



BIRDING TOUR ICELAND: VIKING BIRDING

10 - 18 JUNE 2018



King Eider (photo Jari Peltomäki) is one of our targets on this trip.

Iceland, thanks to its remote location and harsh winters, has a relatively small population, leaving vast parts of this island nation untouched. Some amazing scenery of glaciers, volcanic peaks, steep cliffs, waterfalls, and steaming geysers make this an amazing panorama for a birding destination. Along with the stunning scenery you find a host of Eurasian breeding birds that make this place home for the summer. With abundant, almost constant sunlight during the middle of summer, the birds are active all day. Observing cliffs packed with breeding alcids and gulls is an amazing sight. Along with breeding plumage in many shorebirds and loons, which are often only seen in their drab winter plumage further south, this makes for a true birders' and photographers' paradise. Not to mention that off Húsavík exists some of the best whale watching in Europe! With a major ring road circling the country, we'll take time along its breadth to take in many stunning birds – not only from vehicles but also from several boats and even a tractor.

Please note that the detailed itinerary below cannot be guaranteed as it is only a rough guide and can be changed (usually slightly) due to factors such as availability of accommodation, updated information on the state of accommodation, roads, or birding sites, the discretion of the guides and other factors.

Itinerary (9 days/8 nights)

Day 1. Arrival

We'll arrive at Reykjavík-Keflavík International Airport and spend the night in Reykjavík.
Overnight: Reykjavík

Day 2. Hafnaberg, Reykjavík boat trip, Seltjarnarnes

We'll spend the morning visiting the cliffs at Hafnaberg for species like **Common** and **Thick-billed Murre**. There will also be loads of **Black-legged Kittiwake** and **Arctic Tern**, plus **Great Cormorant**, **European Shag**, **Razorbill**, **Black Guillemot**, and **Northern Fulmar**. We might also see **Common Eider** and **Great Northern Loon** floating out at sea. From here we'll head to Reykjavík for a boat trip to see the **Atlantic Puffin** colony there. Hundreds of these colorful birds go to and fro from their colony, and close views are almost guaranteed. There are also chances to see **Common Eider**, **Northern Fulmar**, **Common Murre**, and **Lesser Black-backed** and **Black-headed Gulls**.

After the boat tour we'll drive to Seltjarnarnes, where we can pick up some duck species like **Common Eider**, **Tufted Duck**, **Greater Scaup**, **Greylag Goose**, and **Whooper Swan**. Shorebirds like **Eurasian Oystercatcher**, **Common Redshank**, **Common Ringed** and **European Golden Plovers**, **Ruddy Turnstone**, **Purple Sandpiper**, and **Red-necked Phalarope** can all be seen here.

Overnight: Reykjavík

Day 3. Flatey Island

We'll drive up to Stykkisshólmur to catch the ferry to Flatey Island. Around the docks we should see plenty of **Common Eider**, **Arctic Tern**, **Common Murre**, **Atlantic Puffin**, and loads of larids like **Glaucous**, **Great Black-backed**, **Black-headed**, and **European Herring Gulls**, plus plenty of **Black-legged Kittiwake**. From the ferry we have a chance for **Parasitic Jaeger**.

When we arrive at Flatey Island we'll have the chance to look around for our main target, **Red Phalarope**. This is one of the few places they breed in Iceland, and though the breeding area is closed during the breeding season, there is still a good chance to find them in the area.

Flatey also provides us with the opportunity to see the much more common **Red-necked Phalarope** plus other shorebirds like **European Golden Plover**, **Ruddy Turnstone**, **Common Snipe**, **Dunlin**, and **Common Ringed Plover**. This area is also good for **Snow Bunting** and **Meadow Pipit**.

From Flatey we'll catch the afternoon ferry to Breiðafjörður and drive to Breiðavík for the night.

Overnight: Breiðavík

Day 4. Látrabjarg and Blönduós

Today we'll visit the amazing Látrabjarg, the famous bird cliffs. Here thousands of breeding seabirds mass along the cliffs, creating a huge racket as they jostle for position along the cliff face. Huge numbers of **Common Murre** and to a lesser extent **Thick-billed Murre** and **Razorbill** breed alongside **Black-legged Kittiwake** and **Black Guillemot**. **Glaucous Gull**, **European Shag**, and **Great Cormorant** also squeeze in here among their noisy neighbors.

Once we've taken in this spectacle we'll head for Blönduós. This town is the halfway point of our journey eastwards, and the river here provides some great birding, with species like **Common** and sometimes **King Eider**, **Red-breasted Merganser**, and **Red-throated Loon** seen around here, along with **Northern Wheatear**, **Meadow Pipit**, **Dunlin**, **Eurasian Oystercatcher**, **European Golden Plover**, **Black-headed Gull**, and **Parasitic Jaeger**.

Overnight: Blönduós

Day 5. Húsavík and Lake Mývatn

Today we'll set off early and continue east to Húsavík, where we'll take a whale-watching tour into the bay. Here we'll also have a chance to see plenty of **Atlantic Puffin** at another Flatey Island (no relation). There is also a massive **Arctic Tern** breeding colony here, plus **Black Guillemot**, **Purple Sandpiper**, **Dunlin**, **Common Redshank**, **Red-necked Phalarope**, and **Snow Bunting**. **Great Skua** and **Parasitic Jaeger** are also found from the boat, and **Long-tailed Duck**, **Common Scoter**, and **Common Eider** are often seen here too.

After our boat ride we'll head south to Lake Mývatn. This is the center of duck habitat in Iceland. **Greylag Goose**, **Whooper Swan**, **Gadwall**, **Barrow's Goldeneye**, **Red-breasted Merganser**, **Eurasian Wigeon**, **Harlequin Duck**, **Northern Shoveler**, **Common Pochard**, **Green-winged Teal**, **Long-tailed Duck**, **Greater Scaup**, and **Common Scoter** have all been seen here. There is also a good chance for **Great Northern** and **Red-throated Loons**, **Horned Grebe**, **Gyrfalcon**, **Parasitic Jaeger**, **Redwing**, **Common Redpoll**, **Black-tailed Godwit**, **Dunlin**, **European Golden Plover**, and **Northern Wheatear**.

Overnight: Mývatn

Day 6. Dettifoss waterfall, Bakkagerði

We'll spend the morning around Lake Mývatn before heading to Dettifoss, an amazing waterfall in Vatnajökull National Park. This is the largest waterfall in Iceland and reputed to be the most powerful waterfall in Europe.

From here we'll head to the coastal village of Bakkagerði to visit the **Atlantic Puffin** colony here. This is one of the most approachable colonies in Iceland, and you'll be able to get close-up views of these fantastic creatures. There are also other good birds around here, like **Whimbrel**, **European Golden Plover**, **Common Eider**, **Redwing**, and **Great Black-backed Gull**.

Overnight: Bakkagerði

Day 7. Jökulsárlón and Ingólfshöfði Nature Reserve

Today we'll head south along the southern coast of Iceland. We'll have another chance early this morning to visit the **Atlantic Puffin** colony before we drive along the south coast. We'll stop at Jökulsárlón to see the icebergs floating in the bay, along with species like **Barnacle Goose, Great** and **Parasitic Jaegers**, and **Snow Bunting**.

Then we'll be heading to Ingólfshöfði Nature Reserve. We'll take a tractor across the black sand beach to visit this small headland. Both **Atlantic Puffin** and **Great Skua** breed here, along with thousands of **Common Murre, Razorbill**, and **Black-legged Kittiwake**, as well as **Northern Fulmar**. There is also a good chance here for **Snow Bunting**.

From here we will drive to Vík í Mýrdal, the southernmost village in Iceland.

Overnight: Vík í Mýrdal

Day 8. Flói Nature Reserve, Gulfoss, Geysir, Þingvellir National Park

This morning we'll visit two amazing waterfalls on our way to Flói Nature Reserve. The reclaimed marsh/bog/estuary that exists here today is one of the best spots to see **Red-throated Loon**. It was saved by Fuglavernd, BirdLife Iceland, and is home to breeding shorebirds like **Whimbrel, Red-necked Phalarope**, and **Black-tailed Godwit**, as well as to ducks like **Common** and **Red-breasted Mergansers, Tufted Duck, Eurasian Wigeon**, and to **Whooper Swan**.

After our morning birding here we'll head north to Gulfoss to see the stunning waterfall here, then on to Geysir to see the hot spires of steam erupting from the earth. We'll make our way back to Reykjavík through the Þingvellir National Park, where we'll have a chance for **Rock Ptarmigan, European Golden Plover, Redwing, Meadow Pipit, Northern Wheatear**, and **Common Redpoll**, as well as other marine nesting birds. We'll arrive in Reykjavík in time for our farewell dinner.

Overnight: Reykjavík

Day 9. Departure

Today we transfer to Reykjavík-Keflavík International Airport for our flights home.

Duration:	9 days
Limit:	4 – 8
Date:	10 – 18 June 2018
Start:	Reykjavík
End:	Reykjavík
Price:	£3062 assuming 6 – 8 participants, £3463 assuming 4 – 5 participants
Single supplement:	£650

Price includes:

- Meals
- Accommodation
- Guiding fees
- Entrance fees
- All transport while on tour
- Bottled water throughout the tour

Price excludes:

- International flights
- Items of a personal nature, e.g. gifts

Drinks
Laundry
Personal insurance
Gratuities