

Iceland Anytime

Dates: Anytime (May-Jun recommended)

Guide: Local Guide

Sample Price: £1500

This sample Anytime tour focuses on the birds of the far north of Iceland, on the fringes of the Arctic Circle, together with a whalewatching cruise for Humpback Whales..



Day 1: Arrive Akureyri

Today, we fly to Akureyri via Reykjavik/Keflavik, arriving in the evening, with a little time for evening birding if time permits.

Days 2-3: Lake Myvatn, Husavik and around

Lake Mývatn is a paradise for birdwatchers. This area, which could be described as "Europe's duck factory," is simply packed with birds, including many Barrow's Goldeneyes and Harlequin Ducks. A typical list of birds will include up to 50 species and will quite likely include Gyrfalcon.

Arriving at the Mývatn area from Reykjadalur, we will take a look at Lake Mávvatn, where there is a good chance of seeing Great Northern Divers. We then approach the river Laxá which flows out of Mývatn. This uppermost part of the river is the prime habitat for Harlequin Duck and Barrow's Goldeneye in Iceland.

We then start the circuit around Mývatn and make a stop at Álfavogur to scan the flocks of ducks for scarcer visitors. Near Skútustaðir there are small lakes in extensive wetlands, which hold variety of ducks, including Long-tailed Duck and the occasional Common Pochard. We will continue around the lake and make a few stops to view birds and the picturesque and impressive scenery. The woodlands at Höfði are a great place for a walk, with views of some unusual lava formations in the lake. There are plenty of Common Redpoll, Redwing and Eurasian Wren here, as well as various ducks on the lake. Between here and Reykjahlíð village, we will look for dabbling ducks including Gadwall and the scarce Northern Shoveler. Red-necked Phalaropes can be common at the right time of year. At Neslandavík there are often large flocks of Tufted Duck, Greater Scaup and Eurasian Wigeon. It is also a good site for Common Scoter and may also yield scarce vagrants such as American Wigeon, Common Pochard and Ring-necked Duck. Sigurgeir's Bird Museum is conveniently located on this bay, at one of the best birdwatching sites at Mývatn. The last key site is called Álár, nearly as rich in birds as Neslandavík and likely to contain scarce species.

We will spend on afternoon with a whale cruise from Husavik, where we can hope to see Humpback Whales. Other species, including Blue Whale are possible. The harbour area is a prime spot for gulls, especially in spring. Iceland Gulls can be found there all year round among the more common gulls. Rare gulls show up from time to time and nowhere in Iceland has more records of Ross's Gull and Ivory Gull than Húsavík harbour. At the small lakes of Kaldbakstjarnir just south of Húsavík there are close to 30 species of breeding birds, including very tame Horned Grebes and a pair of Great Northern Divers. Offshore, there'll be a selection of auks, as well as good numbers of Arctic Terns.

We will also take some time to visit local peninsulas. This should bring us species including Thick-billed Murre (Brunnich's Guillemot), Common Murre (Common Guillemot), Razorbill, Atlantic Puffin and Northern Gannet.

Day 4: Depart Akureyri

We will have some time for morning birding before we return to Akureyri Airport for our flight home via Reykjavik/Keflavik.

Anytime Tours can be taken at a time of your choosing (subject to availability). Prices are samples based on the cheapest time of year in the recommended date-range, and assume a group of two people sharing a room (larger groups will be cheaper). Most prices include international flights (from the UK), internal transport, birding guide, 3 meals per day, accommodation, park fees and bottled water (if necessary).

All tours are subject to a formal quotation which will contain full information on what is included.

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