Scotland & Orkney Islands Eco-Adventure

An action-packed Eco-Adventure: Scotland & Orkney Island Marine Life with Seacoast Science Center, September 24–October 3, 2022

Itinerary

Edinburgh Itinerary, Sept. 24-26

Day 1: Arrival to Edinburgh
Upon arrival, you have a check-in at the hotel. The rest of the day is at your own leisure.

Day 2: Edinburgh Royal Mile and Castle Tour
Following breakfast you get to explore the capital of Scotland - Edinburgh!

Together with the guide you start a 4-hour tour of the Old Town and explore this culturally and historically important part of the city. Today you walk along the famous Royal Mile which connects two royal residences - the Castle and the palace of Holyrood House.

Before you visit the Edinburgh Castle you hear a comprehensive history insight from your guide and visit the castle independently*. Here you may see the Honours (Crown Jewels) of Scotland, the Stone of Destiny, the famous 15th century gun Mons Meg, the One O’Clock Gun inside the castle.

Your guided walking tour ends before you visit the castle and after exploring the castle you may spend time in the city on your own or return to the hotel.

*Note: transportation for the tour is not included. The distillery is located within walking distance from the hotel.

Day 3: Departure to Lerwick
After breakfast you check-out and have a transfer to the airport.

Lerwick Itinerary, Sept. 26-28

Day 3: Arrival to Shetland Islands and Tour
Welcome to the Shetland Islands! Your guide-driver meets you and together you embark on a full-day tour to the southern part of Shetland Island. This trip is one of the most scenic with amazing panoramic views, history, and wildlife.

Today you have a short photo-stop at Scalloway and travel across from Mousa to take in a view one of the best-preserved brochs in the world. Here you visit St Ninian's Isle, the 4000-year-old Jarlshof settlement, and the Crofthouse museum. On the way through Fladdabister, you learn more about what was life like in Shetland over a
century ago and then you reach the wild cliffs of Sumburgh Head. Here you see Puffins from mid-April to mid-August and have a close look at Sumburgh Lighthouse which was opened in 1821.

On the way back to Lerwick you see lots of Shetland ponies, seabirds, and other wildlife. For a lunch break, you can choose a restaurant in the Sumburgh Hotel, which was built in 1867.

- Optional: Shetland Otter Watching Experience

After the tour you are taken to the hotel for check-in.

**Day 4: Seabirds & Seals Wildlife Cruise with Underwater Viewing**

Today after breakfast we set-off on a boat tour that takes you right around Bressay & around the cliffs of the famous Noss National Nature Reserve.

On this amazing wildlife experience you will get to enjoy Shetland's plethora of seabirds and seals, as well as spectacular views, giving you fantastic opportunities to see and photograph Shetland's wildlife against the stunning backdrop of the Noss cliffs.

You will get unbelievably close to the awe-inspiring sights and sounds of this extraordinary seabird metropolis, which is home to 25,000 Northern gannets, as well as thousands of guillemots, black guillemots, puffins, razorbills, gulls, shags and skuas.

We will come eye-to-eye with beautiful blue-eyed gannets and immerse yourself in the unforgettable clamour of a thousands-strong ‘choir’ or different bird calls - a sound you'll never forget.

We bring along fresh fish to give you a guaranteed opportunity to see gannets diving. We might even see porpoises, or the occasional whale, otter or dolphins. Every trip is unique - leaving you with many happy memories of Shetland.

**Day 5: Unst and Yell Islands Tour**

Following breakfast and check-out, you meet with your private guide-driver and start a tour to the Northern Isles: to Unst and Yell. To reach the destination you also enjoy a hop on and off two ferries on the way.

Firstly you visit Island of Yell, which is Shetland's biggest island and from here you catch the 5-minute ferry to Unst. Today you see a 400-year-old Muness Castle, the ex-RAF base of Saxa Vord, where there is now a brewery and gin distillery. From Saxa Vord you may see Muckle Flugga, the most northerly part of the British Isles.

Continue to Haroldswick boat museum and visit the reconstructed Viking longhouse and longship created by Viking Unst before visiting Hermaness and its visitor center.

After the tour you are taken to the port for a ferry to Kirkwall.

**Kirkwall, Orkney Itinerary: Sept. 28-30**

**Day 5: Arrival In Kirkwall**

Upon arrival in Kirkwall, you driver meets you and transfers to the hotel for check-in.

**Day 6: Cetaceans in Orkney**

Following breakfast, we set-off for Cetaceans watching tour. Orkney is one of the best places to see whales & dolphins in the UK.

Visit Orkney during the from May through October and your chances of spotting a killer whale, minke whale or long-finned pilot whale in the waters around this island group are excellent. Experts report that 90 percent of the orca sightings around the United Kingdom are in the waters off Orkney and Shetland.

Some are commoner than others, and as a result are easier to observe. Some are simply more difficult to see as they prefer to keep well offshore in deeper water, more to do with habit than size, as the bigger whales such as Humpback and Sperm will often visit Scapa Flow.
Harbour Porpoise can be almost guaranteed in good conditions, whilst Orca can be more unpredictable and therefore frustrating! Hoxa Head on South Ronaldsay; Marwick Head in West Mainland, and Noup Head on Westray are three favourite cetacean-watching spots, and have given us lots of enjoyable observations over the years.

Please be aware that although Harbour Porpoise and Orca are reasonably common in Orkney, we cannot guarantee sightings! Orca can be especially elusive, although the joy on seeing these animals is unrivalled.

After the tour you return to the hotel.

**Day 7: Sea Kayaking OR Coastal Wild Orkney Walk Tour - Departure to Inverness**

Today after breakfast we continue our adventures. Today we have prepared couple of experiences so you can choose at your preference and interest:

1) **Sea Kayaking:** enjoy a Kayaking tour along Orkney’s spectacular coastline, with its soaring cliffs, perfect beaches and abundant wildlife, that is best explored and appreciated by sea kayak.

Britain's highest cliffs, really impressive caves, arches and tunnels, miles of sandy beaches, wrecked ships, World Heritage Site status archaeology, teeming with wild life, the Orkney Islands have it all.

Gliding above clear water, landing on a white sand beach on a hidden island, having Seals swim within metres of the kayaks, taking in a full panorama of islands and mountains - sharing all this with your friends and family - the special feel that has made sea kayaking in Orkney a ‘must do’ experience for those wanting to get to know Wild Scotland.

2) **Coastal Wild Orkney Walk:** There is nothing quite like being on a beach or walking along a coastal path when the wind is blowing and the sea spray is splashing against your skin. Wild Orkney Walks take place at a variety of locations throughout the Orkney mainland.

The Brodgar Wildlife Walk is a circular walk around the RSPB reserve which surrounds the Ring of Brodgar. During the autumn months, this area hosts a fantastic variety of wildfowl on both Stenness and Harray lochs including Slavonian Grebes, Long-Tailed Ducks and Goldeneyes. In the grassland habitats, keep an eye out for flocks of waders such as Golden Plovers and Curlews. This is also a good place to see Brown Hares in the fields and Harbour Seals in Stenness Loch.

The Burwick Coastal Walk follows a cliff top path along the west coast of South Ronaldsay. On a clear day there are stunning views over Scapa Flow, the islands and over the Pentland Firth to Caithness.

There are plenty of opportunities to spot a variety of wildlife throughout the summer months including seabirds, seals, wildflowers, insects and maybe even some cetaceans if we are very lucky.

After the tour we depart from Kirkwall to Inverness.

**Inverness Itinerary: Sept. 30-Oct. 2**

**Day 7: Arrival to Inverness**

Upon arrival, you have a transfer for the check-in at the hotel. The rest of the day is at your own leisure.

**Day 8: Full Day Private Tour Wildlife of the Black Isle**

Today we set-off for yet another exciting day trip. Immerse into the fantastic nature of Scotish lands and set off on the wildlife watching on the Black Isle.

Together with a local guide, we travel to Chanonry Ness to take a chance to witness all sorts of interesting animals and plants on the way. Once at Chanonry Ness, you proceed to see the Bottlenosed Dolphins as local surroundings are the best place in Europe to do that, especially during the summertime.

Then we head up into the fantastic woodland at Fairy Glen, a perfect place to observe wild seabirds and raptors above the sea cliffs of Rosemarkie. *Note: average distance covered on foot is 4 miles.*
After the tour you will be taken back to your hotel in Inverness.

Day 9: Return to Edinburgh
Following breakfast in your hotel, you check out and walk to the train station.

Edinburgh Itinerary: Oct. 2-3

Day 9: Return to Edinburgh & Overnight at Dalhousie Castle Hotel
Upon arrival, you have a check-in at the Dalhousie Castle Hotel. Stay at the lovely Castle located near the capital Edinburgh, the Dalhousie Castle Hotel is set in a 13th-century building.

Day 10: Departure Home
Following breakfast in your hotel, you check out and depart from Edinburgh.

Accommodations:

Market Street Hotel
Sept. 24-26
Edinburgh

The Kveldsro House Hotel
Sept. 26-28
Lerwick

The Lynnfield Hotel
Sept. 28-30
Kirkwall

Kingsmills Hotel
Sept. 30-Oct. 2
Inverness

Dalhousie Castle Hotel
Oct. 2-3
Edinburgh