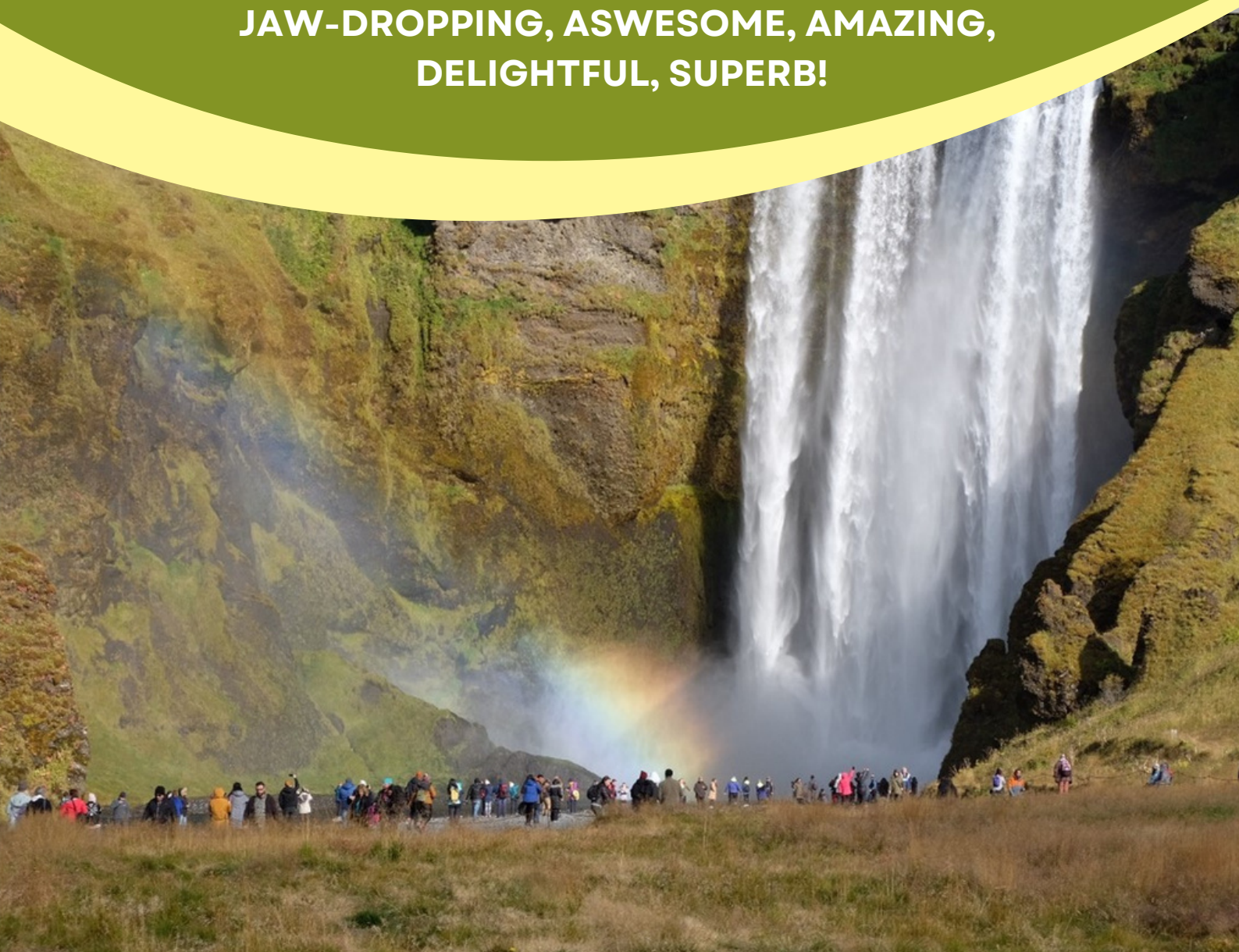


Iceland Birding and Photography Tour 2024

Sunday June 9th to Monday June 17th 2024

ICELAND IS...

JAW-DROPPING, ASWESOME, AMAZING,
DELIGHTFUL, SUPERB!



Yes, Iceland is all that! And more. Here's what...

- Barrow's Goldeneye and Harlequin Duck at their only breeding grounds in Europe
- White-tailed Eagles, Gyrfalcons, Merlins and Short-eared Owls
- Teeming seabird colonies with Atlantic Puffins, Thick-billed Murre (Brünnich's Guillemot), Black Guillemots and more
- Roadside Rock Ptarmigans, Arctic Terns, Common Loons (Great Northern Diver) and Horned (Slavonian) Grebes
- Spinning Red-necked and Grey Phalaropes
- Geese, swans, terns, skuas and ducks
- Mammals too – whales, seals and arctic foxes – as well as the very photogenic Icelandic horses.





So, Iceland is cool. Here's why this tour could be for you, and your partner:

- Abundant opportunities for bird, mammal and landscape photographers “on the go”.
- Good accommodation and food (see our note below about the hotel ratings).
- A well-planned and tried itinerary.
- Domestic flight Akureyri - Reykjavik to save a long, tiresome return drive on the last day.
- Extras such as the ferry to the pretty island of Flatey, a whale-watching excursion and courtesy Reykjavik airport hotel transfer included in the price.
- Scenery like you've never seen before.

We at *Birding In Spain* are respected professionals in the bird tour business and have been guiding for more years than this century has to its name so far.

We always seek out good accommodation, food and transport and always work hard to put together the best itinerary, maximising contact with birds and nature without sacrificing comfort and fun, and minimizing driving time as much as possible.

Look at the price - yes, Iceland is indeed an expensive country - then look at what we offer you for that. Quality. Care. Professionalism. Service.

We're not going to cut any corners to make sure that your Iceland Tour is an experience you'll be happy to remember for many years.

**Small group tour only! Don't miss out!
Ask us for more information now!**

Contact Steve or Florinda at info@birdinginspain.com
or phone us at +34 973 210757.

THE ITINERARY

Day 0. Saturday June 8th 2024

Arrival at Keflavik International Airport. Free courtesy transfer from airport to Reykjavik (Keflavik) airport hotel/guesthouse (transfer only; hotel not included in the price).

Day 1. Sunday June 9th

From Keflavik to Hella

We'll set off together in the morning, keen to get to grips with some of the special birds of Iceland and to take in miles of its **amazing scenery**. Brief stops at coastal and roadside ponds should help us do that: here we may find birds such as the Common Loon (Great Northern Diver), **Glaucous and Iceland Gulls**, Whooper Swan, Common Eider, Common Ringed Plover, Common Redshank, Eurasian Oystercatcher, **Purple Sandpiper**, and European Golden Plover.

We do a spot of sea watching at the **Gardur peninsula** where, with a little luck we may see **Manx Shearwater** and Northern Gannet and maybe even the **European Storm Petrel**, among others.

We will then continue at our own speed across the eye-opening Reykjanes Peninsula with its huge expanses of lava, past inlets, dunes, villages, beaches and coastal lagoons until we reach our destination near **Hella**.



THE ITINERARY

Day 2. Monday June 10th

Southern Iceland

Today we will reach the southern tip of Iceland at **Vík**, where furious waves crash and roll onto a striking **black sand beach**. Hereabouts we'll be visiting scenic rocky headlands and cliffs, riverbanks, waterfalls - **Skogafoss** is one in particular that should not be missed - and rough pastures: the scenery is impossible to ignore. We'll also get a glimpse of our first **Icelandic glacier** - Eyjafjöll - and some birds too: perhaps Merlin, **Short-eared Owl**, Atlantic Puffin, **Red-throated Diver**, Arctic Skua, Northern Fulmar, Pink-footed Goose, and more.



Day 3. Tuesday June 11th

Past Reykjavik to the Snaefellness peninsula

It's a fair drive to our next hotel at **Stykkisholmur**, but what a drive! We'll be making a number of stops along the way. The first may be a placid

THE ITINERARY

lagoon not far from Reykjavik itself, where we could see our first **Slavonian (Horned) Grebes**, Greater Scaup and **Red-necked Phalarope**. In the vicinity of Borgarnes there are good chances for a number of new birds, such as Common Shelduck, Dunlin, Common Redshank, and the stunning Black-tailed Godwit. Then there are Arctic Terns and Whooper Swans, and in particular we'll be keeping a keen eye out for the enormous silhouette of the **White-tailed Eagle**.

Then we arrive at our hotel in an unbeatable location overlooking the harbour of Stykkishólmur, said to be the “**prettiest town in Iceland**”.



Day 4. Wednesday June 12th

Snaefellness Peninsula

Rock Ptarmigan, Northern Wheatear, **Snow Bunting**, Red-breasted Merganser, Tufted Duck and Common Eider are all birds which we could encounter on our drive to the western point of the Snaefellness Peninsula.

THE ITINERARY

At the coastal cliffs we can spend some time getting to grips with the range of Alcids such as Atlantic Puffin, Common Murre (Common Guillemot), **Thick-billed Murre** (Brünnich's Guillemot), Razorbill, and **Black Guillemot**. Northern Fulmars are very conspicuous, as are Black-legged Kittiwakes, and we could also see Glaucous Gull, European Shag, Red-throated and Common Loon (Diver). Nevertheless, perhaps the biggest thrill of the day will be spotting our first group of **Harlequin Duck** surfing the waves, or even a scurrying **Arctic Fox**.

To complete the circuit of the peninsula we scout along its southern edge, where we may encounter both **Common and Grey Seals**, before returning to our welcoming accommodation at Stykkisholmur.



Day 5. Thursday June 13th

Flatey Island return trip and Stykkisholmur Bay

Stykkisholmur is like a little placid haven concealed in the ruggedness of Iceland. The surrounds of the harbour are worth birding for Black Guillemot, Purple Sandpiper, White-tailed Eagle, among others, and it is

THE ITINERARY

from here we catch the ferry for a return trip to **Flatey Island**. Flatey Island is widely thought of as one of Iceland's prettiest islands, something we will not argue with! Birds are tame and entertaining here, and amid the squeals of **Arctic Terns** and the drumming of Common Snipes we expect to get close views of Red-necked Phalarope, Snow Bunting, and with luck the rare and colourful **Red (Grey) Phalarope**.



Day 6. Friday June 14th

Stykkisholmur to Blonduós and the Skagi Peninsula

We leave the **Snaefellness Peninsula** today and head toward the capital of the north – Akureyri. However, we won't be arrive there today, and neither before we find some more birds! We have further chances at interesting species such as Rock Ptarmigan, Pink-footed Goose, Purple Sandpiper, **Long-tailed Duck**, and Iceland Gull, for example, and it is quite possible that we encounter the first **Gyrfalcon** of the tour, or the first Common Gull or Common Redpoll.

THE ITINERARY

By spending the night at **Blondüós** we have more time to explore the rewarding **Skagi Peninsula** to the north of this small town.



Day 7. Saturday June 15th

Whale-watching excursion and Akureyri

We continue our journey eastwards past glacial valleys toward the main treat of the day: a **Whale-watching** excursion which sets out into the fjord from a small village. If all goes according to plan the Skipper and First Mate will take us out of the harbour and to some wonderfully close encounters with a number of **Humpback Whales** which will be swimming around and feeding in small groups.

Want to try your hand at a bit of **cod fishing**? Now's your chance. On our two previous visits I managed to catch a cod both times!

Note: we actively choose this whale-watching operator because it's more personable, we avoid the crowds, and the skipper is more wildlife conscious than other operators we have seen operating out of Húsavík.



For the remainder of the day we will explore the fjord and inlets surrounding Akureyri.

THE ITINERARY

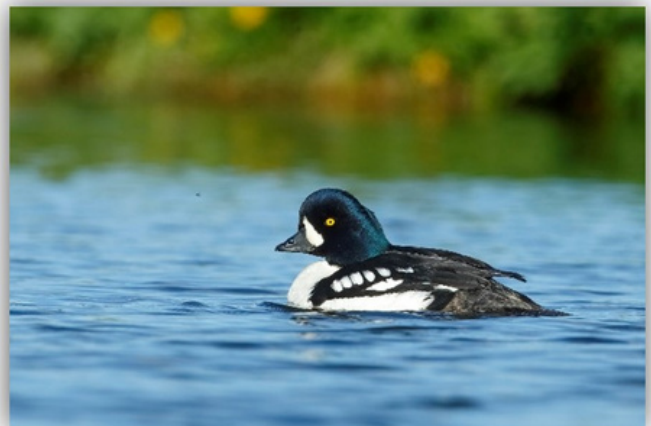
Day 8. Sunday June 16th

Myvatn Lake – a real bird hotspot

We believe that no birder can come to Iceland and really “do” Iceland without visiting **Myvatn Lake!** Why?

Well ... Gyr Falcon, and Short-eared Owl. A small population of **Long-tailed Jaegers** (Skuas) breeds in the vicinity. There are also **Barrow's Goldeneye**, Harlequin Duck, Long-tailed Duck, Tufted Duck, Eurasian Wigeon, Common Scoter, Common Pochard, Greater Scaup, Common Loon (Great Northern Diver), Red-necked Phalarope, and the possibilities of rarities such as American Wigeon, Lesser Scaup or Surf Scoter.

We also take in some of the magical geology of this area, including the **pseudo-craters**, volcanic cones and lava fields, steaming vents and **bubbling mud pots**. There'll be so much to see here that we shouldn't be bothered that this birdwatching paradise is also known as the “lake of midges!”



THE ITINERARY

Day 9. Monday June 17th

Domestic flight Akureyri - Reykjavik

Today we will take a domestic flight from Akureyri to return us to Reykjavik domestic airport the fast way, and from there a group taxi to Keflavik for those who desire. End of tour. Sadly, all good things must come to an end.



Price 4,275 euros
Single room supplement 1,075 euros

Don't miss out on this amazing tour.

CONTACT US!

info@birdinginspain.com

Look at what the price includes

- Whale-watching excursion from Hauganes
- Ferry from Stykkisholmur to Flatey
- Domestic flight Akureyri to Reykjavik
- All ground transfers for the duration of the tour in private vehicle, with fuel, parking and tolls included
- 8 nights hotel/guesthouse accommodation in double/twin en-suite room*, with Breakfast
- Picnic style/light lunches
- 2-course evening meals
- Drinking water and snacks available in the vehicle
- Services of professional guide(s) and all guide's expenses
- Free courtesy transfer from Reykjavik International Airport to nearby "airport" accommodation on day of arrival (Day 0)**

* For the most part, although en-suite facilities may not always be available

** Please note that this does not include Reykjavik city hotels as Reykjavik is a 50-minute drive in the wrong direction for the start of our tour.

We think that it's worth pointing out: all of the accommodation we use on our Iceland tour has a rating of 8.5 or higher on Booking's website.

It does not include international flights, drinks not included with the meals, insurance, tips and any items of a personal nature. Nor does it include **international money transfer fees** implied in the payment of the tour.

INTERNATIONAL FLIGHTS

We recommend that you plan to arrive on "Day 0" at Keflavik, Iceland's international airport, and whatever time you arrive we will arrange your transfer to your nearby accommodation for that night. Departure should also be planned from Keflavik, preferably in the afternoon or evening of "Day 9", unless you plan to stay on in Iceland for your own personal reasons.

HOTELS

We're excited! We've managed to book these excellent hotels and guesthouses for our visit.

1. Loa's nest near Hella – 2 nights, June 9th and 10th
2. Hotel Fransiskus, Stykkisholmur – 3 nights – June 11th, 12th and 13th
3. To be determined - Near Blondüós – 1 night – June 14th
4. Grenivik Guesthouse, near Akureyri – 2 nights – June 15th and 16th

PREVIOUS ICELAND TOUR CLIENT REVIEWS

“We all enjoyed the trip and were awed by the scenery...I haven't seen all the pictures I took but have seen some of Janet's which are quite spectacular. Speaking of spectacular we saw James' video of the humpbacked whale - great sequence.” – **James, USA.**

“Some great memories and a lovely bunch of folk to tour with. Thanks!” – **Andy, USA.**

“Our trip to Iceland with you was hotly anticipated and it didn't disappoint. The scenery was magnificent as were the birds, seals, whales, etc. The Golden Plover sitting on a little mound while we all took photos was a particular highlight for me as was the Gyr Falcon and Great Northern Diver close to shore, but there were too many great sightings to list them all. We enjoyed the local food and our accommodation in various beautiful locations was perfect. As usual you delivered, Steve. Thank you and Florinda.” - **Mary, UK.**

“I really didn't know what to expect from my birding trip to Iceland, but I was delighted to find out how amazing it was. There are numerous species of birds to be seen, and Steve has a keen knowledge of them and where to find them. Best of all, you can do it all while traveling through one of the most beautiful and iconic landscape in the world - Iceland - a trip to experience.” – **James, UK.**

“In September 2018, together with my non birding son, I went on a 10 day tour of Iceland led by Steve West of Birding in Spain. Steve worked tirelessly to find the birds and we had a very successful birding trip. He also managed to incorporate all the important 'tourist sites' and general wildlife into our trip. A very successful tour on a magical island that catered for everyone. We even got the Northern Lights. This was my third birding trip with Steve, he remains my first choice for guided trips.” – **Ian, UK**

We invite you to take a look at one or more of these selected videos to help you get a clearer picture of where we are going and what we expect to see and experience.

- See this informative video about Stykkisholmúr (“Iceland’s prettiest town”), which also features Hotel Fransiskus!

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ftiSDhO1UTc>

- Photographing birds on Flatey Island

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HkVdiygbiMo>

- Whale watching from Hauganes

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2gsZvpSZ91o>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DkhJT4LGQDU>

- Relaxing seals in Iceland

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ifWw2FQAa0U>

- Birds of Iceland by Birdfun

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FjUuepwTwLM>



WHO ARE WE?

Steve, a lifelong birder and conservationist, hails from Hampshire originally, where he spent time in his youth birding around Silchester Common and Pamber Forest, before moving to Norwich to study ecology at the UEA. At the age of 24 he moved to Catalonia, Spain, where he lives until this day.

Steve led his first birding tour in northern Spain in 1996, and since then has led tours throughout mainland Spain on a regular basis in Catalonia, Aragon, Navarra, Extremadura, Andalusia, Castilla y León, Cantabria and Asturias. He has also escorted birding groups to Iceland, Scotland, Norway, Finland, Bulgaria and Morocco. He is the author of two birding-oriented books, the first of which was “Where the birds are in northeast Spain” (2004).

Steve was also one of the pioneers involved in establishing commercial bird photography hides in Spain where, from 2009 onwards, the Birding In Spain hides received photographers from all over Europe and beyond, keen on photographing raptors and steppe species close-up.



Steve speaks fluent Catalan and Spanish. When not leading or organizing tours he spends his time writing, holding workshops on environmental education to local schools and growing organic vegetables on a plot near his wife's village in the Garrigues, to the south of the city of Lleida.



Florinda was born and bred in Catalonia, where she lives to this day. She graduated in tourism before becoming a PA, and then partnered with Steve in the running of Birding In Spain.

In recent years Florinda has acquired experience in co-leading some of the Birding In Spain tours, which makes a nice change from being stuck in the office with the payments, administration tasks and the like that she usually has to deal with! She is a person's person, and brings a refreshing air to any personal or professional relationship she is engaged in.

Florinda is fluent in English, Spanish and Catalan and has a working knowledge of French and Italian.

Thanks, that's nice, but I think a tour to Brazil could be more up my street. We understand. Then what about Brazil? Just control-click info@birdinginspain.com to request more information about our brand new September 2024 tour to Brazil