

WILD PHOTOGRAPHY HOLIDAYS



NORTH & EAST ICELAND

SEABIRDS IN THE ARCTIC CIRCLE

HIGHLIGHTS

- North & East Iceland locations
- The Arctic Circle
- Puffins with sand eels
- Birds with young chicks
- Gorgeous and diverse landscapes
- Remote coastal locations
- Grímsey and Hrísey islands
- Sunrises and sunsets in dramatic locations
- Two flights across Iceland
- Iceland's East fjords
- Whale watching tour (optional)
- Arctic Henge
- Húsavík and Akureyri

BIRD SPECIES

On this tour we will have excellent chances of seeing and photographing a vast variety of birds including...

Atlantic Puffin, Razorbill, Common & Brünnich's Guillemot, Black Guillemot, Ptarmigan, Kittiwake, North Atlantic Fulmar, Arctic Tern, Arctic Skua, Great Skua, Cormorant, Harlequin Duck, Eider Duck, Red-necked Phalarope, Red-throated Diver, Great Northern Diver, Snipe, Redshank, Golden Plover, Ringed Plover, Whimbrel, Black Tailed Godwit, Oystercatcher, Pink-footed Goose, Raven, Dunlin Purple Sandpiper, Gyrfalcon, Merlin and Whimbrel.

Many species of duck breed in Iceland and we will possibly encounter...

Eurasian Wigeon, Teal, Greater Scaup, Tufted Duck, Common Scoter, Northern Shoveler, Long-Tail Duck, Horned Grebe, Northern Pintail.

INTRODUCTION

This is a lovely new, adventurous photographic tour that is dedicated to the ocean and birds of North and East Iceland. Many of the locations we cover are remote and little visited. This tour has two locations in common with our June Iceland birds tour. The first is Hrísey Island for Ptarmigan & Black Guillemots, the second is the Island of Grímsey in the Arctic Circle for Puffins and seabirds.



We have also added three exciting new locations in the far Northeast of Iceland. This creative adventure photographing birds in the Icelandic landscape starts in the latter half of July when the birds will be busy feeding their young and the predators such as Great Skuas, Arctic Skua, Raven and Black Backed Gull will be actively hunting and marauding.

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 nesting seabirds back lit by the midnight sun when most other folks are asleep. This tour is a fabulous 13 day introduction to the Icelandic birdlife and perfect for those guests who have enjoyed the June Mývatn and Grímsey tour and would like to get to know the birdlife in other parts of Iceland.

DAILY ITINERARY

Day 1,2: Flight to Egilsstaðir & Bakkagerði

The flight over Iceland from Reykjavík arrives in Egilsstaðir one of East Iceland's larger towns with a pop-

ulation of around only 2300 people. We will be waiting to transfer you to our accommodation. It is approximately a forty minutes drive over a mountain pass to the tiny village of Bakkagerði. A scenic pass takes us up close to the snow streaked Dyrfjöll Mountains before dropping dramatically downwards towards the sea to eventually to arrive in Bakkagerði our base for the next three nights. We stay in divinely positioned accommodation that has some lovely hot tubs overlooking the fjord.

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. We will concentrate on photographing birds in the landscape, the Puffin and Kittiwake colonies here are particularly easy to access. There will be nesting Eider Ducks, Whimbrels, Black tail Godwit, Ptarmigan and quite often rafts of Harlequin Duck. There are many unusually shaped mountains providing a superb back drop to vast Lupin fields. A stronghold of elves and the Hidden People, the 'Elf' mountain Álfaborg in the village provides a great all round viewpoint.



Our tutors will be helping you to capture the birds in a creative way whilst making sure that you have a full grasp of the technical skills required for bird photography. 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 examples of their own work for inspiration.

Hotel Bakkagerði (B,L,D)

Note: Wild Photography Holidays services commence with an early morning flight from Reykjavík to Egilsstaðir. The hotel in Reykjavík the night before the tour starts is not included in the price. You will need to arrive in Reykjavík on the day before this flight. The domestic airport is only a short taxi ride from the city. The time of this flight will be confirmed by the office when you book.

Days 3,4: Húsey Farm

Following an early morning photography session we will have breakfast before heading over a very scenic mountain pass before dropping down to sea-level (The Greenland Sea) and Húsey Horse Farm. Húsey is north of



Egilsstaðir and located between 2 rivers; Jökulsá á Brú and the glacial river Lagarfljót. Húsey's remote location offers wonderful panoramic views of the surrounding mountains and opportunities to experience Iceland's unspoiled nature including seals together with many exciting species of bird including Great Skua, Arctic Skua, Red Throated Diver, Arctic Tern, Whooper Swan and a wide variety of small waders. In our opinion this is one of Iceland's best kept bird secrets.

If any of our guests enjoy horse riding then this is the place where you can ride a characterful Icelandic horse on a small group outing. The sunsets on the vast black sand beach can be spectacular and the ocean pools are often frequented by large numbers of Red Throated Diver and Great Skua.

Húsey Farm (B,L,D)

Days 5,6: Raufarhöfn

This morning after breakfast we have a scenic drive ahead to the most northerly village on mainland Iceland. We will be heading to Raufarhöfn fishing village in Northeast Iceland close to the Melrakkaslétta area, home to Arctic Fox and Ptarmigan. The actual drive is around 3.5 hours, but the coastal landscape is so unique that we will no doubt be taking our time to photograph en route. One of our main locations from Raufarhöfn will be Rauðinúpur Cape an exceedingly isolated location and very little visited. Leaving our vehicle close to a farm our first encounter will be with the Arctic Tern who will be busy feeding their young and aggressively defending their patch. We might spot Long Tail Ducks on the nearby

lake. A delightful stroll along the seashore will take us to a path leading to the top of a cliff where we will encounter all manner of seabirds including Puffin, Guillemot, Cormorant and Razorbill. Close to Rauðinúpur lighthouse are two dramatic sea-stacks populated by nesting Gannets. Most of Iceland's Gannet colonies that can be accessed by walking are found in the very far north of the island. At this time of year the sun just about drops down over the horizon around 23:45.

Hotel Raufarhöfn (B,L,D)

Day 7,8: Dalvík and Hrísey

Today we have a 3 hour drive to our hotel in Dalvík located on the edge of Eyjafjörður. En route we will visit the northerly town of Húsavík. Here there will be options for morning activities including a whale watching tour or a



visit to a fabulous spa pool right next to a lighthouse and located at the top of a cliff overlooking the ocean. For those guests needing a bird fix we have a couple of locations around Húsavík where it will be possible to see a variety of pool based birds including the Slavonian Grebe, Black headed Gull, Whooper Swan, Arctic Tern and Great Northern Diver. We will have lunch in Húsavík before driving on to Dalvík.

After our evening meal we will take a walk along the black sand beach and the sand dunes where nesting Eider Ducks can be found. Harlequin Ducks are often seen on fast-flowing reaches of the river. We will also photograph around the coastal end of the nature reserve around Lake Hrísatjörn where there are possibly one or two pairs of nesting Black Throated Diver. The Slavonian Grebe and Whooper Swan breed here too. At the east of Hrísatjörn there is a hide.

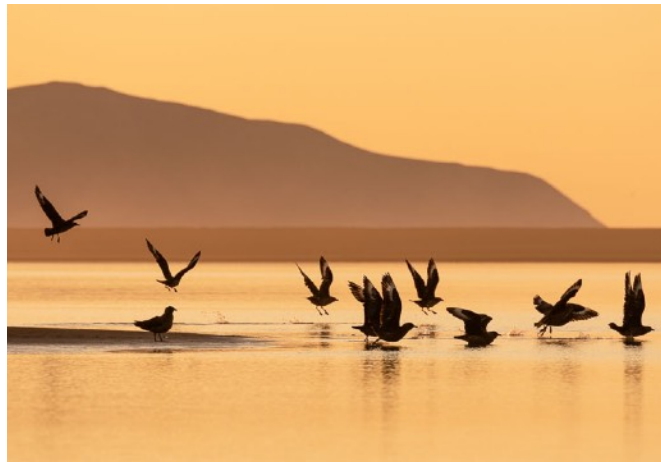
On our second morning we will take a leisurely drive along the fjord to visit various bird locations before returning to Dalvík for lunch. Mid afternoon we will take the ferry for the 15 minute sailing to the tiny

island of Hrísey. Around 40 bird species nest in Hrísey, 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 Hrísey, although it is hunted elsewhere in Iceland. Waders have dense breeding colonies and the Black Guillemot are particularly prolific in the harbour where they nest in the rocks. Weather permitting we will hope to enjoy the evening light and to return on the last ferry at 23:30.

Hotel Dalvík (B,L,D)

Day 9 – 11: Grímsey

This morning we take the 09:00 ferry (3 hrs) to Grímsey Island where we'll be staying for three nights. The ferry journey is a fine opportunity to see some stunning vistas of North Iceland, and often we 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 inside the Arctic Circle. The north Atlantic current brings some warmth from the Gulf Stream, 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 depending on

numbers some guests will share a room. We will have the whole house for ourselves. Grímsey is the only place in Iceland located actually inside 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 12: Grímsey & Akureyri

We will have the whole morning to continue our exploration of Grímsey before taking the 14:00 sailing for Dalvík. From here we will make the short journey to Akureyri and guests will have a couple of hours to explore this attractive capital of the north before we drive the short distance to our last night hotel close to the domestic airport where we will enjoy a final dinner together.

Hotel Akureyri (B,L,D)

Day 13: Homeward Flights

Following breakfast we will transfer you to the local airport for a flight back to Reykjavík. WPH services finish at this point and depending on the time of your homeward flight you may need to book a hotel for an extra night in Reykjavík. (B)

JOINING ARRANGEMENTS AND TRANSFERS

There will be one single transfer meeting the recommended flight in Egilsstaðir. 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 a first flight to Egilsstaðir from Reykjavík's domestic airport. You will need to be at the airport at the latest 40 mins before the flight departs. If you prefer to stay in Reyk-



javík the night before this flight, we can arrange a hotel for you, although this is not included in the price of the holiday. The flight to Egilsstaðir 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 from Keflavík International Airport takes

about forty five minutes. On Day 13 the group will fly back to Reykjavík after breakfast on the morning 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 late 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 your hotel. Please let our office know in advance which hotel you will be staying at, so we can order your Flybus ticket.

WHAT'S INCLUDED

- 12 nights accommodation
- Flights Reykjavík – Egilsstaðir (Day 1)
- Flights Akureyri – Reykjavík (Day 13)
- Flybus transfers to/from Reykjavík
- All meals
- Ferry to Grímsey and Hrísey
- Photographic tuition

WHAT'S NOT INCLUDED

- International flights
- Drinks and snacks extra to meals

- Alcoholic beverages
- Whale watching tour
- Travel insurance

ACCOMMODATION

We will be using a variety of accommodation. Our accommodations are chosen for their locations and proximity to great birdlife and landscapes. Borgarfjörður Eystri Hotel/Spa with private rooms/facilities overlooking the Ocean, Húsey Farm is a hostel where we stay in various rooms, some may be single and some shared. All are with shared bathrooms. In Raufarhöfn we stay in a hotel overlooking the Ocean, private rooms and facilities. In Grímsey we stay in a large house very close to the bird cliffs. We will have shared rooms/bathrooms. In Dalvík we stay in a Hotel with private bathrooms. In Akureyri we will stay in a comfortable hotel with private rooms and facilities surrounded by trees close to the domestic airport and fairly close to the city centre.



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. There are government run alcohol stores in the major towns and most places where we eat 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. Please check with your insurance company that cover extends to Iceland.

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 nationals.

LANGUAGE

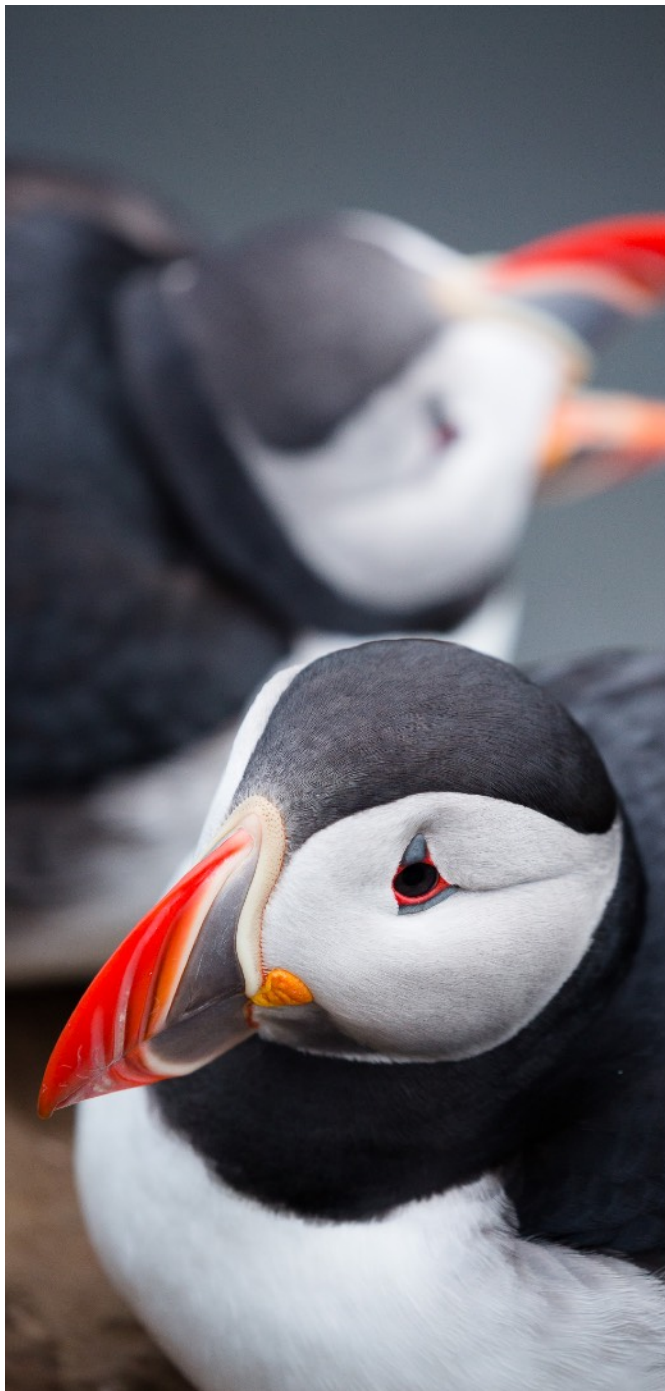
Icelanders speak Icelandic. They also tend to speak rather good English.

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

The best solution to temperature control is to have a number of layers available from lightweight thermal un-



derwear 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 – 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](#)