

WILD PHOTOGRAPHY HOLIDAYS



NORTH ICELAND MÝVATN BIRDS & PUFFINS IN THE ARCTIC CIRCLE

HIGHLIGHTS

- Peak time for birds in Iceland
- Puffins in the Arctic Circle
- Grímsey Island and Hrísey Island
- Lake Mývatn and breeding ducks
- Opportunity to photograph birds from a hide
- Colourful geothermal areas and volcanic landscapes
- Eyjafjörður & Nature Reserve
- Sunrises and sunsets in dramatic locations
- Sigurgeir's famous bird museum
- Midnight sun
- Goðafoss Waterfall
- Fabulous spring flowers
- Two flights across Iceland

INTRODUCTION

This is a brand new three base bird trip dedicated to photographing the birds of North Iceland. After several years running bird photography tours in Mývatn area, a world renowned breeding area for ducks and otherworldly landscapes, we have decided to extend our tour to Iceland's far North Hrísey Island and the Arctic Circle where we will focus on the Puffins and Sea birds of Grímsey Island. This creative adventure photographing birds in the Icelandic landscape starts at the beginning of June when the birdlife is at its most active and prolific. Migrants have arrived and all are very conspicuous defending their territories. Grímsey Island is possibly Iceland's best location for photographing the Puffins who live in

burrows on the edge of the sea cliffs. Located right on the Arctic Circle it is magical to enjoy Puffins lit by the midnight sun when most other folks are asleep. In Mývatn we will have the opportunity to use hides to photograph the abundant waterfowl and other species. In addition to Grímsey and Mývatn we have added two nights based in Dalvík overlooking Eyjafjörður. The Eyjafjarðará, Hörgá and Svarfaðardalsá river estuaries and in particular the magical Hrísey Island are among the best places in Iceland for bird photography. At this time of year in Iceland the alpine flowers are in bloom and the Icelandic landscape is enhanced by hours of soft ambient light cast by the midnight sun, welcome to Iceland in summer!



Some of the birds we hope to see and photograph on this tour: Atlantic Puffin, Razorbill, Ptarmigan, Kittiwake, North Atlantic Fulmar, Arctic Tern, Arctic Skua, Great Skua, Harlequin Duck, Barrow's Goldeneye, Eurasian Wigeon, Teal, Greater Scaup, Tufted Duck, Common Scoter, Northern Shoveler, Long-Tail Duck, Great Northern Diver, Red-throated Diver, Horned Grebe, Red-necked Phalarope, Snipe, Redshank, Golden Plover, Ringed Plover, Whimbrel, Gyrfalcon, Black Tailed Godwit, Merlin, Northern Pintail, Oystercatcher, Pink-footed Goose, Raven, Dunlin and Purple Sandpiper.

DAILY ITINERARY

Day 1: Flight to Akureyri

Wild Photography Holidays services commence with a flight from Reykjavík to Akureyri where we will meet and transfer you to our first night hotel. Following dinner at our hotel we will have a group meeting, introductions and a trip briefing followed by an image presentation. Should you wish to fly up to Akureyri a day earlier we would be able to book you into the hotel for an extra

night although this is not included in the price of this holiday.

Hotel Akureyri (D)

Day 2,3,4: Lake Mývatn

After breakfast we leave Akureyri to drive South to Lake Mývatn. En route we may spend some time at one of Iceland's most spectacular waterfalls Goðafoss before travelling to our comfortable cottages are situated right next to Lake Mývatn, Iceland's fourth largest lake located at the edge of the volcanic zone cutting through the north of Iceland. It is fed by water welling up from a number of springs on the lakeshore. Craters and volcanoes dominate the landscape. The shoreline is deeply incised by numerous small inlets and speckled with about 50 islands and small islets. Mývatn is famed for its birdlife both on and around the lake. In May all migrants have arrived and the birds are very conspicuous, defending their territories. In summer more species of duck have made their homes in the Mývatn region than in any other location on earth, it is a paradise for bird photographers. We have often photographed the Great Northern Diver



here too. The River Laxá flowing from the lake is the prime habitat for Harlequin and Barrow's Goldeneye in Iceland. These two ducks do not breed anywhere else in Europe.

Over the next two days we will make the most of the long hours of daylight by exploring the best of what this area has to offer both in terms of birdlife and the unique landscape. The area is starkly beautiful, an otherworldly landscape of spluttering mud pots, weird lava formations, steaming fumaroles, volcanic craters, serene pools and breeding birds crazy with hormones. We always do our best to meet our guests expectations. We will concentrate on photographing birds in the landscape, sometimes from a hide. Our tutors will be helping you to do this in a creative way. They will also to make sure that you have a full grasp of the technical skills required for modern bird photography. Keep a look out for the Gyr Falcons who nest in the area and find rich pickings during the breeding season. During the times when we are not out in the field our tutors will be helping you to review and process images together with showing you ex-



amples of their own work for inspiration.
Cottages Lake Mývatn (B,L,D)

Day 5–6: Dalvík and Hriséy

After breakfast we leave the Mývatn area to drive North, through Akureyri and on to our hotel in Dalvík located on the edge of Eyjafjörður. En route we will visit bird locations. We will have an early evening meal before exploring Svarfaðardalur Nature Reserve, the first wetland area granted protection in Iceland. The area of Húsabakki at the inland end of the Svarfaðardalur Nature Reserve is just 5 km from our hotel. From the path a wide variety of waterfowl and waders maybe seen; also Ptarmigan and passerines. Black-tailed Godwit, Whimbrel and Greylag Geese are abundant and Harlequin Ducks are often seen on fast-flowing reaches of the river. In the evening light

we will photograph around the coastal end of the nature reserve around the Lake Hrisatjörn. The Slavonian Grebe and Whooper Swan breed here every year. At the east of Hrisatjörn there is a hide.

On our second morning we will take a leisurely drive along the fjord to visit various bird locations before returning to Árskógssandur for an afternoon ferry to the tiny Island of Hriséy, it takes just 15 minutes. Around 40 bird species nest in Hriséy, some can only be counted in a few pairs while others are in thousands. The main reason for this unusually large concentration of birds is that all hunting and gathering of eggs is banned plus there are no predators such as foxes, minks, mice or rats. The Ptarmigan is a protected species on Hriséy, although it is hunted elsewhere in Iceland. Waders have dense

breeding colonies. Weather permitting we will hope enjoy the evening light and to return on the last ferry at 23:30. Hotel Dalvík (B,L,D)

Day 7–8: Grímsey

This morning we take the 09:00 ferry (3 hrs) to Grímsey Island where we'll be staying for two nights. The ferry journey is a fine opportunity to see some stunning vistas of North Iceland, we often see whales en route. After settling into our comfortable guesthouse we will begin our exploration of this serene island which is basically just one giant bird colony. Grímsey is the northernmost inhabited Icelandic territory, just 5 square kilometres with around sixty residents and it is located on the Arctic Circle. The north Atlantic current brings some warmth from the Gulf of Mexico, promoting a surprisingly mild



climate despite its northerly position. The main commercial activity here is fishing, there are a few sheep and collecting seabird eggs is also common. This small island is the best location in Iceland for photographing the Atlantic Puffin, especially in flight. Puffins are easily photographed at numerous locations almost any time of day. Fulmars, Murres, Razorbills and Kittiwakes nest on these same cliffs. There is a colony of Arctic Terns right outside our guest house. Red Guillemots nest and fish in the pretty harbour and Red Phalaropes dart energetically around the village pond. Also vying for our photographic attention are the nesting Oystercatchers, Sandpipers, Plovers, Wagtails, Wheatears and Buntings that are widely distributed across the island.

Our guest house on Grímsey is perfectly located close to the bird cliffs. It is clean, simple and guests will share a room. We will have the whole house for ourselves. Grímsey is the only place in Iceland located on the Arctic Circle. The seascapes, including an array of wild flowers, are fabulous and the dramatic Arctic light makes for

some superb, creative photography.

Guesthouse (B,L,D)

Day 9: Grímsey & Akureyri

We will have a whole day to continue our explorations of Grímsey before taking the 17:00 sailing for Dalvík. From here we will make the short drive to Akureyri and our last night hotel where we will enjoy a final dinner together. Hotel Akureyri (B,L,D)

Day 10: Homeward Flights

Following breakfast we will transfer you to the local airport for flights back to Reykjavík. WPH services finish at this point although if necessary we are able to book a hotel for an extra night in Reykjavík, please enquire at the time of booking. (B)

JOINING ARRANGEMENTS AND TRANSFERS

There will be one single transfer meeting the recommended flight in Akureyri. This flight is included in the price of the holiday. Please double check with the office for the time of this flight, but it will probably be the 18:55



from Reykjavík's domestic airport and you will need to be at the airport at the latest 30 mins before the flight departs. If you prefer to stay in Reykjavík the night before this flight, we can arrange a hotel for you, although this is not included in the price of the holiday. It is totally possible to travel from most European airports to make the internal Iceland connection in the same day. The flight to Akureyri takes around 45 minutes and departs from Reykjavík's domestic airport which is close to the BSÍ Flybus Terminal. Return Flybus tickets are included in the price of this holiday and will be sent to you in advance of your arrival. It is important that you let the office know the times of your international flights well in advance of your arrival in Iceland. The journey into Reykjavík takes about forty five minutes. If you plan to fly through to Akureyri the same day that you arrive in Iceland, then you will need a flight that arrives in Keflavík International Airport by no later than 15:00 on Day 1. On Day 10 the group will fly back to Reykjavík after breakfast on the 08:25 flight from Akureyri to Reykjavík's Domestic airport. If you wish to catch a homeward flight



on this day you would be advised by ourselves to make it for the afternoon. Please contact the office for advice if there is anything that you do not understand.

Flybus Airport Transfer

The Flybus is included in the price of this holiday and it is the most convenient way to get from Iceland's international airport to Reykjavík and back. The coach takes you to the BSÍ central bus station. There you will be directed to a smaller bus that will take you to the domestic airport.

WHAT'S INCLUDED

- 9 nights accommodation
- Two flights Reykjavík – Akureyri and back
- Flybus transfers
- All meals
- Transport and ferries
- Photographic tuition
- Transfers to and from Akureyri Airport

WHAT'S NOT INCLUDED

- International flights
- Drinks and snacks extra to meals
- Alcoholic beverages
- Travel insurance

ACCOMMODATION

We will be using a variety of accommodation. In Akureyri we will stay in a comfortable hotel surrounded by trees close to the domestic airport and fairly close to the city centre. Our accommodations outside Akureyri are chosen for their locations and proximity to great birdlife and landscapes. In Mývatn we stay in attractive 2 bedroomed or single bedroomed cottages by the lake. The single cottages are limited so enquire at the time of booking. The two bedroomed cottages are spacious with a shared bathroom, small kitchen, inside and outside sitting area. In Grímsey we stay in a large house very close to the bird cliffs. We will have shared room/ bathrooms. In Dalvík we stay in a Hotel with private bathrooms.

FOOD

All meals are included in the price. The most common Icelandic dishes are fish and lamb and we can of course cater for a wide variety of culinary tastes as long as this is mentioned on the booking form.

ALCOHOL

This is rather expensive in Iceland. It is worth considering bringing a bottle of your favourite 'tipple'! All the restaurants that we eat in serve alcohol.



SPENDING MONEY

Icelandic Krona can be easily obtained at the airport ATM machine; these are plentiful throughout Iceland. There will be opportunities to buy presents and souvenirs in some of our locations. Credit cards are accepted in all places for even very cheap purchases.

TRAVEL INSURANCE

Please ensure that you have adequate Travel Insurance that includes repatriation in case of accident. Please make sure your equipment is insured too. Iceland is not in the EU, so please check with your insurance company that cover extends to non-EU countries.

PASSPORT AND VISA REQUIREMENTS

A passport valid for at least three months beyond length of stay required by all except nationals of Austria, Belgium, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Italy, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, Portugal, Spain and Sweden who are only required to produce national identity cards issued by the authorities in their countries of

origin. Visas are not required but a return ticket will need to be shown by Australian, Canadian and USA nationals. Other nationalities please enquire before booking.

COVID RESTRICTIONS

Please contact the office for up to date information.

LANGUAGE

Icelanders speak Icelandic. They also tend to speak rather good English.

CLIMATE

Iceland's climate is tempered by the Gulf Stream. Summers are mild and winters rather cold, the weather is very changeable at all times of the year, there may be rain, sunshine, drizzle and snow all in the same day. As far as we can make a guess, expect weather that is probably similar to April/May in the UK. Most importantly for us, the lack of pollution means that the clarity of the light is often exceptional with phenomenal 'big skies' and really atmospheric cloud patterns.



CLOTHING SUGGESTIONS

The best solution to temperature control is to have a number of layers available from lightweight thermal underwear through mid-layer insulation to a windproof jacket. For the lower body choose a pair of trousers that you can move in easily rather than jeans as the latter take a very long time to dry should we be caught in a shower and provide little protection against wind-chill when wet. If you have any questions feel free to contact us at anytime before the trip.

SUGGESTED CLOTHING & EQUIPMENT

- Warm trousers (not jeans)
- Long sleeved thermal tops and leggings
- Long sleeved shirt/tee-shirt
- Light fleece/wool jumper
- Warm fleece type jacket
- Waterproof jacket
- Waterproof trousers
- Warm socks
- Lightweight walking boots/shoes

- Wellington boots
- Light warm hat
- Gloves
- Casual clothes for hotel wear
- Sun cream, sunglasses & sun hat
- Small basic first aid to include plasters, blister repair e.g. Compede, needle/cotton & any personal medicines
- Small penknife

PHOTOGRAPHIC EQUIPMENT AND INFORMATION

- Specially designed camera bags or rucksacks like F-Stop, Lowepro and Peak design.
- A camera with interchangeable lenses such as a digital SLR or a mirrorless system camera.
- A set of lenses to cover the whole range from wide-angle to telephoto, for example...
For full-frame cameras: 24–105mm standard zoom and a 70–200mm or longer tele zoom. For crop format cameras: 17–50mm standard zoom and a 70–200mm or longer tele zoom.
- As long a telephoto lens as you own and are comfortable to carry in the field. Tele zooms of 80–400mm or 150–600mm are a good choice. If you own a fixed telephoto lens in the range of 400 to 600 mm, bring it.
- Spare camera
- Tripod – only required if you use a gimbal/very heavy lens. Most bird photography is best done handheld allowing you to move around and adjust position easily.
- Filters – neutral density, graduated filters and polarisers can be useful for the occasional landscape image.

- Lens cloth
- Sensor cleaning device (optional)
- Lightweight ‘trekking’ absorbent towel for drying cameras and equipment
- Rain cover for camera and camera bag
- Sufficient memory cards for the whole holiday as it may not be possible to buy more during the trip.
- A laptop with the image editing applications of your choice, essential for checking and presenting images during the trip and for one-on-one sessions with the tutor. All of the places we stay in have Wi-Fi.
- Backup storage device (optional)
- Spare batteries and chargers
- All the electrical sockets are [European three-pin](#), so you might need a travel plug adapter.

It's important that you are familiar with the basic operation of your camera such as setting exposure/AF modes, aperture, shutter speed, ISO etc. Nowadays there is a huge variety of cameras and systems and while we will always do our best to help, it's impossible to know every possible model.

PARTNERS

Although this is primarily a photography holiday, non-photographer partners will be very welcome as there are many options and interesting possibilities in addition to taking photographs.



MORE QUESTIONS?

While we hope that this information has answered most of your questions about the holiday, we know it will not give you all the information you need. If you have any more questions, please get in touch. Talking to us on the phone (we will always call you back) can often be a quick way of sorting out individual questions. It also helps us to get to know each other before the holiday.

BOOKING THIS HOLIDAY

Fill in the [online booking form](#), or give us a call on +44 (0)1270 440222.

LINKS

View [images and information for this tour](#) on the website. Read about [our approach to teaching photography](#)