

Birdwatching on the Isles of Scilly – Trip Itinerary

2025

Operated by Wildlife Tours & Education

Thursday 2nd October to Thursday 9th October 2025

£2378

This is a trip focusing on seeking out migratory birds.

Departure is from Norfolk early morning of 2nd October and drop off is in Norfolk late evening 9th October. Pick up and drop off 'en-route' can be arranged.

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| Day 1 | Arrive Cornwall. |
| Day 2 | Sail to Isles of Scilly |
| Day 3 to 6 | Visit to various Islands around the Archipelago |
| Day 7 | Sail to Penzance |
| Day 8 | Drive back to Norfolk dropping off en route |
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Grey Catbird seen in Cornwall – a very rare bird indeed on this side of the Atlantic.

Although we will endeavour to follow our planned programme due to bad weather and other considerations this is not always possible. You can rest assured that any alterations to our planned itinerary will be made to make maximum use of our time and weather conditions.

Overview

This is a unique tour visiting the very beautiful Isles of Scilly. Stunning sea cliffs and beaches will be the backdrop for our search for birds on migration.

We shall concentrate on finding vagrant birds that so often congregate in this part of the world during late September and October.

Day 1 - Thursday

On our way to Cornwall, picking up party members en route, we may well have the chance to call in at locations to see a rarity or scarce resident birds such as Gull Bunting or Chough. We arrive at our overnight accommodation in Penzance. Situated a stone throw from the famous Cornish Valleys and Hayle Estuary, there may be the opportunity to see if the areas holds any migratory birds before our trip offshore the following day or upon our return at the end of our stay. The rooms in our accommodation are comfortable and we will take our evening meal in Penzance.

Day 2 - Friday

Our sailing will take a few hours but will give us the chance to catch up with some truly pelagic species such as Sooty and Cory's Shearwaters as well as a chance encounter with cetaceans. Once we have landed we'll arrive at our very comfortable hotel and the rest of the day we will probably spend on St Mary's but this is dependent upon where the best birdwatching is to be found. We will then retire as we will each evening to our hotel for our evening meal.

Day 3 - Saturday to Day 6 – Tuesday

Siberian vagrants as well as British and European breeding birds are all funnelled down the British Isles coastline as they head south and inevitably end up congregating within Cornwall and more likely the Isles of Scilly; the final piece of land before they venture out to sea. We will also have the chance to see any other wildlife we come across during our stay such as Minke Whales and Dolphins.

Additionally, we also have the chance to see and maybe even find for ourselves a rare American vagrant that has made landfall having been swept across the Atlantic by a fast-moving depression. The Isles of Scilly is THE place within the UK where this is possible. Literally anything can turn up here.

During the last couple of years many, many rare birds have turned up on the archipelago as well as commoner and scarce species that are far too many to list.



Red eyed Vireo – A not too infrequent Autumn visitor to the Isles of Scilly from the Americas

If this doesn't get your mouth watering nothing will!

Each day we will be venturing out around the islands after breakfast and call at a local cafe or restaurant for lunch or maybe a picnic lunch from the local shops. Catching a boat from the quay in Hugh Town or making our way around St Mary's we will walk footpaths and beaches the like of which you will not find anywhere else in the world. The islands are steeped in history, are truly, truly beautiful and contain unique flora as well as fauna.



Common Rosefinch we found on St Martins



Buff breasted Sandpiper a scarce USA visitor more frequent in September than October

Our hotel is located within Hugh Town on St Mary's. The Scillies is composed of many islands but the other islands we may visit are:

Tresco: The home of the famous gardens.

St Martins: A large open island to the north complete with a patchwork of fields.

St Agnes and Gugh: Two islands connected by a sand bar that is passable at low tide. St Agnes is the most easterly island and the home of the famous Turks Head Pastie!

Bryher: A small island to the west of Tresco.

Our detailed itinerary will depend upon where the birds are being found and on one or two evenings we may visit the 'Bird Log Call' to find out what others are seeing.

Day 7 – Wednesday

Sadly, we must make our way back to the mainland on the Scillonian Ferry. It is rare I make any promises however I can guarantee you will be sad to leave the Isles of Scilly. Again, there will be an opportunity to see some pelagic species before we dock in Penzance where we spend another night in our B&B accommodation.

Day 8 – Thursday

Depending upon time available we may well have time to find search either the Cornish Valleys or other Cornish sites such as Marazion Marsh a reedbed reserve nearby that has held American Waders and Bittern as well as scarce Warblers and Ducks ... the list is endless. We will then continue our onward journey to Norfolk dropping off en route and maybe calling in at a suitable location or two to catch up with any rarities. We hope to arrive back in Norfolk during the evening.

This tour is ideal for photographers.

What is included?

The services of a guide that has been to the Isles of Scilly during over 20 previous migration seasons.

All evening meals and breakfasts with the exception of your evening meal on day 1 and 7 taken in Penzance and day 8 taken as we travel home.

Transport to and from Norfolk and pick up en route at suitable locations.

Return sailing to the Isles of Scilly and transport of your baggage to and from Hotel/Quay on St Mary's.

Up to three return boat trips to the outer islands.

Accommodation is in en suite rooms.

A single room supplement of £210 is payable although sharing can be arranged on most occasions.

What is not included?

All drinks with meals and items of a personal nature.

Lunches with the exception of lunch on day 1

Further notes.

We will be walking each day although we will be taking our time to explore areas thoroughly during our time on the islands.

Please bring with you photographic ID in case we have to fly off/onto the island.

It is possible to arrange to fly to/from the Isles of Scilly rather than sail but this would incur a premium charge.

Group Size.

Maximum usually 4 plus tour leader

How to Book

Please telephone 07833 463 034 or 01263 576 995 at a time convenient to yourself or email carl@wildlifetoursandeducation.co.uk

Carl Chapman



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Ortolan Bunting – a regular autumn vagrant on the Isles of Scilly.



It's not all about birds. This photograph of a Common Dolphin was taken on our return journey to Penzance. They are regular each year. Just one of four species of cetacean often seen around the islands.



Dotterel taken on St Martins