



ATLANTIC PUFFINS

ICELAND

Birding in the Land of Fire and Ice

9 DAYS | Choose your dates | Best season to travel: **MAY - JUN**

Explore the birds of Iceland on a journey to the land of fire and ice. This 9 day birding adventure offers both expert and novice birding enthusiasts a comprehensive introduction to Icelandic breeding and non-breeding bird populations. From the waterfowl of Lake Mývatn to the iconic Atlantic Puffins, the program provides opportunities to observe a wide variety of species including auks, petrels, cormorants, gannets, gulls, terns, waders, stilts, and birds of prey. This program includes visits to some of the country's unique geological features, plus hikes and boating adventures designed to enrich your understanding of the natural history and diverse birds of Iceland.

PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS

- Visit the home of half of the world's population of Atlantic Puffin.
- Discover how Iceland's avifauna has adapted to environments including volcanic systems, freshwater systems, and marine environments.
- Follow the fjords of northwest Iceland and see the majestic cliffs iconic to Iceland's rich seabird population.
- Observe Black-legged Kittiwake, Thick-billed Murre, Arctic Tern, and Red-throated Loons.
- Navigate Breiðafjörður Bay for up-close views of Great Cormorants, European Shags, and Atlantic Puffins.
- Marvel at Dettifoss Waterfall, the most powerful waterfall in Europe.

WHAT'S INCLUDED?

- Bilingual local guide
- Driver
- Accommodations
- Activities
- Private transportation
- Meals
- Beverages with meals
- Carbon offsetting



PHOTO BY HELGI GUDMUNDSSON

ITINERARY

BLD = BREAKFAST, LUNCH, DINNER

DAY 1 - REYKJAVÍK

Upon arrival at the Keflavík International Airport, transfer via flybus to your hotel in Reykjavík. Buses are located right outside the terminal building. Check-in starts at 3 pm. Begin exploring the city and observe Redwings and Common Redpolls. Visits to nearby ponds should yield abundant Arctic Terns that breed by the side of the road. Lesser Black-backed Gulls also gather here in good numbers. Dinner and orientation at the hotel this evening. *Overnight at Hotel Holt or similar. (BD)*

DAY 2 - LAKE MÝVATN

Fly to Akureyri. The journey to Lake Mývatn includes a stop at a plantation in hopes of finding Goldcrests and a visit to the famous Godafoss Waterfall. Later enjoy close-up views of the Harlequin Duck on the River Laxá as it flows out of Lake Mývatn. Red-necked Phalarope often spin on the river and feed on emerging flies, while Whimbrel and Golden Plover live in the surrounding moorlands. Also scan the lake for some of its 14 Icelandic breeding duck species, such as the Black Scoter, Barrow's Goldeneye, Tufted Duck, Eurasian Wigeon, and Greater Scaup. *Overnight at Sel Hotel Myvatn or similar. (BLD)*

DAY 3 - LAKE MÝVATN

Continue exploration of Lake Mývatn area and visit to the Sigurgeir's Bird Museum, considered the largest known private bird collection in Iceland. The museum's bird collection contains specimens of almost all of the Icelandic breeding bird species. *Overnight at Sel Hotel Myvatn or similar. (BLD)*

DAY 4 - HÚSAVÍK

Today visit Dettifoss Waterfall, the most powerful waterfall in Europe, before driving further northeast. The area holds good numbers of breeding Purple Sandpipers, Arctic Terns, and Snow Buntings. With some luck you might come across Rock Ptarmigan or hunting Gyrfalcon. On the way to Húsavík, visit a big birch forest for the chance to encounter Eurasian Wigeons at very close range. At another site, scan the sea from a cliff top black with Atlantic Puffins for the opportunity to see Great Skuas fly by. *Overnight at Húsavík Cape Hotel or similar. (BLD)*

DAY 5 - GAUKSMÝRI

Embark from Húsavík for a morning whale watching tour. This site has produced both humpback and blue whales in recent years, along with the more common Minke Whale and White-beaked Dolphin. After lunch, drive west toward Gauksmýri, looking for Pink-footed Goose, Mew Gull, and the Icelandic Black-tailed Godwit along the way. If you're willing to stay up late, you may get a chance to see the Short-eared Owl. *Overnight at Gauksmýri Country Lodge or similar. (BLD)*

DAY 6 - LÁTRABJARG

Today is a long driving day toward the majestic seabird cliff Látrabjarg. Follow a number of fjords on the way, showing some of the highlights of the fantastic landscapes of northwest Iceland. Today's target species, the White-tailed Eagle, can be found in scattered pairs breeding in these fjords. An evening walk around your hotel should produce Red-throated Loons and the ever-present Arctic Tern, Common Redshank, and Common Snipe. *Overnight at Hotel Breiðavík or similar. (BLD)*

DAY 7 - FLATEY

Látrabjarg cliffs are Europe's largest bird cliffs and the continent's westernmost point. The numbers of auks flying by the cliff's end are simply overwhelming, with a constant stream of thousands of birds. Common and Thick-billed Murres are customary here, as well as the Razorbill. Atlantic Puffins nest on the edge of the cliff tops and can be approached within a hand's reach. The cliff is also filled with calling Black-legged Kittiwakes, while Northern Fulmars soar the skies along the cliffs. Snow Buntings are numerous in the moorland above the cliff, as are Common Ringed Plovers. In the afternoon, take the ferry across the Breiðafjörður Bay and stop at Flatey Island for an overnight stay. Birding on the island is a once-in-a-lifetime experience because the birds are surprisingly tame. Species include the abundant Black Guillemots on the shoreline, Red-necked Phalaropes, Common Redshanks, Meadow Pipits, and Redwings. With luck you may

even encounter the rare Red Phalarope, as Iceland is on the southern edge of its breeding distribution around the Arctic. *Overnight at Hotel Flatey or similar. (BLD)*

DAY 8 - GRUNDARFJORDUR

Continue birding this morning on Flatey Island before resuming the ferry crossing towards Stykkishólmur. In the afternoon take another boat trip around the islands of Breiðafjörður Bay, allowing close-up views of the Great Cormorants and European Shags that live among thousands of Atlantic Puffins nesting in the bay. Sometimes the White-tailed Eagle can also be seen here. *Overnight at Fosshotel Hellnar or similar. (BLD)*

DAY 9 - FAREWELL!

This morning observe Glaucous Gulls, numerous on the shores around your hotel. Prepare for your departure via flybus for your transfer to the airport for your flight back to the US. Check-out is at 11 am. *(BL)*



PHOTO BY ANDREA SCHAFFER

LAND PRICING

\$5,570 (12 participants + 1 leader)

\$6,045 (10 participants + 1 leader)

Price includes accommodations, meals, entrance fees, and activities as indicated in the itinerary, private transportation unless otherwise noted in itinerary, non-alcoholic beverages with meals, full-time guide for duration of program, and carbon offset.

International airfare, gratuities, alcoholic beverages, and items of a personal nature are not included.

Valid for travel in 2020.

TRAVEL PROTECTION

Holbrook Travel purchases Travel Protection on behalf of all participants traveling in 2018 or beyond. These plans help provide coverage once the trip has departed and offer benefits for Baggage/Personal Effects, Accident & Sickness Medical Expenses, Emergency Evacuation and more. Refer to the Plan Document for more details.

Optional additional coverage is available in the form of the Group Deluxe Plan, which offers benefits for Trip Cancellation/Interruption, in addition to many other insurance benefits and non-insurance assistance services. If interested in this optional plan, we can provide you with rates and plan details.

THE FINE PRINT

A \$200 per person deposit and enrollment form is due upon booking and no later than four months prior to departure. This deposit is refundable until 95 days prior to departure excluding a \$100 cancellation fee. Final payments are due no later than 95 days prior to departure. Cancellations received less than 95 days prior to departure are not refundable.