 Jun 2022
Price	£2,495
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 around 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	Wheatear
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 meet 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 Common Dolphins 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 will 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





"The Uists are full of surprises - a Corncrake suddenly appears from a clump of iris in full view or a Great Northern Diver in summer plumage sits on a deep blue sea, where Little Terns dive. Every visit brings fantastic experiences and I hope you can share some with me on this trip." Stuart Housden OBE

Godwits bound for Iceland, which may drop into the fields. 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 allows 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 or Golden 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 sometimes 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 Twites. 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 and is found nowhere else in the world!

If time permits we shall visit Berneray 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 and cetaceans, we shall go on deck and watch 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. After breakfast the next morning we say our farewells.



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 journey to our hotel.
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.
1 night Premier Inn |
| Day 9 | Depart after breakfast. |

Richard Stacey: Short-eared Owl
John Tidmarsh: Loch Sgiopot, Arctic Skua
Gaye Henson: Corncrake
Stuart Housden: Machair, Red-necked Phalarope
Jane Hope: Otter



A HEBRIDEAN ODYSSEY



"Last year we made our way up to a high point, with the whole of North Uist spread out below us in a wonderful panorama, as a huge adult Golden Eagle flew past us almost at eye level! Sharing such a close eye to eye encounter with this incredible bird was a moment none of us will forget in a hurry!" Craig Round

Dates Sun 05 - Fri 17 Jun 2022

Price £2,995

Deposit £575 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

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
Last single booked, may be in a nearby Guest House for 2 nights in Castlebay but will have all meals with group

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

Craig Round: Corncrake

Tim Drew: Otter

Alan Daniells: Corn Bunting, Harris landscape

Stuart Housden: Red-necked Phalarope, Uists landscape

Christine Maughan: White-tailed Eagle

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!



"On this fantastic trip we'll make our way from Vatersay in the south, to the most northerly point of the Outer Hebrides at the Butt of Lewis. Travelling the whole length of these wonderful islands on the edge, you get to experience the differences in the landscape from one island to the next, with a myriad of wildlife riches along the way. Miles of deserted shell sand beaches, fringed by a vivid turquoise sea, rugged sea cliffs and the pounding Atlantic waves below, give way to towering mountains and moorland, the realm of eagles and the flower studded Machair. This is a trip not to miss" 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 wildfowl, waders and scarce migrants with the possibility of a vagrant American Wader if we're lucky. The sea lochs and beaches of the rugged south west coast of Lewis are a wild, remote and 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



MULL AND KINTYRE



"Mull and Kintyre features fabulous birds and mammals, from White-tailed and Golden Eagles and Corncrakes on Iona, to Otters potentially in every bay. However, finding iconic butterflies such as Marsh, Small Pearl-bordered and Dark Green Fritillaries is as equally rewarding!" Julian Sykes

Dates Sat 11 - Mon 20 June 2022

Price £2,645

Deposit £525 Single Supp £500

Leaders Julian Sykes and one from our team

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	Great Skua
Great Northern Diver	Arctic Tern
Corncrake	Storm Petrel
Osprey	Whinchat
White-tailed Eagle	Common Redstart
Golden Eagle	Wood Warbler
Hen Harrier	Tree Pipit
Short-eared Owl	Raven
Peregrine	Common Seal
Common Sandpiper	Common Dolphin
Greenshank	Otter
Dunlin	Red Deer

Underrated Argyll, with hidden corners and evidence 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 Corncrake, Great Northern Diver and Wood Warbler
- 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

I 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 Divers, waders and wildfowl, plus we'll stop along the famous Mull of Kintyre.

The next day we shall head inland, stopping at Taynish NNR for classic woodland species such as Wood Warbler, Common Redstart and Tree Pipit, plus a chance of Marsh Fritillary, if the weather's

kind. We shall visit the Crinan Canal area for Osprey, Whinchat and possibly Cuckoo. Depending on conditions we shall visit Knapdale and walk the Beaver Trail, where we shall see evidence of these secretive aquatic mammals. We shall be making an evening visit for Grasshopper Warbler, Tawny Owl and bats, so you never know your 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. Gannets and gulls fly by the picture windows or from the sun deck and nearby, the grounds are sprinkled with orchids and play host to a variety of woodland species.

The mighty White-tailed Eagle is a real highlight here, together with majestic Golden Eagle, both



"All islands are wonderful, none more so than Scottish islands and this holiday visits some of the best. Mull needs no introduction, with its eagles, harriers and Otters. Iona is a spiritual haven, with Corncrakes rasping from their iris beds. Staffa has the legendary Fingal's Cave and Lunga one of the best seabird colonies in the UK. Sitting with Puffins at your feet will last in the memory for *kin*



busy feeding young now. Mull is probably 'the' best place in Britain to see eagles. 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. We'll be alert to any possible cetaceans and seabirds as we sail. We shall see Black Guillemot, Great Skua, Fulmar and possibly 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 in Luss 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 Loch Lomond Arms Hotel
- Day 10** Leave Loch Lomond for Glasgow

Jane Hope: White-tailed Eagle,
Sally Nowell: Landscape
Louise and John Sykes: Otter, Puffin
Craig Round: Hen Harrier
Maggie and John Tester: Iona Abbey



MULL IN SUMMER



"The Isle of Mull and surrounding islands are full of wildlife, where eagles can occur right overhead, Puffins sit at your feet and Otters fish on the lochs. It really is an island for some of the best wildlife experiences."
Kate Mennie

Dates Sat 18 - Sat 25 June 2022

Price £ 2,195

Deposit £430 Single Supp £450

Leader Kate Mennie and Sally Nowell

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 Double, twin and single rooms all ensuite

Group 12

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 to our overnight base near Oban, passing the 'bonnie' banks of Loch Lomond and through the 'rest and be thankful' road pass.

In the morning we shall catch a morning ferry to the Island of Mull. We may see Black Guillemots in Oban harbour and as we journey across the Firth of Lorne, Common and Arctic Terns, Gannet and maybe even a Common Dolphin or Harbour Porpoise could be seen.

Marvelling at the spectacular landscape we'll look out for our first eagles, before reaching our hotel, overlooking the Sound of Mull, in the evening.



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".



"The landscape around Mull can change in a minute, with views over to the mainland, up to Ben More on Mull and out west towards the Treshnish Isles, Coll and Tiree. Every corner of Mull has something to offer and our comfortable hotel will be the perfect base for the week." 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; along the bonnie banks of Loch Lomond, before arriving at our hotel overlooking the Clyde Estuary, 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 in Lochawe
1 night at Ben Cruachan Inn
- 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
5 nights at Isle of Mull Hotel
- Day 7** Catch the ferry to Lochaline and make our way to our last hotel
1 night at Glendoch Golf & Spa Resort
- Day 8** After breakfast we make our way back to Glasgow

Andrew Dodds: Otter

Jane Hope: White-tailed Eagle, Black Guillemot

Maggie & John Tester: Lunga

David Petts: Hen Harrier

Maggie Bucknell: Staffa, Puffin



THE SHETLAND ISLES



"Mid-summer is a great time to visit Shetland, with some of the best wildlife spectacles in Britain. Last time, whilst on our boat trip to the island of Noss, we were surrounded by masses of marauding Great Skuas and hundreds of plunge diving Gannets right next to the boat, a simply awesome sight and sound!" Craig Round

Dates Tue 28 Jun - Tue 05 Jul 2022

Price £2,395

Deposit £475 Single Supp £300

Leaders Craig Round and Tim Drew

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

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

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

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

Insects Biting insects are not a problem

Accom Double, twin and single ensuite rooms

Group 12

Craig Round: Storm Petrel, Noss, Arctic Tern
Roy Atkins: Red-necked Phalarope
Sally Dowden: Guillemots Sumburgh Head
Andrew Hoyne: Puffins
Simon Eaves: Guillemots

Just some of what we hope to see:

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

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

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

I Flying from Aberdeen, we arrive in Shetland and drive north over Mainland to our delightful hotel on the sheltered shore of Busta Voe.

2-4 On our visit to Shetland's most northerly island Unst, we'll walk across the moorland to the wild and dramatic cliffs of Hermaness, where the skies are full of soaring and displaying Great Skuas (in Shetland called Bonxies, meaning 'dumpy bird'). Breeding Snipe, Dunlin and Meadow Pipit display overhead and the plaintive call of Golden Plover can be heard. Unst also supports Wheatear, Twite and Whimbrel.

As we reach the vast seabird cliffs and gannetry at Saito, the sight that greets you really does take your breath away! A blizzard of Gannets ride the updrafts and swirl in vast flocks below you, as Fulmars and Great Skuas glide past. Puffins

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

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

Another inter-island boat journey takes us to Fetlar, so named from the Viking for 'fat or fertile land' and the fourth largest island in the Shetland Isles.





"Shetland's wonderful seabird colonies are at their busiest at this time of year and we'll visit the towering cliffs of the Noup of Noss by boat. Cruising in under the cliffs the view that greets you always takes your breath away, blizzards of Gannets swirl above and the ledges are packed with auks, whilst all-round is the din of countless calling birds. We'll also make a boat trip at night out to the island of Mousa, in the 'simmer dim'. To watch tiny Storm Petrels fly in low over the sea to their nests in the walls of the ancient broch and swirl like bats all around you, it's a simply magical experience you never forget!" Craig Round

It is a stronghold for stunning and rare Red-necked Phalaropes, as they delicately spin on small lochans, picking tiny insects from the waterside stones. Fetlar is also a great place to see and hear the weird wailing courtship cries of Red-throated Divers, which at this time of year may have young.

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

A trip highlight for many is our dusk visit to the island of Mousa. Once inside the tower of the 2,000-year-old Iron Age Broch, we are enveloped in silence, until the rhythmic 'churring' of Storm Petrels amongst the stones brings these ancient walls alive, a moment of real 'Shetland magic'. It's a real privilege to watch these tiny ocean-going seabirds flying in low over the sea, to return to their nest sites in the walls of the Broch and as the last fiery glow of the 'simmer dim' lights up the horizon, they swirl like bats around our heads in ever greater numbers, before fluttering in to land.

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

5-7 Leaving the north and its many islands and skerries behind us, we venture south to our hotel at the southern end of Shetland, close to the dramatic Viking settlement of Jarlshoff and Iron Age settlement of Old Scatness and only a short stroll away from the coast.

Great Northern Diver and Long-tailed Duck all over-summer here, along with a few pairs of Whooper Swans that now breed. We'll also see Arctic Terns, Arctic and Great Skuas, Rock Dove, Twite, Raven and perhaps Peregrine.

Also close by are the superb seabird cliffs of Sumburgh Head, which can also be a great place to look for passing cetaceans and over the years we've seen White-beaked and White-sided Dolphins and watched Humpback, Minke Whale and predatory Orcas!

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

8 We may have some time to birdwatch on the final morning, before our flight back to Aberdeen.



Outline Itinerary

- Day 1** Fly into Sumburgh and travel north to our Mainland base at Busta Voe
4 nights at Busta House
- Days 2-4** Exploration of Unst, including the wild cliffs of Hermaness and the small island of Fetlar, as well as north Mainland and a night visit to Mousa
- Day 5** Travel south to our base on the south Mainland
3 nights at Sumburgh Hotel
- Days 6-7** Birdwatching and wildlife exploration of south Mainland, including a visit to Noss, Sumburgh Head and the Viking settlement of Jarlshoff
- Day 8** Depending on our flight time, we may be able to spend the morning bird and wildlife watching, before catching our flight back to Aberdeen



YORKSHIRE IN SUMMER



"This tour is fast becoming one of my favourites, there is so much variety in Yorkshire and so many highlights. Guests have been wowed by the wildlife, but without doubt the vast and beautiful Yorkshire countryside is what they comment on most."
Sally Nowell

Dates Sat 2 - Sat 9 July 2022
Price £2,095
Deposit £400 Single Supp £460

Leaders Sally Nowell & Julian Sykes
Weather The weather can be changeable, but in the main the temperature should not be below 15 °C and it can be warm or even hot. Please be prepared, however, for wet and windy weather as well
Walking Mostly easy walking on level paths up to 3 miles, with perhaps a little more if rarities require it
Meals All included from dinner on Day 1 to breakfast on Day 8
Insects Could be a problem on occasion at this time of year
Accom Double, twin and single rooms all ensuite
Group 12

Just some of what we hope to see:

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

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, reedbeds, forest and moorland
- Comfortable accommodation and great food
- Possibility of Honey Buzzard, Turtle Dove, Bittern, Bearded Tit
- Visit Bempton RSPB seabird cliffs 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 overlooking the magnificent sweep of Filey Bay and Brigg in time for dinner, having met 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, along coastal cliffs and estuaries and inland to some superb woodlands and the beautiful North Yorkshire Moors.

2-4 From our base in Filey this is a great time of year to visit the soaring cliffs of the East Yorkshire coast and a highlight of this holiday is undoubtedly our visit to Bempton. We'll view it from the clifftops, 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 when we get eyeball to eyeball views of Gannets hanging in the wind!

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. Other coastal sites we may visit include Flamborough Head and Hornsea Mere.

If weather permits we may take a boat trip out from Bridlington to view Bempton cliffs from below.

We shall also explore the glorious tapestry landscape of the North Yorkshire Moors. This area is often over-shadowed by the better known Yorkshire Dales, but in this moorland landscape we shall be looking for Red Grouse, Golden Plover, Curlew and Lapwing.





We shall be exploring the vast forests looking for Honey Buzzard and Turtle Dove, all tricky species to catch up with, but in scenery such as this the hunt can be part of the pleasure. We shall also be making an evening visit to forested areas looking for Nightjar.

5-7 We transfer to our hotel in the delightful market town of Beverley for the next three nights. Enroute we'll visit 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, its birds and 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 paintings of this area, we shall be scanning the hillsides and hedgerows for these silent and efficient hunters. 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 the stunning Marbled White, flitting amongst the native plants typical of chalky soils, including numerous orchid species.

From our base here 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 such as Spotted Redshank.

Here there are vast reedbeds with large numbers of breeding Marsh Harriers, so we hope to get some great views of these fabulous birds. Bittern also breed here, so with luck we may spot one amongst the reeds or even get a 'fly past'. We make a special effort to see the elusive Bearded Tit and may glimpse Water Rail along the reed edges. This area is also a favoured hunting ground for Barn Owl.

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

8 After breakfast we shall transfer back to York Station where we say our farewells



Outline Itinerary

- Day 1** Arrive at York Station, for those arriving by car, vehicles can be left at the long stay car park for the week. Transfer to our coastal location hotel. 4 nights at White Lodge Hotel, Filey
- Days 2-4** Explore East Yorkshire area. Visit Bempton Cliffs, Flamborough Head and the Yorkshire Wolds and North Yorkshire Moors, plus Dalby and Cropton Forest.
- Days 5-7** Transfer to Beverley visiting Blacktoft Sands and North Cave Wetlands, as well as the Yorkshire Wolds and the historic town of Beverley. 3 nights Beverley Arms Hotel
- Day 8** After breakfast we travel back to York station where we say our farewells.
- Make your way home, or if you wish, extend your holiday with a weekend in this beautiful city

Andrew Dodd: Gannets
Chris Piper: Yorkshire Coast, Tawny Owl
Trevor Tipler: Speckled Wood, Beverley Minster, Common Spotted Orchid



SUMMER WILDLIFE BONANZA



"I love leading this trip for the fabulous variety of wildlife we manage to squeeze into one week. It is quite astonishing how many species can be seen, with dragonflies, butterflies and many flowers all possible. It is our best week for the general naturalist interested in everything!" Roy Atkins

Dates	Sat 2 - Sat 9 Jul 2022
Price	£1,745
Deposit	£325 Single Supp £300
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 rooms all ensuite
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
- Ten 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!

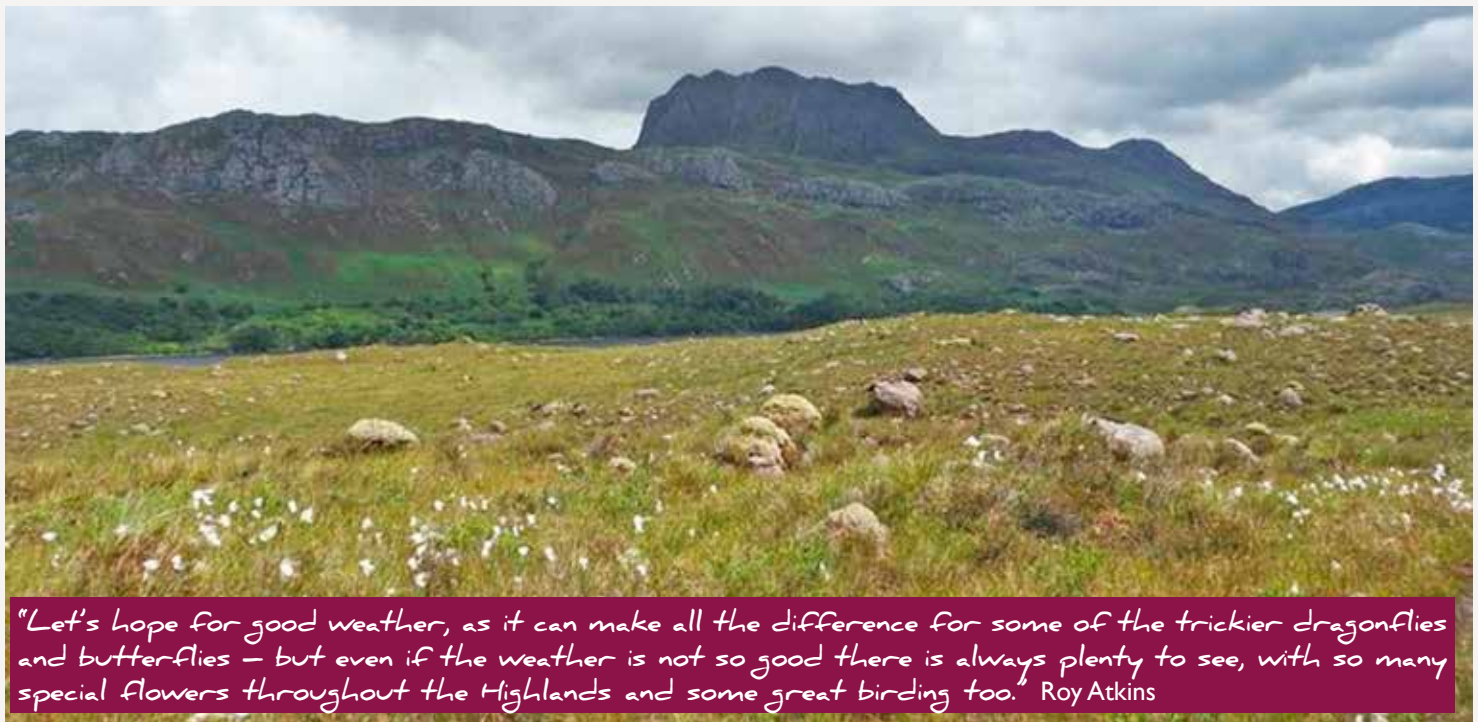
2-7 Our focus this week is on the special Highland species of flowers, dragonflies and butterflies, so we may start locally, visiting ancient Caledonian Pines where delicate Twinflower spread in patches on the forest floor - their tiny paired flowers are exquisite and surely one of the most beautiful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

we shall see this week. Common, Intermediate and Serrated-leaved Wintergreen are here too, plus the much rarer One-flowered Wintergreen, while boggy pools hold Common Hawker and Four-spotted Chaser. 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 Common and Parrot Crossbill now breed here. We'll also make an evening hide visit, where close up views





"Let's hope for good weather, as it can make all the difference for some of the trickier dragonflies and butterflies – but even if the weather is not so good there is always plenty to see, with so many special flowers throughout the Highlands and some great birding too." Roy Atkins

of Badgers are almost guaranteed but we also have fingers crossed for Pine Martens that sometimes appear.

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 Campion and Arctic Mouse-ear.

8 We say our farewells after breakfast on Saturday.



Outline Itinerary

- Day 1** Arrive at our 4 star hotel in Grantown on Spey, in time for dinner and a chat about our plans for the coming week 7 nights at The Garth Hotel
- 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: One-flowered Wintergreens, Fragrant Orchid and Burnet Moth, Golden-ringed Dragonfly, Large Heath Butterfly, Northern Damselfly, Twin Flower
Duncan Macdonald: Above Loch Maree



THE FARNE ISLANDS



"It might be titled 'Farnes' but this tour is far more than just that, as we visit all corners of Northumberland. A visit to this fantastic island group however, is a major highlight, with its cacophony of seabirds and seals. I love re-acquainting myself with this NE coastal county each year, as there's always a surprise or two." Julian Sykes

Dates Sat 09 - Sat 16 Jul 2022
Price £2,095
Deposit £400 Single Supp £525

Leaders Julian Sykes and Sally Nowell

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. The trip to Coquet Island lasts 1 hr & North Sea RHIB tour lasts 5 hrs. This trip can be over choppy seas

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

Insects Could be a problem, especially on the inland day

Accom Double, twin and single rooms all ensuite

Group 10

Just some of what we hope to see:

Common Scoter	Little Tern
Manx Shearwater	auks
Spoonbill	Rock Pipit
Osprey	Dipper
Red Kite	Willow Tit
Goshawk	Common Crossbill
Avocet	Red Squirrel
Spotted Redshank	White-beaked Dolphin
Black-tailed Godwit	Bottlenose Dolphin
Great Skua	Grey Seal
Little Gull	Dark Green Fritillary
Arctic Tern	Lindisfarne Helliborine
Roseate Tern	Pyramidal Orchid

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!
- The famous Kielder Forest for Red Squirrel, Osprey and Common Crossbill
- Full day on Holy Island for birds, butterflies and botany
- Beautiful coastline with long sandy beaches, jagged rocks and migrant waders
- Superb RHIB tour into the North Sea for seabirds and cetaceans
- A trip out to Coquet Island to see breeding Roseate Terns and Grey Seals
- Staying in a wonderful hotel in the shadow of the iconic Bamburgh Castle

We are based in the beautiful, coastal town of Bamburgh, in the shadow of its famous historic castle, 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 time at Monks House Pool or Stag Rocks, to kickstart our daily checklist.

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. South of Bamburgh is Newton by the Sea, where a stop overlooking the North Sea can produce a Little Tern fishing in the beautiful bay, along with more potential seaduck. There are a couple of 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 further south to an area close to Newcastle Airport, where we search for two key species – Red Kite and Willow Tit. We shall spend the day around here visiting some productive local Reserves, which will also produce some of the commoner species found in the county.





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

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 10m RHIB tour takes us out into deeper water and as a consequence we have a chance to see Gannets fishing, Great Skua 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 Spoonbill being 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 on 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 train station or The Victoria Hotel, Bamburgh for a 7 night stay
- Days 2-7** Exploration of the coast, forest and moorland, including three boat trips for The Farne Islands, the Farnes Deeps and Coquet Island
- Day 8** We say our farewells and depart after breakfast

Lesley Gadsden: Puffins
James Glover: Arctic Terns, Bamburgh Castle, Kittiwakes
Jane Hope: Bottlenose Dolphin
Julian Sykes: Seabird colony, Grey Seal



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!" Roy Atkins

Dates Sat 23 Jul - Wed 3 Aug 2022
Standard cabin £7,795 SS £3,900
Deposit £1,555
Price for sharing a Standard cabin

Leader Roy Atkins
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 12

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!"
Roy Atkins



Sailing into Liefdefjorden - great for Minke Whale 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 and 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 to be found. We hope to circumnavigate Spitsbergen Island, heading out of Isfjorden and then north to Kongssfjorden 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 the islands of 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



SUMMER IN SPEYSIDE



"The seabird colonies at Troup Head will be a real highlight of the trip, with breathtaking sea views and young Gannets, Kittiwakes, Guillemots and more being fed just metres away on the cliff side."
Kate Mennie

Dates	Sat 23 - Sat 30 July 2022
Price	£1,995
Deposit	£375 Single Supp £200
Leaders	Kate Mennie and Sally Nowell
Weather	Weather can be a mix of sunny and wet days, but will be mainly mild and could be hot. It may be cooler on our coastal days (10-25°C)
Walking	Walking will be mainly on well maintained paths, beach shingle and grassy cliff tops with a max. of 1-4 miles daily. Walking boots are recommended
Meals	All included from dinner on Day 1 to breakfast on Day 8
Insects	Biting insects such as midges are likely in calm areas around trees and water. Ticks may also be present, so insect repellent will be useful
Accom	Double, twin and single rooms all ensuite or with private facilities
Group	12

Just some of what we hope to see:

Crested Tit	Goosander
crossbills	Eider
Red Grouse	Red-breasted Merganser
Golden Eagle	Ringed Plover
White-tailed Eagle	Redshank
Osprey	Common Tern
Red Kite	Sandwich Tern
Peregrine	Scotch Argus Butterfly
Wheatear	Dark Green Fritillary
Spotted Flycatcher	Butterfly
Gannet	Heath Spotted Orchid
Kittiwake	Northern Marsh Orchid
Razorbill	Bottlenose Dolphin
Guillemot	Red Squirrel
Puffin	Red Deer
Black-throated Diver	Roe Deer
Red-throated Diver	Mountain Hare
Slavonian Grebe	

A summer wildlife holiday covering Speyside, the Black Isle and the Aberdeenshire coast. This trip will take in everything from butterflies and flowers, to Crested Tit, Bottlenose Dolphin and Gannet.

- From Speyside to the Aberdeenshire coast at the height of the breeding season
- Visit the only Mainland Gannet colony in Scotland with a chance of Puffin and more
- Explore Speyside for eagles and divers and travel along the Moray Coast including Troup Head
- A time when wildflower meadows are in full bloom and there are butterflies galore
- See diver species in breeding plumage and look for Slavonian Grebe
- Visit the Black Isle to look for the largest Bottlenose Dolphins in the world
- An evening visit to the wildlife hide for chance of Badger and Pine Marten

| We arrive at our comfortable hotel in Strathspey, Tigh na Sgiath, in time to relax and maybe enjoy a stroll through the woods beside the hotel. We shall then sit down for dinner together in the restaurant, serving the finest local fresh food, with plenty of time to discuss the plans for the week ahead.

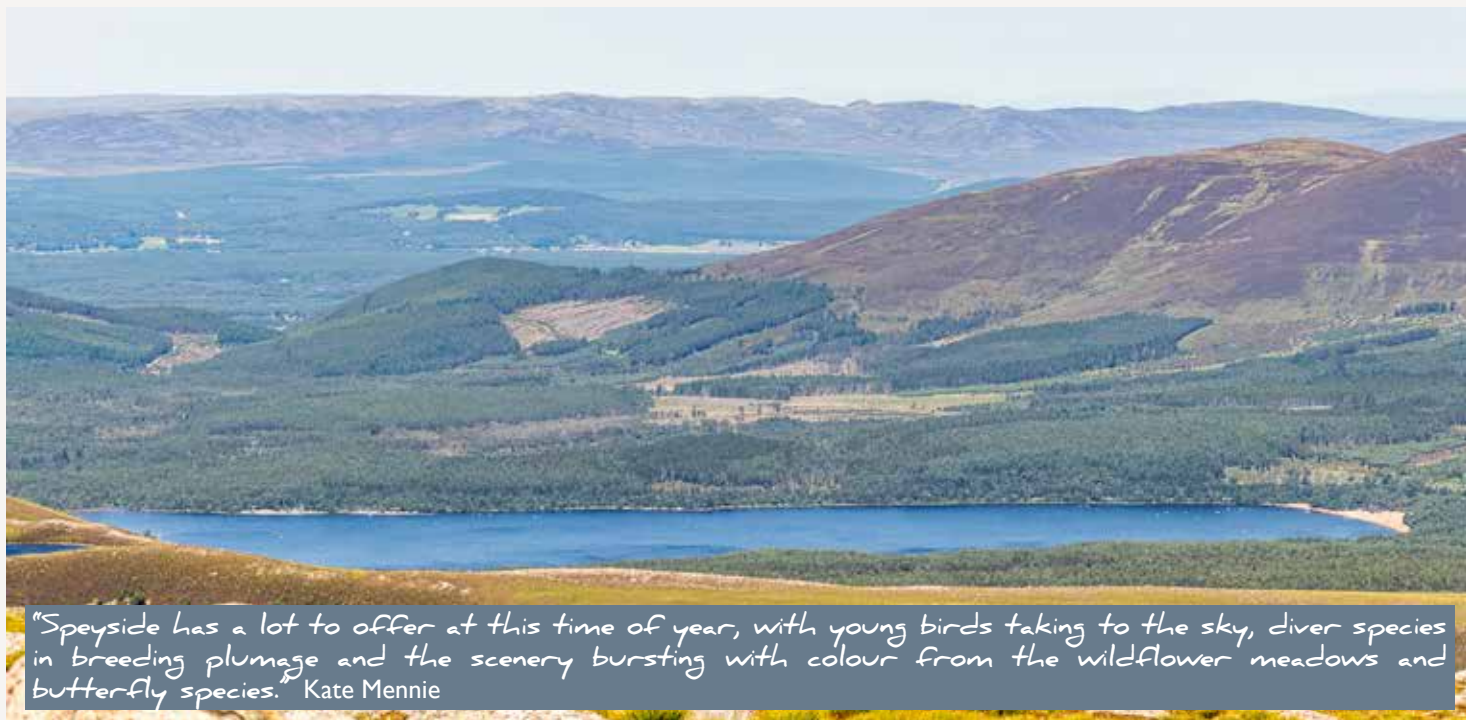
2-7 The itinerary for the week will remain flexible and we'll keep an eye on weather and tide times to maximise our opportunities, but we shall explore the Cairngorms National Park and make day trips up to the coast to maximise the number of breeding bird species. Days out will include Troup Head, Spey Bay and the Inner Moray Firth.

We shall delve into the Caledonian Forests and lochs of the Cairngorms National Park in search of Crested Tit, crossbill and Red Squirrel, with plenty of opportunities to look for evidence of

Capercaillie. This is the best time to see flowering Creeping Ladies Tresses – a scarce orchid of the forest floor. The moorland will give us plenty of suitable habitat to look for Red and Black Grouse, Black-throated Diver and even Hen Harrier. One evening will be spent at our evening wildlife hide, where the long summer sunshine will give us an opportunity to see Badgers and Pine Marten in daylight.

Another day will be spent high in a remote Highland glen, where we shall look for White-tailed and Golden Eagles, with large numbers of Red Deer gathering on hilltops around us as we scan. Here we shall also look for Wheatear, Mountain Hare and Peregrine Falcon, in the vast open reaches of the heather-clad hills. Many wading species will also still be on surrounding farmland.





"Speyside has a lot to offer at this time of year, with young birds taking to the sky, diver species in breeding plumage and the scenery bursting with colour from the wildflower meadows and butterfly species." Kate Mennie

As we follow the River Spey in Badenoch, river species such as Dipper, Common Sandpiper, and Goosander could join us as we lunch by the river or a local loch. Osprey will be feeding young on nests and summer visitors such as Spotted Flycatcher and Willow Warbler can be seen. Wildflower meadows will be blooming with orchids, such as Heath Spotted, Fragrant and Northern Marsh, attracting an array of insects such as Dark Green Fritillary and Scotch Argus. Red-throated Diver and Slavonian Grebe could also be a possibility on inland lochs in their stunning breeding plumage.

We shall also head north-east along the Moray Coast into Aberdeenshire, where the largest Scottish colony of mainland Northern Gannets can be witnessed at the RSPB Reserve of Troup Head. This peninsula juts out into the North Sea with cliff faces that can be viewed from above. A short walk along maintained paths will allow us to get close to where we can watch and listen to this busy colony feeding young on nests. Other seabirds such as Kittiwake, Razorbill and Guillemot will be flying in and out to sea to fish for their young. There is also a good chance of Puffin here amongst the other birds.

Looking out to sea we can scan the waters as far as the northern tip of the Scottish mainland searching for any dolphins and whales that may be passing. The Inner Moray Firth has a resident pod of Bottlenose Dolphins that are regularly seen between there and the north-east corner of Aberdeenshire. Minke Whales, plus occasionally Orcas are also seen travelling up this north-east coastline.

Our walk back across the fields gives us the opportunity for species such as Yellowhammer, Linnet and Common Whitethroat. On our journey back towards Speyside, we shall make a stop at the mouth of the River Spey, where Corn Bunting, Sedge Warbler and Osprey can be seen. Wildfowl such as Goosander, Eider and Red-breasted Merganser, plus waders such as Ringed Plover and Redshank are all possible.

We shall also spend a day searching the Moray coastline into different estuaries along the coastal road, where Osprey dive in for fish just yards away from us, Common, Sandwich and Arctic Tern nest on shingle, Eider bob up and down on the sea and Harbour and Grey Seals rest in the bays.

The Black Isle is a favourite spot for us to visit on many of our holidays, where a trip to Chanorny Point cannot be missed, giving us the chance to see the world's largest Bottlenose Dolphins close into shore, timed perfectly with the tide, whilst Sandwich Terns scan for fish over our heads. On the Cromarty Firth we shall look for wader species such as Curlew, Ringed Plover and early migratory Knot and Bar-tailed Godwit. If we're really lucky, one or two may still be in breeding plumage.

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



Outline Itinerary

- Day 1** Arrive at our comfortable hotel for the week
7 nights at Tigh na Sgiath Country House
- Days 2-7** We shall divide our time between Speyside and the Cairngorms National Park and exploring coastline from the Black Isle to Aberdeenshire
- Day 8** A final morning in Speyside when we shall say our farewells

Jane Hope: Gannets, View from Cairngorm, Heath Spotted Orchid
Tim Drew: Black-throated Diver
Ian Gardner: Bottlenose Dolphin
Steve Batt: Scotch Argus
Simon Eaves: Slavonian Grebe





"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 Sat 30 Jul - Sun 14 Aug 2022

Price £6,995

Deposit £1,375 **Single Supp** £425

Leaders Darren Rees and Dalton Gibbs

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 Dalton Gibbs 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 Iris Boutique Hotel
Day 7	Cape Cross and Skeleton Coast. Drive to Brandberg then onto Uis 1 night White Lady Guest House
Day 8	Drive to Kamanjab and private game conservation area, includes night drive 1 night Kaoko Bush Lodge
Day 9	Etosha National Park (west) Wildlife viewing from Okaukuejo 1 night Okaukuejo Rest Camp
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



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 Fri 05 - Fri 19 Aug 2022

Price £7,500

Deposit £1,500 Single Supp £700

Leaders Roy Atkins and local guides

Flights British Airways, 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 25°C but are not entirely predictable and can sometimes be chilly in the early morning and very hot at midday (12°C at night to max of 34°C during day). Iguazú is in an area of rainforest, so showers can be expected, with temps around 17°C, (12°C at night to max 26°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, Guilded 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 Valle dos Ventos
- 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 Pouso 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

INNER HEBRIDES



"If you love the idea of spending a week filling your lungs with fresh, clean, sea air; getting away from it all and seeing some of Scotland's most iconic wildlife, then this is the holiday for you!"
Sally Nowell

Dates	Wed 17 - Thu 25 Aug 2022
Price	£2,950
Deposit	£500 Single Supp £450
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. Private or shared bathroom in some rooms on Coll
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 looking for 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
- Travel to the islands of Rum, Eigg, Skye, 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, then 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 sea 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.

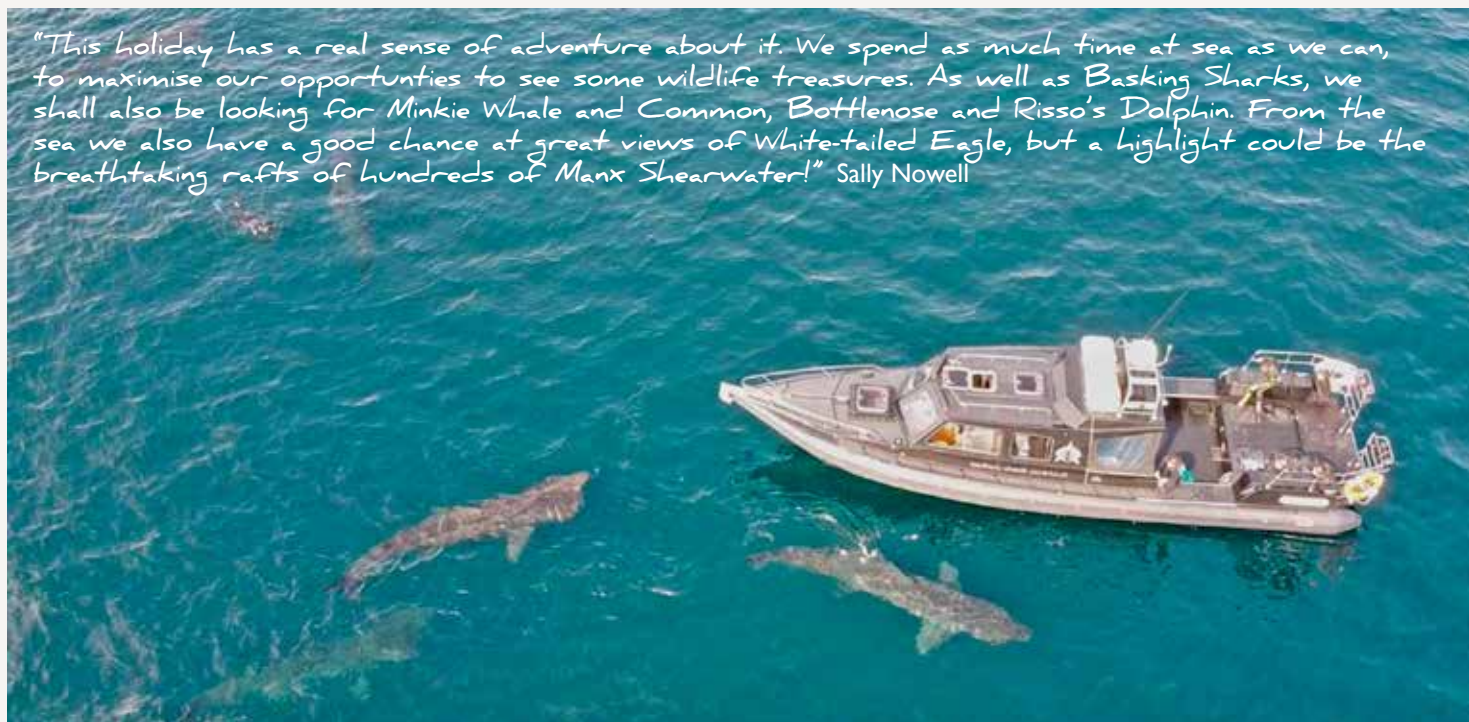
Our views of the islands we pass are often spectacular and a real favourite with photographers. After our day at sea, we shall be pleasantly relaxed and ready to head back to our hotel in Mallaig for dinner and a good night's sleep.

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 also 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!!



"This holiday has a real sense of adventure about it. We spend as much time at sea as we can, to maximise our opportunities to see some wildlife treasures. As well as Basking Sharks, we shall also be looking for Minkie Whale and Common, Bottlenose and Risso's Dolphin. From the sea we also have a good chance at great views of White-tailed Eagle, but a highlight could be the breathtaking rafts of hundreds of Manx Shearwater!" Sally Nowell



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 the sunniest places in the UK, and 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, plus the huge colonies of Shags along the coast which are quite spectacular.

We shall head south looking for Basking Sharks and Grey Seals and have a number of other 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 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. After our days out on the boat, we shall spend some time on Coll to explore this delightful island from the land.

On our last evening on Coll we shall catch the ferry back to Oban, with plenty more chances of cetacean sightings enroute. We shall also be hoping to glimpse White-tailed Eagles and we stand good chances of great views of these from the sea.

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 Tigh na Mara Guest House, Coll
- Day 6 Boat trip for the whole day including landing on Tiree
- Day 7 Boat trip for the whole day, evening ferry back to Oban
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,
Kate Mennie: Common Seal
Craig Round: Minke Whale
Christine Maughan: Great Skua
Louise Darby: Otter





"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 21 - Tue 30 Aug 2022
Price £3,495
Deposit £695 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!

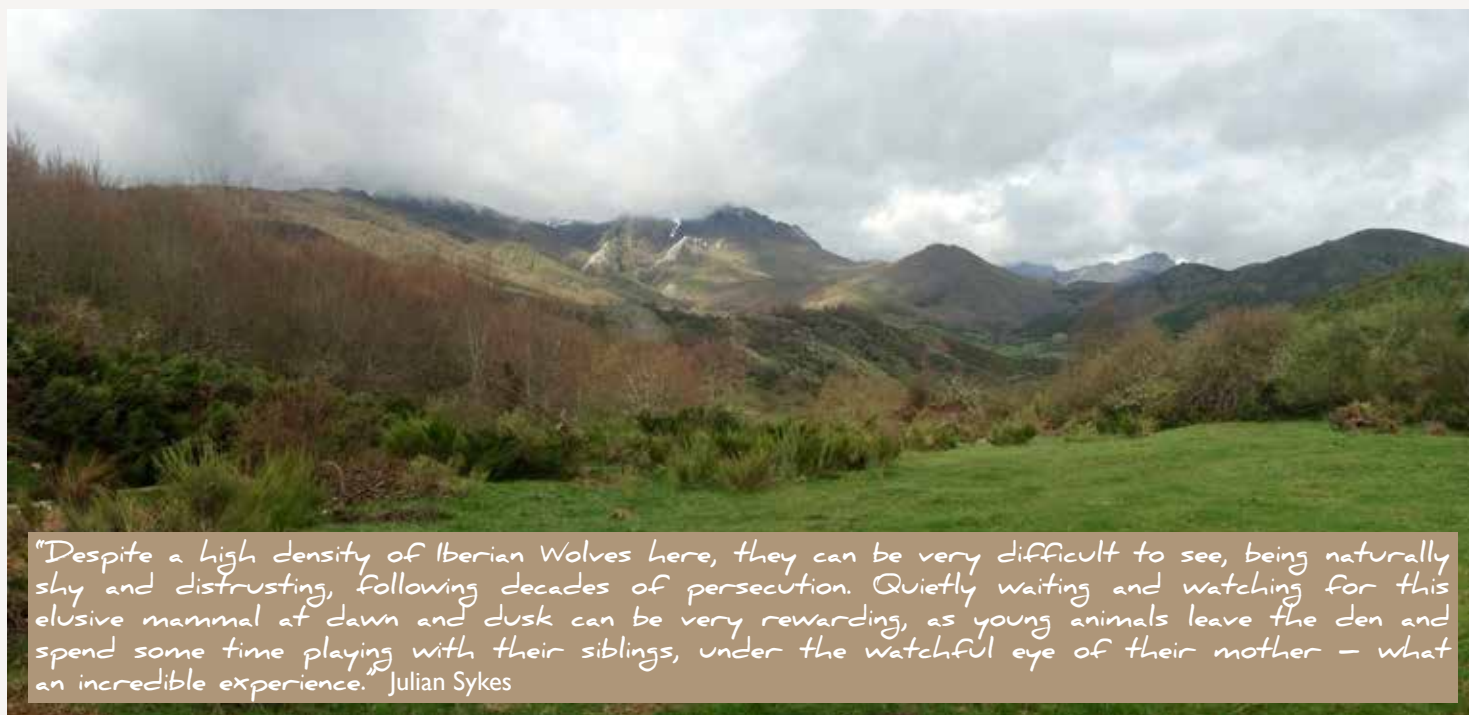
I Fly to Bilbao and drive straight along the coast, stopping off at the excellent Santana Marshes briefly to kick off the tour checklist with Little Egret, Western Yellow-legged Gull, Curlew and Common Redshank. With a bit of luck we might even find Spoonbill, Whimbrel, Ruff and Spotted Redshank, which 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





"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 27 Aug - Sun 4 Sep 2022

Price £4,395

Deposit £875 Single Supp £400

Leaders Darren Rees and one from our team

Flights Air Canada, scheduled
Outbound: Morning, Heathrow-Halifax
Inbound: Overnight, Halifax-Heathrow
Possible transit stop for 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 and are of good quality

Insects A few biting insects may be encountered, so bring repellent

Accom Twin and single rooms all ensuite
Group 8

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.

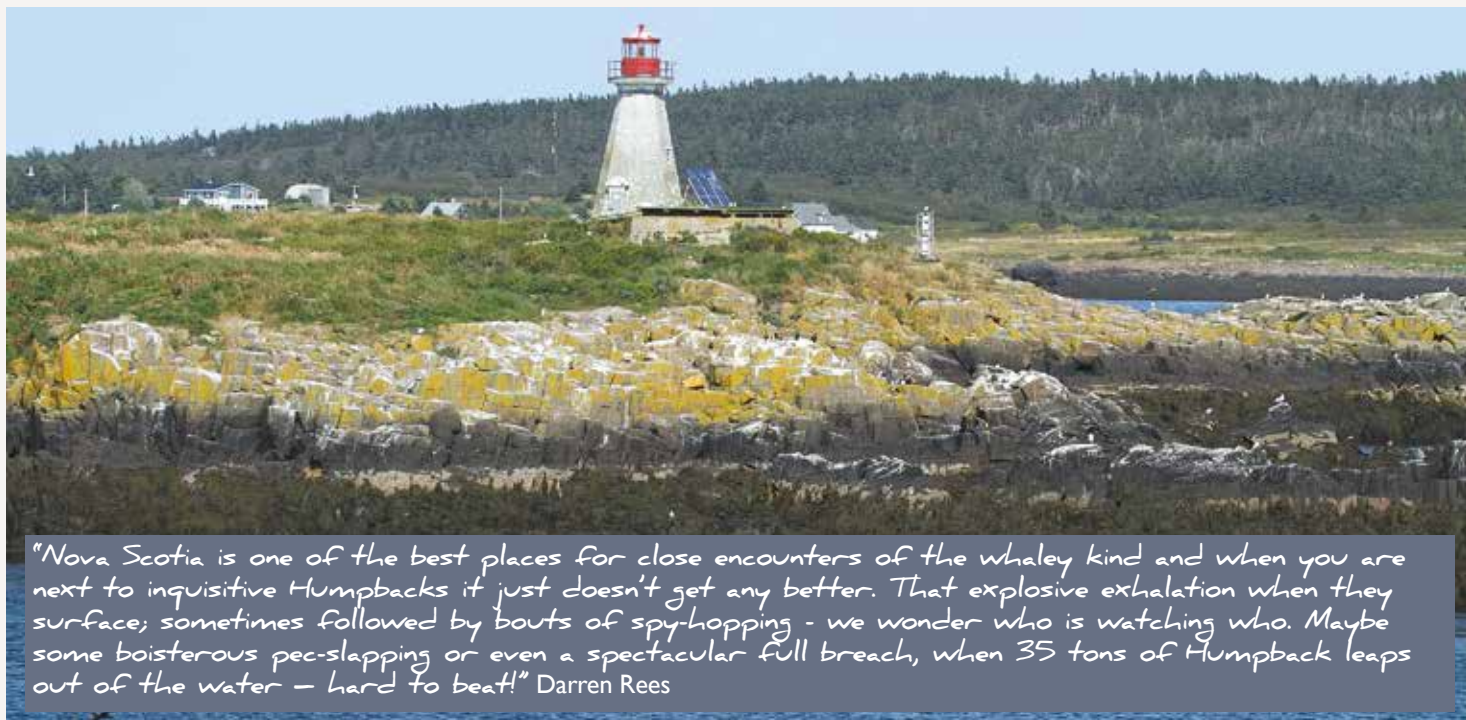
2-7 The small islands that poke from the mainland into the rich Bay of Fundy are truly magical and captivating. Beautiful spruce forests roll down to a rocky shore, marked with quiet bays and sleepy fishing ports. A delightful landscape of painted clapperboard houses; bright, bold lighthouses; wooden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





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

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

Roy Cowley: Humpback Whale, Bald Eagle, Greater Shearwater, Peter's Island Lighthouse, Mega Nova boat
Roy Atkins: Semi-palmated and Least Sandpipers



AN ORKNEY ODYSSEY



"Autumn is a great time to visit these magical islands and Orkney has a wealth of wonderful wild landscapes and seascapes to explore, along with some incredible wildlife, including excellent numbers of both Hen Harriers and Short-eared Owls."
Craig Round

Dates Sat 27 Aug - Mon 5 Sep 2022

Price £2,450

Deposit £475 Single Supp £500

Leaders Craig Round and Tim Drew

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 Scaapa 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!





"Orkney has some of the finest pre-historic archaeological sites anywhere in Europe and there will be many incredible sites for us to visit. At The Ring of Brodgar, Skara Brae and Maeshowe, you really can sense the thousands of years of human history all around you in the landscape." Craig Round

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 Kirkbuster 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
1 night at 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 Stenness
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
1 night at Premier Inn |
| Day 10 | After breakfast we say farewell |

Colin Scott: Arctic Skua, Red-throated Diver
Craig Round: Short-eared Owl
Roy Atkins: The Ring of Brodgar, beach
Mary Braddock: Black Guillemot

RAPTORS OF THE HIGHLANDS



"At a time of year when numerous raptors are on the wing, we shall go in search of majestic eagles, agile Hen Harriers and speedy Merlins, as well as many more."
Kate Mennie

Dates	Sat 3 - Sat 10 Sep 2022
Price	£2,195
Deposit	£425 Single Supp £350
Leaders	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
Boat trip	The boat trip off Mull will be in relatively sheltered waters
Group	7
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,



"Exploring the Cairngorms National Park, Isle of Mull and everywhere in between, this holiday allows us to visit different environments through the week, including up-close to diving White-tailed Eagles."
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 Country House
- 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 Country House
- Day 8** Depart after breakfast

Jane Hope: White-tailed Eagle, Goshawk
Sally Nowell: Mull landscape
Simon Eaves: Osprey
Kate Mennie: Golden Eagle
Craig Round: Hen Harrier





"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 3 - Mon 12 Sep 2022
Price	£3,695
Deposit	£725 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 Sauslik, 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





"I was very lucky as a young boy to visit Cornwall fairly regularly with my 'birdwatching parents' and was never disappointed. I was mesmerized by the rugged beauty of the landscape, the wonderful smell of the ocean and the great wildlife to be found on both sea and land." Julian Sykes

Dates Sat 17 - Sat 24 Sep 2022

Price £2,895

Deposit £575 Single Supp £0

Leaders Julian Sykes and Sally Nowell

Weather September in Cornwall can vary enormously, from warm sunny days to wet and windy, with the latter sometimes being the more preferable! Temperatures should remain good, with a range from 15-25°C

Walking Mostly easy walking on level ground up to two miles, but there is potential for some inclines/declines in the valleys - all on good roads, paths or tracks

Boat Trip 4 hour boat trip into the Atlantic, onboard a comfortable 10m catamaran, which has a toilet onboard

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

Insects Biting insects are unlikely to be a problem

Accom Double, twin and single rooms all ensuite

Group 10

Just some of what we hope to see:

Great Northern Diver	Arctic Skua
Great Shearwater	Sabine's Gull
Balearic Shearwater	Black Tern
Storm Petrel	Wryneck
Spoonbill	Melodious Warbler
Osprey	Red-backed Shrike
Little Stint	Red-billed Cough
Pectoral Sandpiper	Risso's Dolphin
Curlew Sandpiper	Common Dolphin
Spotted Redshank	Ocean Sunfish

Seabirds passing iconic rocky headlands, waders feeding in estuaries and reservoirs, migrants making landfall in beautiful, wooded valleys and cetaceans offshore, says it all.

- Pendeen and St Ives for seabird passage
- Resident Choughs on the Lizard
- Pelagic tour for Common and Risso's Dolphins
- Waders at Hayle Estuary, Stithians and Drift
- Visit the iconic Land's End and its valleys
- Chance of scarce migrants making landfall
- Fabulous hotel on the Cornish coast

We arrive at our comfortable, family-run hotel overlooking the beautiful Penzance Bay, only minutes from the train station. If timings and the weather are favourable, we shall make a short late afternoon walk to the Jubilee Pool – an open air lido, which is surrounded by rocky coastline.

Here we hope to find a few roosting waders such as Turnstone, Oystercatcher and if we are very lucky Purple Sandpiper. We always will keep an eye out in the bay as we should also see our first Gannets, gulls and auks.

2-7 Penzance is a fabulous place to be based for this Cornish adventure with a road network in all directions. We shall be keeping an eye on the weather and the local information services to ensure we make the most of the week, but we shall also visit most of the iconic sites.

Pendeen, Porthgwarra and the Island at St Ives, are a few of the famous seawatching points in southwest Cornwall and we aim to make a few visits. In the right conditions, passage Manx Shearwaters are joined by their rarer cousins – Balearic, Sooty and possibly Great Shearwaters. Arctic and Great Skuas can be seen chasing Kittiwakes and terns, plus there is the chance of Pomerine Skua, Sabine's Gull, European Storm Petrel and Grey Phalarope, if we are lucky.

September is also synonymous with wader passage in the UK and we shall visit the coastal sites of Hayle Estuary and Marazion Marsh, along with the inland reservoirs of Drift and Stithians, to try and find a good mix. Along with the expected commoner species we also hope to see Wood and Curlew Sandpiper, Little Stint, Spotted Redshank and Whimbrel, with the outside possibility of Jack Snipe and Pectoral Sandpiper. It will be great fun





"This holiday is going to be a fantastic experience for us all, as both seabird and wader identification can be a challenge, but is also very rewarding. There is also something very special about wandering around the beautiful, vegetated valleys and headlands in search of common and scarce migrants - I cannot wait to get back!" Julian Sykes

looking through the flocks of birds, honing our identification skills in a 'wader masterclass'.

This holiday though is not just about sea and shorebirds, as this is also getting to peak migration time for land birds too and time will be spent wandering the tracks and paths around the headland. Either side of the famous Land's End are vegetated valleys leading down to the sea, with the most notable being Nanquidno and Nanjizal amongst several more. These can be migrant traps for passerines making landfall, or feeding up to continue south towards Africa. Annually something 'mega' turns up, but we at least hope to find a Wryneck, Black Redstart or Melodious Warbler amongst the commoner pips, warblers, flycatchers, wheatears and wagtails.

For part of one day, we shall take to the sea for an exciting boat expedition out into the Atlantic Ocean. This could certainly prove to be one of the highlights of the week, as we hope for not only seabirds around the vessel but also cetaceans. The knowledgeable crew know exactly where to find the best feeding areas, with good chances of Harbour Porpoise and Common and Risso's Dolphins, along with possibly Minke Whale and Basking Shark. We shall also encounter lots of the same seabirds, but with a completely different perspective from a headland as they fly past and around the boat.

A day will be spent driving to The Lizard peninsula to see the famous 'Cornish Choughs', which returned as a breeding species to the

county in 2002 after a 50 year absence. Lizard Point is the most southerly part of the UK and as a consequence can also attract its fair share of migrant birds on their passage south. From the village we shall walk slowly out to the watchpoint, all the time looking out for wildlife. Once there, hopefully the Red-billed Choughs will be on display and we get to see them wheeling around making their distinctive calls.

Although there is going to be a focus on all things wildlife, we shall also endeavour to call in on some of Cornwall's premier tourist sites such as Land's End, Sennan Cove and the Minack Theatre. We shall have a wonderful week in this equally wonderful southwest corner of Britain.

8 After breakfast and one last look out into Penzance Bay we shall leave this lovely welcoming hotel and say our farewells to each other, before heading home.



Outline Itinerary

Day 1 Meet at our Penzance hotel where we shall spend the next week 7 nights at the Queens Hotel

Days 2-7 Explore the sites of SW Cornwall. Some mornings and evenings spent watching for passage seabirds, with the rest of the time visiting iconic birdwatching sites. One day we'll take a cruise for cetaceans and possibly Sunfish

Day 8 After breakfast we say our farewells and leave this historic area

Linda Gregory: Pectoral Sandpiper
Julian Sykes: Wryneck, Great Shearwater, Choughs
Simon Eaves: Common Dolphin
Tom Corser: Land's End
Roy Atkins: Lesser Yellowlegs



AUTUMN WILDLIFE IN THE CAIRNGORMS



"Autumn is in full swing in the Cairngorms, with golden leaves, a fresh feel in the air and perhaps even fresh snow on the mountain summits. A time to explore what the area has to offer, as wildlife prepares for the winter ahead." Kate Mennie

Dates Sat 24 Sep - Sat 01 Oct 2022

Price £1,995

Deposit £375 **Single Supp** £200

Leaders Kate Mennie and one from our team

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 rooms all ensuite or with private facilities

Group 12

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.





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 Tigh na Sgiath Country 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

Pauline Greenhalgh: Red Deer
Colin Scott: Ptarmigan
Duncan Macdonald: Uath Lochans
Peter Black: Redwing
Jane Hope: Red Grouse
Mary Braddock: Red Squirrel, Crested Tit



ISLES OF SCILLY



"I love the Scilly Isles. What's not to love, blue seas and little boat rides, sandy beaches, coastal paths and leafy lanes, sheltered bays and breezy headlands, marshy pools and quiet woodlands, exploring all of this and a week of birding along the way."
Simon Eaves

Dates Sat 01 - Sat 08 Oct 2022
Price £2,345
Deposit £450 Single Supp £350

Leaders Simon Eaves and Craig Round

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



"Having visited the Scilly Isles on numerous occasions, I have many a full logbook from all the exciting birds that have turned up during my stays. I can't wait to get back there again to see what the next visit will hold and wondering what memorable species I'll be sketching into my notebook this time." 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 pittasporum 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: Wryneck, Red-eyed Vireo
Margaret & John Tester: Black Redstart, St Mary's Harbour, Red-backed Shrike
Steve Osborne: Cattle Egrets, Jack Snipe





"Oland can be an amazing place to witness migration in action and, depending on wind direction, it can be quiet - or incredible! It is real 'birding' and all very exciting, as we have no idea what the day might bring!"
Roy Atkins

Dates Sun 02 - Sun 09 Oct 2021
Price £2,695
Deposit £525 Single Supp £300

Leaders Roy Atkins and Jane Atkins
Flights Scandinavian Airlines, scheduled
Outbound: Morning, Heathrow-Kalmar
(via Stockholm)
Inbound: Afternoon, Kalmar-Heathrow
(via Stockholm)
Weather Expect a mixture of sun and showers,
with cool winds (0°-20°C)
Walking 2-3 miles on wide tracks, which may
be muddy after rain
Meals All included from dinner on Day 1
to lunch on Day 8
Insects Unlikely to be a problem
Accom Twin and single rooms all ensuite
Group 12

Just some of what we hope to see:

Whooper Swan	Hooded Crow
Common Crane	Eider
Avocet	Robins!
Bearded Tit	Goldcrests!
Barnacle Goose	Tree Sparrow
Bean Goose	White-tailed Eagle
Red-breasted Goose	Hen Harrier
Eiders!	Rough-legged Buzzard
Little Stint	Goshawk
Long-tailed Tit	Yellow-browed Warbler
(White-headed race)	Pallas's Warbler
Caspian Gull	Brambling
Northern Grey Shrike	Twite
Long-eared Owl	Red-breasted Flycatcher
Black Woodpecker	Elk

Autumn migration at its best; masses of cranes, geese, seaduck and raptors, enormous numbers of Goldcrests, Robins and other common migrants.

- Ottenby Bird Observatory at peak migration - Goldcrests everywhere
- Raptors including Rough-legged Buzzard, Goshawk and White-tailed Eagle
- Chance of rarities such as Gyrfalcon and Pallas's and Dusky Warbler
- Huge Barnacle Goose flocks with chance of Red-breasted Goose
- Spectacular Common Crane migration
- Chance to see ringing demonstration and stunning lighthouse top view
- Relaxed pace birding, with most sites close at hand and lots to see!

After our flight to Kalmar, via Stockholm, we then drive the short distance over the bridge to Öland and our delightful hotel at Gammalsby.

2-7 Wooden windmills and burial mounds dot the charming open landscape of this remarkably flat island. We stay just a short distance from the famous Bird Observatory at Ottenby, set in meadows, scrub and heathland, surrounded by low boulder beaches and coastal bays. We need to check everything as we drive down to the lighthouse, as birds can be passing through in large numbers. In the right conditions the trees and bushes can be alive with Brambling, Chaffinch, Tree Sparrow, Twite, Redpoll and Siskin. Woodpigeon and Stock Dove pass overhead and flocks of Golden Plover dot the fields. All around the lighthouse and even around our feet, tiny Goldcrest flutter in the weedy plants. Blackcaps, Chiffchaffs,



Treecreepers, Robins and thrushes are all heading south and gather for a final feed before heading out to sea - perhaps joined in the Sycamores by scarce Pallas's or Yellow-browed Warbler and we've seen Red-breasted and Collared Flycatchers here. The Observatory staff make regular checks of the mist-nets and will bring out anything special to show any birders nearby. We'll also visit the Observatory to watch the ringing in action and learn about the research and results of many years of work here, one of the oldest bird ringing stations in the world.

The coast can be dotted with ducks of several species, along with shorebirds and Brent Geese, sometimes with Black Brant amongst them. The fields can hold big flocks of migrant Barnacle Geese, with occasionally other species such as Bean and White-fronted Goose. Common Cranes add to the spectacle, often in their thousands and



"I am really excited about leading this trip with Roy, it will be my first visit and I love the thought of seeing so many birds on the move. Sometimes there are thousands of Goldcrests - other times masses of raptors passing through - or enormous movements of geese and seaduck. I would also love to see big flocks of cranes which should be passing through." Jane Atkins



we frequently hear them passing over our hotel at the start of the day as they head out to feed. The trees around the lighthouse may hold Long-eared or with luck, even a Tengmalm's Owl and Great Grey Shrike perch in the bushes nearby.

The number of birds can be astonishing - over a thousand Goldcrests have been ringed in one day! Swedish birders excitedly scan all that goes by and there is a tremendous sense of anticipation. If the winds turn to the east, then our thoughts will turn to Richard's Pipit and Pallas's, Radde's and Dusky Warblers. If the winds blow from the north, then we'll be thinking of larger, more spectacular birds - we've seen Snowy Owl, Hawk Owl and Gyrfalcon in previous years.

We'll check other hotspots along the coast - places such as Seby Badet and Stenåsa Badet, where taller trees attract migrants such as flycatchers. The Swedish Ornithological Society runs a shop and Visitor Centre here. Who knows what we shall find and a lot of the pleasure is in looking with excited anticipation. We shall also keep in touch with news of any rarities on the island, as we would not want to miss something special!

Wherever we are on the island, small clusters of Rough-legged Buzzard drift lazily south, along with Goshawk, Sparrowhawk, Hen Harrier and in recent years the occasional Pallid Harrier! Wandering immature Golden Eagle can pop up over the trees and White-tailed Eagles patrol the coast or follow the geese.

At Sandvik, we'll check the waders for anything

unusual amongst the Dunlin, Knot and other species - we've seen Buff-breasted Sandpiper here! More waders are at Bejershamsvik, with a chance of Bearded Tit in the reeds here too. Peregrines menace the waders and offshore, tremendous numbers of Eider may be on the move, 10,000 a day have been recorded. Long-tailed Duck, Red-breasted Merganser, Scaup, Common Scoter and even King Eider are possible, Black and Red-throated Diver pass south and there may be Arctic and Pomarine Skuas if conditions are right.

On the grazing meadows at Kastlosa and Eckelsudde there may be thousands of Barnacle Geese and smaller numbers of Greylag and White-fronted Geese, with the chance of Bean Goose too. It is always worth a careful check as vagrant Red-breasted Goose is always a possibility.

There are dense woods, small ponds and clearings near the Observatory, which have roving flocks of Goldcrest that are worth checking through, as an elusive Pallas's Warbler just might be amongst them! We'll look for Black Woodpeckers in the pines, where passing Nutcracker or Parrot Crossbills sometimes turn up and deciduous woodlands have Scandinavian race Nuthatch, Bullfinch and lovely white-headed Long-tailed Tit. A few Elk (or Moose) inhabit Öland and we may make an early start one morning to search for them too.

8 After a morning's birding we catch an afternoon flight home.



Outline Itinerary

- | | |
|-----------------|---|
| Day 1 | Fly to Kalmar via Stockholm and transfer to Gammalsby
7 nights Gammalsbygarden Inn |
| Days 2-7 | Birdwatching and wildlife exploration including visits to the Ottenby Bird Observatory. Bird ringing and mist netting opportunities |
| Day 8 | Transfer to Kalmar for our flight back to the UK, via Stockholm |

Mark Denman: Long-tailed Tits, Goldcrest
Roy Atkins: Gyr Falcon, Common Cranes, White-tailed Eagle, Barnacle Geese
Mary Braddock: Great Grey Shrike



ALLADALE WILDERNESS RESERVE



"Staying at Alladale Wilderness Reserve is an unforgettable experience, it's a magical and spectacular base from which to explore some of Sutherland in autumn."
Sally Nowell

Dates	Sat 8 - Sat 15 Oct 2022 Sat 22 - Sat 29 Oct 2022
Price	£2,895
Deposit	£575 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	6

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	Artic 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.



"Sutherland is one of the less explored parts of Scotland, but it has some spectacular scenery and equally spectacular wildlife too!" 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



EAST YORKSHIRE



"It's always a treat and a privilege to guide a tour in my home county of Yorkshire. I am always exceptionally proud to show off just what incredible and diverse wildlife it has to offer, especially in October."
Julian Sykes

Dates Sat 8 - Sat 15 Oct 2022
Price £1,925
Deposit £375 Single Supp £400

Leaders Julian Sykes and one from our team.

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 transfer to the hotel 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 Bampton 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





"As the autumn migration unfolds around us we never know quite what we might see or hear - a Yellow-browed Warbler feeding in sycamores, the schack, schack, schack of Fieldfare calling overhead, Goldcrests feeding at our feet, or even a Short-eared Owl coming in off the sea - the visible migration we have already witnessed here in Yorkshire is simply magical." Julian Sykes

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 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 Beverley Arms Hotel, 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, Little Owl
Julian Sykes: Spurn Point
Simon Eaves: Black-tailed Godwit
Peter Black: Gannet
Ian Smith: Lapland Bunting
Tim Jones: Migrating Goldfinches



MULL IN AUTUMN



"This is time of year to watch raptors, Otter, deer, divers and more on my favourite islands, during the autumnal light in wild landscapes."
Kate Mennie

Dates Sat 8 - Sat 15 Oct 2022
Price £1,995
Deposit £350 Single Supp £350

Leaders Kate Mennie and one from our team

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 Double, twin and single rooms all ensuite

Group 12

Just some of what we hope to see:

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

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 at Kilchrennan near Oban. In the morning we'll make our way through some beautiful scenery 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 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.



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.

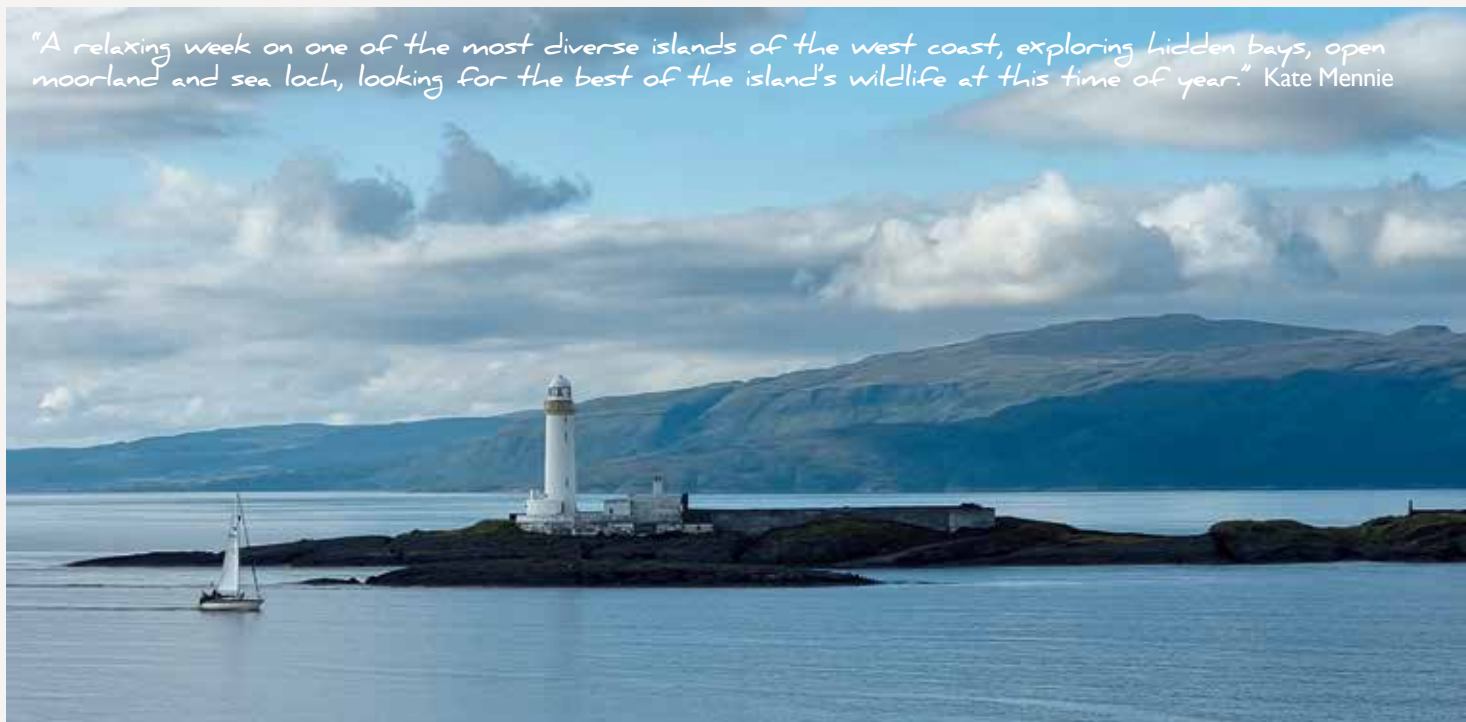
At this time of year we shall be hoping for good views of all three divers and perhaps a few wintering seaduck might be starting to arrive. Early Whooper Swans may also be arriving, as well as Slavonian Grebe, which spend the winter in sheltered bays.

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

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



"A relaxing week on one of the most diverse islands of the west coast, exploring hidden bays, open moorland and sea loch, looking for the best of the island's wildlife at this time of year." Kate Mennie



tolerance of our presence, often gets us some incredible views of these breathtaking 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. 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 in the north east of the island; the Mull Cheese Factory for a guided tour and a special tasting of their delicious cheese and also the White-tail Gin Distillery towards the south west of the island, for a special tasting of their glorious 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 overlooking the Clyde Estuary, for our last night.

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



Outline Itinerary

- Days 1-2** Meet in Glasgow and make our way to our base for one night at Kilchrennan. Travel to Oban to catch the ferry to Mull 1 night at the Taychreggan Hotel
- 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 our hotel travelling to Glasgow the following morning 1 night at the Gleddoch Hotel

Rob Martin: White-tailed Eagle, Common Dolphin
Julia Bevan: Corran Ferry View
Kate Mennie: Black-throated Diver, Otter
Jane Hope: Common Seals
Richard Stacey: Short-eared Owl



FORTH 'N' FIFE



"Having lived in Kinross and been an active member of the Fife Bird Club, I know all too well how fantastic and diverse this holiday will be. With lots of coastline, wetlands, forest, rolling mountains and extensive farmland, there will always be something different to be seen and found on any given day."

Julian Sykes

Dates Sat 22 - Sat 29 Oct 2022
Price £1,895
Deposit £350 Single Supp £300

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	Spotted Redshank
Great Northern Diver	Black-tailed Godwit
Slavonian Grebe	Whimbrel
Red-necked Grebe	Great Skua
Manx Shearwater	Arctic Skua
Whooper Swan	Mediterranean Gull
Taiga Bean Goose	Little Gull
Brent Goose	Short-eared Owl
Velvet Scoter	Yellow-browed Warbler
Surf Scoter	Barred Warbler
Long-tailed Duck	Firecrest
White-tailed Eagle	Twite
Golden Eagle	Corn Bunting
Marsh Harrier	Snow Bunting
Red Kite	Lapland Bunting
Peregrine	European Beaver
Red Grouse	Red Squirrel
Black Grouse	
Purple Sandpiper	
Greenshank	

Fife, Lothian and Perthshire can be incredibly rewarding, as a constant stream of winter migrants arrive from the north, along with a chance of something special amongst them.

- Cross the mighty Forth Road Bridge to Musselburgh Lagoons
- Big flocks of scoter offshore plus divers, grebes and skuas
- Looking for European Beaver at the Loch of the Lowes Reserve
- Good chance of the rare wintering Taiga Bean Geese
- Possibilities of Yellow-browed Warbler, Lapland Bunting and Ring Ouzel
- Black Grouse, Golden Eagle, Peregrine in the Perthshire mountains
- Visit the famous Kelpies and St Andrews' coastline

We meet in Edinburgh and head to our comfortable accommodation in Kinross, situated on the edge of Loch Leven, which hosts 15,000+ roosting Pink-footed Geese during winter. It is wonderful to wake up and see and hear them each day flying out to feed in the nearby agricultural 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 visible migration in action, with the commoner wintering species still migrating in good numbers, along with the

chance of something a bit rarer making landfall. Pipits, thrushes and finches are sometimes joined by scarcer birds, with a good possibility of Yellow-browed and Barred Warblers, along with Brambling, Firecrest and Snow and Lapland Buntings. 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 to view passage seabirds; looking out for auks, skuas, duck, geese and even passerines.

There will be passage gulls and terns, with a few Little Gulls amongst the 100's of Kittiwakes moving south. Red-throated Divers should also be making their way along the North Sea coast, sometimes



"I love crossing the mighty Forth to visit the excellent Musselburgh Lagoons or the Slammanan Plateau for the Taiga Bean Geese. I also love crossing the River Tay into Perthshire for their beautiful mountains with raptors, grouse and even European Beaver. However it's driving through into the Kingdom of Fife, which will always hold a special place in my heart, being so diverse from the coast, all the way inland!" Julian Sykes



in good 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, Turnstone and 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 seawall we shall search through the Velvet Scoter, hoping to find a Surf Scoter that winter here annually, along with Slavonian Grebe and possibly Red-necked Grebe.

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 possibly visits to high tide roosts at Kinneil and Skinflats, where it's possible to see 100'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 day we'll cross the Tay River over to Perthshire, where we shall spend some time between Dunkeld and Crieff looking for raptors. With a bit of good luck and decent weather conditions, we have a possibility of finding Golden Eagle, Red Kite and Peregrine, which would be fantastic! We shall also be on the lookout for both Black and Red Grouse, Grey Partridge and Dipper, which also reside in this area

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.

8 After our last wonderful breakfast we shall say our "goodbyes" and head home, or back to Edinburgh. Hopefully we shall get one final fly past from the overwintering Pink-feet.



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 Perthshire mountains for raptors and grouse, plus an evening visit for European Beaver. We shall cross the Forth River to Musselburgh Lagoons and Dalgety Bay
- Day 8** Travel back to Edinburgh

Mark Denman: Long-tailed Duck
Roy Atkins: Pink-footed Geese
Julian Sykes: Black-tailed Godwit, Taiga Bean Geese
Morag Rea: Kelpies, Forth Bridge
Duncan Macdonald: Eurasian Beaver



ISLAY AND JURA IN AUTUMN



"Thousands of Barnacle and Greenland White-fronted Geese huddled on one island; raptors round every corner and coastal cliffs with feeding Choughs, these islands have it all."

Kate Mennie

Dates Sat 22 - Sat 29 Oct 2022

Price £1,995

Deposit £350 Single Supp £400

Leaders Kate Mennie and one from our team

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 12

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 arrive in Inveraray in time to check into the Loch Fyne Hotel overlooking this large sea loch, enjoying our first dinner together.

2-6 As we wait to board the ferry, from the harbour, we shall scan for Black Guillemot, seals, 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 four 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 Scotland's largest population here on the island. Loch Gorm will give us more concentrations of



"The diverse landscape on Islay and Jura, with inland lochs, coastal beaches, expanses of open heath and farmland will take your breath away. Filled with wildlife in the autumn, the noise of thousands of geese at sunset, rutting Red Deer and soaring eagles, this holiday has it all." Kate Mennie



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 west 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 spend our final hours on Islay checking the bay for divers as we take the ferry back to the mainland. On our journey towards Loch Fyne for our final night, we shall explore some coastal areas in Kintyre and maybe take a woodland wander. We shall arrive at our hotel on Loch Fyne as darkness falls to enjoy a relaxed evening with our final meal together and relive 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 Inverary
1 night Loch Fyne Hotel. Inverary |
| 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 ferry back to Kennacraig and travel to Inverary then travel back to Glasgow the following morning.
1 night Loch Fyne Hotel. Inverary |

Simon Eaves: Barnacle Geese
Duncan Macdonald: Islay
Ian Tulloch: Common Seals, Lesser White-fronted Geese, Whooper Swan
Julian Sykes: Peregrine Falcon
Mike Grimshaw: Twite



PATAGONIA



"Mountain Lion are renowned as an extremely difficult animal to see, but on this trip we really do stand a good chance. I never promise anything, but we have enjoyed some amazing views on past trips, watching animals both hunting and feeding on a kill - so fingers crossed for similar success this time!"

Roy Atkins

Dates Sun 23 Oct - Wed 09 Nov 2022

Price £10,435

Deposit £2,000 Single Supp £1,500

Leaders Roy Atkins plus local guides

Flights British Airways, scheduled
Outbound:
Overnight, Heathrow-Buenos Aires
Inbound:
Overnight, Buenos Aires-Heathrow
Internal flights, Aerolineas Argentinas
Buenos Aires-Trelew-Ushuaia-
El Calafate-Buenos Aires

Weather Highly variable, from warm or even hot and dry in Buenos Aires and the northern part, to potentially cold, wet and windy in the south, though we hope for nice weather there too! 5-25°C

Walking Mainly easy walking on good tracks, with some slightly steeper walks in the mountains, but the amount of walking may be a little unpredictable, when searching for Mountain Lion or even Magellanic Woodpeckers!

Meals All included from lunch on Day 2 to lunch on Day 17

Health Although Malaria and Yellow Fever are uncommon, please consult your doctor for individual advice

Insects There may be biting insects in some areas, so bring insect repellent

Accom Twin and single rooms all ensuite
Group 12

Just some of what we hope to see:

Mountain Lion	Guanaco
Andean Condor	Magellanic Woodpecker
Southern Right Whale	Chilean Flamingo
Magellanic Penguin	Steamer Duck
Black-browed Albatross	Torrent Duck
Southern Elephant Seal	Mara
Magellanic Plover	Kelp Goose

This immense wilderness of glaciers, mountains and spectacular coastlines, hosts an astonishing mix of wildlife – including our best chance of Mountain Lion.

- Mountain Lions! Your best chance of seeing this beautiful big cat
- Boat trip for close up views of Southern Right Whale
- Stunning scenery of Torres del Paine and Andean Mountains
- Steamer Duck, Magellanic Woodpecker and Austral Parakeet in Tierra del Fuego
- Huge Magellanic Penguin colony with birds right by our feet!
- Visit to the spectacular Perito Moreno Glacier
- Andean Condors above snowy mountain peaks - or perhaps on a carcass!

1-3 Arriving in Buenos Aires we start our trip at Costanera Sur, where it is hard to believe you are just 10 minutes from downtown Buenos Aires. The wetlands and bushes along the trails can hold White-tufted Grebe, Rosy-billed Pochard, Masked Gnatcatcher, Nanday Parakeet, Golden-billed Saltator and many more.

Further north we shall spend a full day exploring a fabulously rich area of marshland and farmland, which may prove the most 'birdy' day of the trip! Warbling Dorodito, Curve-billed Reedhaunter, Southern Screamer, Limpkins and many flycatchers, spinetails, finches, raptors, storks, herons, ducks and waders are all possible at this very rich area, where birds just keep on coming!

4-6 We head now to Patagonia, an immense region of unexplored wilderness, creating

the southernmost tip of Argentina and Chile. We fly to Trelew, where a nearby wetland holds Coscoroba Swan, Lake Duck, Chilean Flamingo and Silvery Grebe. A little way down the coast we meet our first young Elephant Seals and search out localised Chubut Steamer Ducks, before heading to our first Magellanic Penguin colony if we have time, as it is still a long drive to Puerto Piramides on Peninsula Valdés.

We have two full days to explore this world-renowned Reserve. More than 800 Southern Right Whales come here to breed - the largest population on Earth - and our boat trip should provide close views. We'll also see young Elephant Seals at a colony on a private beach, with Southern Giant Petrel and Great Grebe offshore. Lesser Rhea and Elegant Crested Tinamou roam the scrubby landscape, along with Guanaco and Mara - the largest rodent in Patagonia. At Punta Norte we'll visit a huge Magellanic Penguin





"This part of South America is so hard to explore and internal flights and long drives are the only way - but wow are the rewards worth it. The scenery alone is unforgettable, with the mountains of Torres del Paine incredibly spectacular, then there are glaciers, the Andes and the Beagle Channel, spectacular places to see some spectacular wildlife." Roy Atkins

colony with penguins right at our feet and who knows - perhaps an armadillo!

7-9 Our next flight takes us to Ushuaia, the southernmost city on earth! Overlooking the Beagle Channel we are close to Tierra del Fuego National Park, a vast relic of coastal Southern Beech forest. Magellanic Woodpecker, White-throated Treerunner, Thorn-tailed Rayadito and Austral Parakeet are here and we hope to find Magellanic Horned and Austral Pygmy Owls. We'll scan the waters for Flying Steamer Duck, Fuegian Steamer Duck, Kelp Goose and Ashy-headed Goose, with Blackish Oystercatcher and Black-faced Ibis on the shore.

We'll explore the Beagle Channel by catamaran, where Southern Sea Lion colonies dot the islands and seabirds are abundant. Imperial and Rock Shags, Magellanic and Gentoo Penguins, South American Tern, Chilean Skua, Dolphin Gull, Southern Giant Petrel, Black-browed Albatross and Southern Fulmar create a fabulous list.

10-11 We have the chance for some relaxed birding before our afternoon flight to El Calafate. Depending on flight times we may fit in a little birding at Laguna Nímez, on the shores of Lake Argentino. This reed-fringed lagoon holds Chilean Flamingo, Andean Ruddy Duck, Upland Goose, Cinereous Harrier and rare Magellanic Plover - if not today we shall certainly get there at some point!

We'll visit Los Glaciares National Park, created in 1937 to preserve this unique wilderness of Southern Beech forests, Andean lakes and 13 spectacular glaciers. Glaciar Perito Moreno is the best known and a series of trails and lookouts provide breath-taking, close-up views. This is our first real chance for magnificent Andean Condor and we'll search for Tufted Tit-Tyrant, Chilean Flicker, Magellanic Tapaculo and Rufous-tailed Plantcutter among others.

12-15 The long drive to Torres del Paine, in Chile, crosses Patagonia's high plateau, where we'll look out for Chocolate-vented Tyrant and Grey-hooded Sierra-Finch as we drive, then after crossing the border, the Paine Massif becomes visible and wow - what a breath-taking spectacular place it is!

We have two full days to explore Torres del Paine NP, a fantastic area for mammals, with Guanaco, Andean Deer, Hairy Armadillo, Chilla Fox and Culpeo Fox all possible, but our main goal is the enigmatic Mountain Lion or Puma. Chances of seeing this beautiful cat are high and we hope to get good views, perhaps the biggest highlight of the trip! Birding is good too, with Torrent and Spectacled Ducks, Scale-throated Earthcreeper, Austral Negrito, Black-necked Swan, Least Seedsnipe and plenty more chances for Andean Condors.

16-18 We return to El Calafate for our flight to Buenos Aires, for an overnight stay. Here we'll relax on the morning of Day 17, before our flight home in the afternoon, arriving back in London on Day 18.



Outline Itinerary

- Days 1-3** Overnight flight to Buenos Aires then birding at Costanera Sur Nature Reserve and north of Buenos Aires
2 nights Lafayette Hotel
- Days 4-6** Flight to Trelew, explore Valdés Peninsula
2 nights Hostería The Paradise
1 night Hotel Peninsula Valdes
- Days 7-9** Flight to Ushuaia, birding Tierra del Fuego NP. Boat trip in the Beagle Channel
3 nights Tolkeyen Hotel
- Days 10-11** Flight to El Calafate, then birding shores of Lake Argentino and visit to Los Glaciares NP
2 nights La Cantera Boutique Hotel
- Days 12-15** Explore Torres del Paine, Chile, great birding and mammals including Puma!
4 nights Hotel Las Torres, Chile
- Days 16-18** Flight to Buenos Aires, overnight stay. Then overnight flight home Day 17, arriving in UK on Day 18
1 night Lafayette Hotel

Roy Atkins: Mountain Lion, Torres del Paine, Magellanic Woodpecker, Guanaco, Andean Condor, Magellanic Penguin



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 12 - Fri 18 Nov 2022
Price £1,495
Deposit £295 Single Supp £250

Leaders Julian Sykes and Darren Rees
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 Double, twin and single ensuite rooms
Group 10

Just some of what we hope to see:

Red-throated Diver	Bar-tailed Godwit
Slavonian Grebe	Black-tailed Godwit
Whooper Swan	Dunlin
Pale-bellied Brent Goose	Common Redshank
Pink-footed Goose	Ringed Plover
Barnacle Goose	Golden Plover
Pintail	Short-eared Owl
Eider	Dipper
Long-tailed Duck	Grey Wagtail
Velvet Scoter	Rock Pipit
Common Scoter	Siberian Chiffchaff
Goosander	Willow Tit
Little Egret	Common Crossbill
Hen Harrier	Siskin
Red Kite	Lesser Redpoll
Merlin	Snow Bunting
Peregrine	Lapland Bunting
Water Rail	Red Squirrel
Purple Sandpiper	Grey Seal
Turnstone	

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.

- Flocks of winter thrushes arriving from Scandinavia
- Kielder Forest for Red Squirrel, Dipper, Common Crossbill
- Beautiful coastline with long sandy beaches and rocky headlands
- Full day on Holy Island with chance of scarce migrants
- Impressive numbers of ducks, geese and waders on estuaries
- Inland to the Redesdale to hang out at Winter's Gibbet
- Largest Pale-bellied Brent Goose flock in the UK

Meeting up at our lovely hotel in Bamburgh, we shall hopefully have time to take a short drive 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 rocks. 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, 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 Divers, Slavonian and Red-necked Grebes, Long-tailed Ducks and

hope for a few Velvet Scoter amongst the large flocks of Common Scoter that annually winter here. As we walk the white, windswept beaches and saltmarsh, we shall look for Snow Buntings or something scarcer such as Lapland Bunting or Shorelark.

Druridge Bay is famous for a network of wetland Reserves, with hides overlooking freshwater pools along this long stretch of coastline - all home to flocks of Wigeon, Teal, Pintail and Shoveler, along with other wildfowl. In the shallow pools, waders roost at high tide such as Bar-tailed and Black-tailed Godwits, Knot, Dunlin, Common Redshank and Grey and Ringed Plovers. Flocks of Golden Plover and Curlew are usually found in nearby fields, along with Greylag Geese plus Pink-footed and Whooper Swans, all the time on the lookout



"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



for a Greenland White-fronted or Barnacle Goose in amongst them, arriving from the north.

We spend a day heading inland where, with luck, we might chance upon a Merlin speeding past, or a Hen Harrier quartering the extensive Cheviot moorland or, with luck, a Short-eared Owl hunting for voles. We shall make a short detour to the edge of Redesdale to look at the imposing Winter's Gibbet, keeping an eye out for Goshawk that breed in these extensive forests. We shall also 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 beautiful animals and we hope for good views of these normally shy creatures, along with the possibility of Bank Vole.

One full day will be spent on Holy Island in the shadow of the wonderful and iconic Lindisfarne Priory, which is worth the visit alone. Here, huge flocks of waders follow the rising and retreating tide, with plovers, godwits, redshank and curlew probing the newly exposed mud. Gorgeous and diminutive Pale-bellied Brent Geese spend their winter here, in one of the largest wintering flocks in the UK, so finding some shouldn't be a struggle. Purple Sandpiper and Rock Pipits feed actively on the seaweed strewn, rocky shore at high tide, but

it's the chance of something unusual which is the attraction.

In recent years, rarities such as Red-flanked Bluetail, Brown Shrike, Pallas's and Dusky Warblers and Brown Shrike have been found, along with Siberian and Yellow-browed Warblers. We could experience huge numbers of winter thrushes passing through and a sea-watch may produce a passing skua or scarce diver.

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 south back to Newcastle, where we shall visit the resident Red Kites at Rowlands Gill and then a couple of wetland sites near the airport for primarily Willow Tit, along with the commoner wildfowl and waterbirds.

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

Day 1	We meet in Bamburgh or Newcastle station. 6 nights at The Victoria Hotel, Bamburgh
Days 2-6	Exploration of the coast north and south of Bamburgh, the forest and moorland of Redesdale, including time around Kielder Water. Full day on Holy Island and possibly south to Newcastle
Day 7	We depart after breakfast

Mike Shaw: Golden Plover mixed flock
Morag Rea: Warkwork Castle
Julian Sykes: Egret
Simon Eaves: Eiders
Chrissie Nicholson: Pale-bellied Brent Geese
James Stevens: Shorelark
Jane Hope: Whooper Swans



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 £50 will be levied on each and any transfer.

6. Speyside Wildlife will do everything possible to ensure that your holiday runs as described. In the unlikely event this is not possible we shall advise you at the earliest opportunity of any significant alterations. Any alterations so made will be of a similar quality to those described. 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.

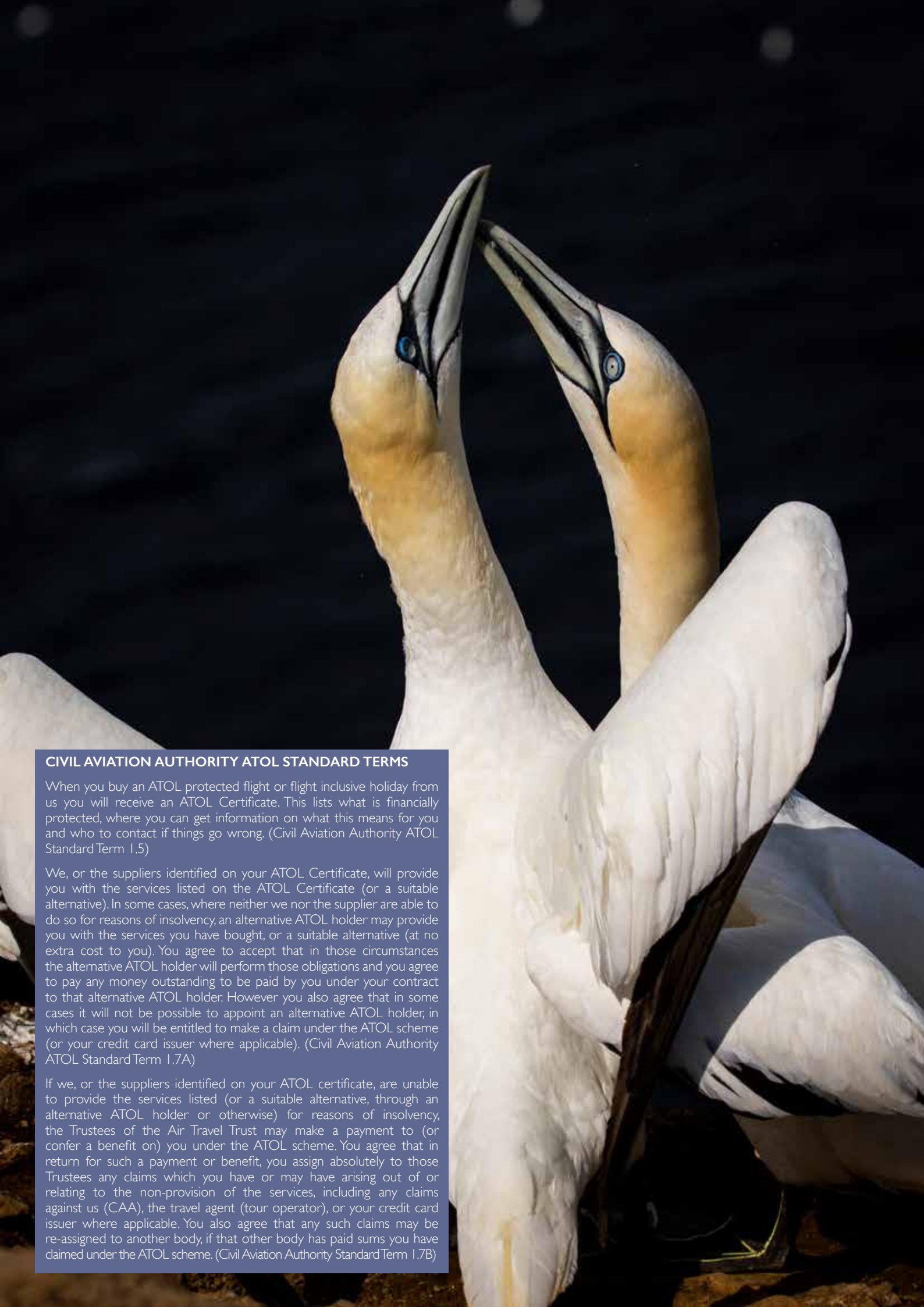
10. All clients booked on a non-UK holiday must be in possession of a valid passport. Full details of requirements for a specific holiday will be sent when we confirm your booking.

11. Speyside Wildlife complies with the requirements set out in Statutory Instrument 2018 No 634 'The Package Travel and Linked Travel Arrangements Regulations 2018'. 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. (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