



The Isle of Islay Wildlife Experience

Monday 9th - Friday 13th March 2026

OVERVIEW

- Led by Ewan Miles & Theo de Clermont
- Five days all inclusive professional guidance, vehicle transport, food, accommodation and ferry fares.
- We will showcase the island's incredible biodiversity which includes 50,000 wintering Geese, Chough, White-tailed Eagle, Golden Eagle, Otter, Peregrine, Hen Harrier, Short-eared Owl, Merlin and many other wintering birds.
- We'll explore a broad range of habitats including wetland, coastal, oceanic, estuarine, beach, dune, mountain and moorland.
- Our home on Islay will be a large traditional house, surrounded by natural beauty.
- Home cooked breakfasts (4 mornings) and packed lunches (4 days), and visits to local pubs/restaurants and home cooked meals on the evening (4 evenings).
- We'll visit the RSPB's wonderful nature reserves, Loch Gruinart and the Oa.
- You'll have access to optional Stargazing Experiences in the evenings (weather dependent).



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Day One – Welcome & Island Crossing

The tour starts on the mainland at Kennacraig. We will meet at **12noon** for an introduction before boarding the 1pm ferry for the crossing to the island of Islay. While on board the MV Hebridean Isles - Eileanan Innse Gall we will search for **Otter, Harbour Porpoise, Bottlenose Dolphin, Black Guillemot, Great Northern, Black-throated and Red-throated Diver, Golden Eagle, White-tailed Eagle** and more.

Once we arrive at Port Askaig (3pm) we'll spend the mid-afternoon covering some beautiful coastal areas on the east of the Isle (Bunnahabhain) and checking some freshwater lochs inland before making our way to the house for our first relaxing evening in our Hebridean home for the next five days.

Day Two – Wildfowl Wonderland

We'll start the day by checking the geese around Loch Indaal which can be productive for **Barnacle Geese, Greenland White-fronted Geese, Greylag Geese** and the obscure species like Small Canada, Pale-bellied Brent and even Snow Geese in some years. Depending on the tide we will also look out for wading species around the shoreline. A scan of the deeper waters can produce sea duck which include **Scaup, Common Scoter and Long-tailed Duck. Slavonian Grebe** winter here along with **Great-Northern Divers** in the sheltered sea lochs.

Working our way into the afternoon we'll head down to the very tranquil Portnahaven to search for **Grey Seals** and any accompanying water-based birds. There is the potential to see all raptors large and small as we continue our search around Loch Gorm and Machir Bay into the evening period.



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Day Three – Chough and Raptors

We will visit **RSPB's Loch Gruinart** nature reserve to check for wildfowl along with the patrolling raptors like Peregrine, Merlin and Hen Harrier, completing the ecosystem. Later on we will drive to Ardnave which is a sand dune system in the north west of the island, we'll search the area for the local **Chough** flock and look out for the wintering finch flocks which often include Twite and Snow Buntings. During the optional coastal walk we'll look for **Purple Sandpiper** and **Turnstone** and search out over Nave Island for **White-tailed Eagles** and much more. Ardnave Loch holds wintering Wigeon and we may find a 'Yank' as American Wigeon and Ring-billed Duck have been found in recent years.

Day Four – Seascapes and Solitude

We'll venture to the South of the isle to the RSPB's other magnificent nature reserve, The Oa. Here we'll enjoy a circular walk to cover the diverse habitats on the peninsula and search for species including **Golden Eagles, Merlin, Peregrine, Chough, Hen Harrier, Snow Bunting, Twite** and much more. We will visit an impressive American Monument commemorating two American troop ships which sank off Islay in WW1. From this view point we'll take in

wonderful seascapes out to the Rhinns of Islay, mainland Kintyre and beyond to Rathlin Island and Northern Ireland.

After our packed lunch we'll head to Kintra for a look at the open mouth of Loch Indaal and the stunning six mile stretch of white-sand beach. While immersing in more spectacular scenery we will look out for wildfowl and check local raptor territories.



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Day Five – Morning Exploration & Return Crossing

On the final morning of the experience we will spend a few hours around the south eastern parts (Ardbeg and Ardmore) observing the mixed woodlands on the more sheltered parts of Islay. We will also monitor the coastline for **Otters** and any other water-based wildlife.

On the return crossing from Port Askaig (15:30 ferry) we will have another chance to see coastal and oceanic species from the ferry before we arrive back to Kennacraig (17:25) and say our goodbyes.

£1395 per person

- * There is £100 extra cost for single occupancy.
- * Please note that the winter timetable is not released yet so return ferry crossings may be subject to change.
- * On booking please advise of any special requirements medical or dietary.
- * Easy going walks of 1-5km will be undertaken.
- * Walks are optional, stay close to the vehicle with one of the guides if not undertaking the walks.
- * Towels / Hair dryer available at the accommodation.