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## WILD SCOTLAND - UNEXPLORED ISLANDS AND WILDLIFE CRUISE

Discover some of the least visited and remotest islands in Scotland, from St Kilda and North Rona to Foula and Muckle Flugga. Embark on an enthralling 13-day expedition exploring wild and remote destinations aboard the Sea Spirit while indulging in luxurious onboard amenities. Join like-minded adventurers passionate about exploration and conservation. Experience the largest seabird colonies in the Atlantic, including hundreds of thousands of puffins and gannets. Explore Iron Age brochs, Neolithic dwellings, Viking strongholds, and visit some of the most isolated yet charming island communities of Scotland. Be part of this inaugural Wild Discovery Conservation Cruise in partnership with Wild Earth Travel. This unparalleled voyage will take you to some of the least visited and remotest islands around the Scottish coast. Places steeped in history, myth and legend where seabird cities throng onto towering cliffs and Celtic, Norse and Pictish cultures meld in a unique blend of nature and man. Tales of survival and endurance are told alongside modern stories of conservation success and human endeavour. This voyage has only ever been completed once before, in 1966, as a pioneering Scottish Ornithologists Club (SOC) Seabird study cruise. On its 60-year anniversary, Dan Brown and Rachael Iveson-Brown of Wild Discovery together with Wild Earth Travel will once again embark on this ambitious voyage to the unexplored islands of Scotland on their inaugural 'Conservation Cruise'. With Dan as the Expedition Leader, they will take you on a journey of a lifetime. In 1966, Dan Brown's grandfather, Gordon Hollands, was a lecturer aboard this landmark cruise. It was billed The Scottish Bird Islands Study Cruise and focused on the remarkable seabird colonies of

Scotland. With over 900 delegates aboard the MS Devonian, they cruised from Greenock via the Hebrides and St Kilda, Sula Sgeir and North Rona up to the Northern Isles and back south into the Firth of Forth over nine days. On board were many of Europe and North America's most prominent ornithologists, including Roger Tory-Peterson, James Ferguson-Lees, Jean Delacour and Karl Voous. Gordon Hollands was part of the SOC team onboard to deliver the voyage. This voyage paved the way for much of the modern research and conservation of Scotland's seabirds, the successes of which we will enjoy on our voyage. With adventure, passion, and conservation at the heart of both Wild Discovery and Wild Earth Travel, you benefit from over 20 years of experience in voyaging, leading, and creating global expeditions, along with world-class expert guidance. We will sail aboard the capable yet intimate expedition cruise vessel Sea Spirit to explore exceptional destinations such as St Kilda and Fair Isle. You will get a true feel for the remarkable islands around the stunning Scottish coast, almost all of which are or have been inhabited by some of the most tenacious species and people in the North Atlantic. What does a Conservation Cruise entail? A small-ship expedition cruise led and guided by an exceptional team of naturalists and scientists focusing on a particular geographic region and supporting one or more conservation projects during the voyage. The UK 2026 Conservation Cruise will support a number of relevant projects run by recognised charitable partners around Scotland. What can the passenger expect? A unique expedition cruise with exciting landings and zodiac cruises to some of the UK's most remote and least visited islands from the comfort of a well-equipped expedition vessel. A



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full schedule of fascinating recaps and lectures from prominent scientists and leaders in their fields. ##### Meet Your Guides  
\_Dan Brown - Expedition Leader\_ A lifelong naturalist with a deep passion for wildlife, Dan has explored some of the most remote corners of the globe in pursuit of conservation and adventure. Raised in the rich environment of Bangor University's Botanic Garden, Dan's fascination with the natural world began early. With decades of experience as a professional ecologist, wildlife photographer, and author, Dan has worked on conservation projects from Africa to Scandinavia. Alongside his wife, Rachael, they co-founded Wild Discovery, an award-winning tour company that specialises in wildlife-watching experiences throughout Scotland and abroad. Together they've guided travellers on unforgettable journeys throughout the Highlands and beyond, sharing extensive knowledge and enthusiasm for Scotland's wildlife. Dan is excited to lead this historic expedition, retracing the steps of his grandfather, Gordon Hollands, who was part of the inaugural Scottish Seabirds Study Cruise in 1966. With a passion for seabird conservation and a deep connection to this legacy, Dan will guide you through Scotland's most remote and remarkable islands, spotting rare seabirds and exploring rugged coastlines along the way. \_Rachael Iveson-Brown - Expedition Host\_ Rachael is a passionate naturalist with a particular love for coastal wildlife. She has worked for ecological consultancies where she provided expert advice on species and landscape ecology throughout the UK. Rachael's love of wildlife and travel combined with her inherently inquisitive mind and her enthusiasm for meeting people allowed a seamless step into the world of expedition travel where, along with Dan, she has hosted many adventures. # Wild Scotland 2



026 Webinar

## ITINERARY

DAY 1: TUESDAY 6 MAY GLASGOW (hotel night)

Welcome to Glasgow, Scotland's largest city, known for its rich history, vibrant culture, and diverse attractions and starting point of our expedition. Enjoy this afternoon at your leisure. This evening meet the Conservation Cruise team and your fellow passengers at the welcome dinner.

DAY 2: WEDNESDAY 7 MAY GLASGOW TOUR & EMBARKATION

After breakfast, there will be options to either undertake a city tour or head out to the edge of the Highlands for a more wildlife-focused few hours as we visit sites around Loch Lomond.

In the afternoon, we embark Sea Spirit before enjoying welcome



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drinks and dinner on board as we sail this evening out of the Clyde, passing Ailsa Craig. This tiny island is a base to a 19th-century lighthouse and also the world centre of quarrying for curling stones. It is now an RSPB reserve and home to around 30,000 pairs of gannet, making for a spectacular first evening experience.

We will enjoy the spectacle from the ship as we cruise around the island, taking in the gannetry as well as other seabirds such as guillemot, razorbill, and puffin.

### DAY 3: THURSDAY 8 MAY IONA & TRESHNISH ISLANDS

This morning, we land on Iona, which lies just off the coast of Mull and is steeped in history. St. Columba arrived here from Ireland in 563 AD, and Christianity spread through northern Britain from this remote island community. The island is also a stronghold for corncrakes as well as a plethora of other species. You will have time to take in the history of the island as well as head out with the naturalists in search of corncrakes.

Over lunch, we relocate to Staffa in the Treshnish Islands, home to a remarkable series of black basaltic columns and the famous Fingal's Cave, which inspired Felix Mendelssohn's *The Hebrides* overture in 1830.

Onwards to Lunga, the largest of the Treshnish Isles and home to prolific birdlife, including numerous breeding Manx shearwaters and storm petrels, and most famously its very obliging puffins. The island still shows the remains of 19th-century black houses. The waters in this area are also very

rich in cetaceans, and we will be on the lookout for minke whale, common dolphin, and basking sharks.

### DAY 4: FRIDAY 9 MAY MINGULAY

We will start our day at the southern end of the Western Isles chain on Mingulay, the penultimate island of the Outer Hebrides. This stunning crescent island features a beautiful sandy bay that can hold a haulout of grey seals, sometimes numbering 600. An old lane takes us through the long-deserted village, where we hope to hear corncrakes calling. The steep cliffs along the west are home to golden and white-tailed eagles, as well as thousands of seabirds, and at this time of year, there may also be migrant birds in the lush valley base.

If the Atlantic is kind to us, we will spend the afternoon exploring the rarely visited Monarch Isles, a series of low-lying sandy islands off the western coast of the Uists. This area is heavily protected, and for good reason, as it is home to 10,000 grey seals and a significant population of black guillemots, as well as breeding waders on the sandy machair.

### DAY 5: SATURDAY 10 MAY ST KILDA

The archipelago of St Kilda is often regarded as the jewel of Britain's Islands; a wild and uninhabited cluster of rocks in the Atlantic, dominated by the largest sea cliffs in the UK and home to hundreds of thousands of seabirds. We will explore Village Bay, the only landing location and the site of human occupation for over 2,000 years until 1936. After a morning soaking in this truly remarkable place, together with Arctic and Great Skuas, the



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endemic Soay Sheep, and no doubt a few migrant birds, we will explore the formidable stacks during the afternoon, circling Soay, Stac Lee, Stac an Armin, and Boreray, which all now fall under the archipelago's UNESCO World Heritage Site status. Up to 60,000 pairs of Gannets breed on these stacks, making for a truly remarkable experience.

### DAY 6: SUNDAY 11 MAY THE SHIANT ISLES, SULA SGEIR & NORTH RONA

The Shiant Islands are a small group of islands in the Hebrides, tucked at the southern end of the Minch between Lewis and Skye. They are the scene for a remarkable success story: the eradication of the invasive Black Rat and the recolonization of thousands of seabirds. These stunning islands are now home to over 60,000 pairs of Puffins, as well as nearly 20,000 pairs of Guillemots and Razorbills, European Storm-petrels, White-tailed Eagles, and Peregrines. We will take a pre-breakfast zodiac cruise to explore the isles before setting sail north.

The Minch is a very rich area for cetaceans, and we will keep our eyes peeled for White-beaked and Risso's Dolphins and potentially even a Humpback Whale. We should also see European Storm-petrels, Manx Shearwaters, and skuas as we head north to Sula Sgeir and North Rona, Britain's most isolated inhabited (formerly) islands. These tiny islands are the foraging grounds for the Guga Hunters, men who sail up from Lewis to harvest Gannets. They are also home to species like Leach's Storm-petrel, and given their location, very few people ever see them. If weather and sea conditions allow, we will attempt a zodiac cruise here.

### DAY 7: MONDAY 12 MAY FOULA & PAPA STOUR

This morning we visit Foula, one of Britain's most remote inhabited islands off the western coast of Shetland. Under 30 people live here in a fertile strip of croft land and alongside thousands of seabirds, including one of the UK's largest populations of Great Skuas, tens of thousands of Fulmars, and almost all of the UK's northern breeding seabird species. The cliffs are second only to St Kilda, and we will be met with a warm welcome and the opportunity to explore this superb island.

Over lunch, we will relocate to Papa Stour, where we will use the Zodiacs to navigate the stunning cliff scenery, sea stacks, arches, blowholes, and coastal caves.

### DAY 8: TUESDAY 13 MAY SHETLAND: MUCKLE FLUGGA & HERMANESS

We continue our exploration of Shetland around the northern isle of Unst. Here, Muckle Flugga, the northernmost land in the UK, will be the focus of a zodiac cruise, while the sheltered bay of Fiska Wick will provide a landing opportunity with a walk over Hermaness National Nature Reserve, home to Great and Arctic Skuas, Puffins, Gannets, Dunlin, and carnivorous plants.

In the afternoon, we will explore Haroldswick, the center of the highest density of rural Viking sites anywhere in the world. Here, there are several Viking exhibitions, including the Unst Heritage Centre, Unst Boat Haven, the site of a Viking Longhouse, and the Skidbladner (replica Gokstad ship) and Viking Longhouse reconstruction.



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### DAY 9: WEDNESDAY 14 MAY LERWICK & MOUSA

We shall start the day with a zodiac landing on Mousa, an RSPB nature reserve and home to over 10,000 European Storm-petrels, as well as the best-preserved Iron Age Broch in the world. The island is also home to breeding Red-throated Diver, Common Eider, Common Snipe, Arctic Tern, Twite, Grey and Harbour Seals, and Otter.

Over lunch, we sail the short distance to Lerwick for a free afternoon to explore this historic port. Those with an interest in history can explore the Clickimin Broch, wander through the narrow stone lanes, or visit the superb Shetland Museum. The harbour is also an excellent place for wildlife photography, with Black Guillemots, Common and Arctic Terns, and even Otters foraging close by. There will also be an option to visit Jarlshof, the best-known archaeological site in Shetland, containing remains spanning from 5500 years ago up to the 17th century.

Late afternoon, we will be joined by a representative from the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds, who will give a presentation on the work of the organisation in the archipelago.

### DAY 10: THURSDAY 15 MAY FAIR ISLE

We have the whole day to explore the incredible island of Fair Isle. Located midway between the Shetland and Orkney Islands, the tiny population of fifty-seven islanders always extend a warm welcome to visitors. There will be numerous options here, from enjoying a walk across the island searching out the puffin slopes, visiting the Bird Observatory (the most famous in the

UK), stopping by the community hall for a cup of tea, or maybe purchasing some of the famous knitwear. In the afternoon, we hope to be able to explore the coast of the island by zodiac.

### DAY 11: FRIDAY 16 MAY NORTH RONALDSAY

Arriving at the northern end of the Orkney Islands, we will visit the bird observatory on North Ronaldsay. At this time of year, we will likely encounter a number of migrant birds, from warblers to waders, as well as many locally breeding species. The island is also famous for its coastal sheep, which are walled off from the pasture and onto the foreshore where they graze seaweeds.

### DAY 12: SATURDAY 17 MAY ISLE OF MAY & BASS ROCK

Overnight, we will have relocated down the eastern coast of Scotland to the outer Firth of Forth. Our morning will be spent exploring the delightful Isle of May, where we will be welcomed by hundreds of Arctic Terns and keep a watchful eye out for the well-camouflaged female Eiders on their nests. Thousands of Puffins, Guillemots, Razorbills, and gulls breed on the island, making it a true seabird spectacle. In the afternoon, we will cruise around the impressive Bass Rock, our final seabird island and home to a very impressive gannetry.

### DAY 13: SUNDAY 18 MAY LEITH - EDINBURGH

Disembark after breakfast. Transfers will be provided to Edinburgh Waverley Train Station and Edinburgh Airport at a fixed time. Let us know if you would like to stay the night in



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Edinburgh (at an additional cost), and we can make arrangements for you.

Please note:

This itinerary is subject to change due to weather conditions or other unforeseeable circumstances.



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## YOUR SHIP: SEA SPIRIT

**YOUR SHIP:**

**Sea Spirit**

view Some cabin plans may vary depending on the cruise,  
please check for details. Zodiac dock Superior Suite Owners

**VESSEL TYPE:**

Suite Library

**LENGTH:**

**PASSENGER CAPACITY:**

**BUILT/REFURBISHED:**

Sea Spirit is a luxury expedition cruise ship, specifically designed to cruise the Polar regions. Carrying a maximum of just 114 passengers in 57 suites, she has the feel of a boutique hotel. Built in 1992, but refurbished several times since, the latest being in 2019, she is just 90 metres long so can navigate the small channels and bays of the Polar regions. Sailing aboard the remarkably comfortable Sea Spirit you will experience the polar regions in grand style with spacious suites. Sea Spirit's spacious suites all have panoramic oceans views. Think king-size or twin beds, en suites, flat screen TVs and DVDs and internet satellite. Many suites have private balconies, lounge areas & dressing tables. There is a lounge, bistro and bar, hot tub, gym, a state-of-the-art presentation room and stabilisers for smooth cruising. There is an open bridge policy so you can join the captain and the officers at any time of day to watch the ship's operations or just check your exact location. Features All-suite ship Smallest suite is a spacious 215 square feet. 15 suites have balconies. Owner's Suite is an outstanding 550 sq. feet. Flat Screen TVs and DVD players in every suite Gymnasium and Hot Tub with seating area and Bistro Library/Games Room Tea & Coffee Station(24 hrs) Elevator Every suite has an exterior



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## PRICING

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