

# Join Mark Carwardine

on a very special North Atlantic Adventure from  
Scotland to Svalbard

visiting Scotland (St Kilda, Stac Lee, Stac an Armin & Rockall), Iceland (Westman Islands, Faxaflói Bay, Snæfellsnes Peninsula, Skjálfandi Bay & Grímsey Island), the Greenland pack ice, and Norway (Jan Mayen & Svalbard)

27 May - 12 June 2025



*“This is a rare opportunity to see some of the best wildlife of the North Atlantic and the high Arctic - bowhead whales, blue whales and an impressive variety of other whales and dolphins (we saw lots of northern bottlenose whales in 2024), several of the biggest seabird colonies in the world (including a wonderful day with huge numbers of puffins), polar bears, walruses, harp seals, and much more - all in a single trip. We leave from Oban, yet visit some of the most remote and seldom visited wildlife-rich hotspots in the region.”*

Mark Carwardine

Wildlife Worldwide has exclusively chartered the *M/V Ortelius* – a comfortable ship with en suite facilities in every cabin – for this wonderful 16-night wildlife expedition cruise from Scotland to the icy realms of Svalbard. We'll visit prime sites in the North Atlantic, the Greenland Sea, and the Arctic Ocean and, along the way, will have shore excursions and plenty of opportunity to enjoy the fabulous variety of wildlife and wild places. We hope to visit the world-renowned bird paradise of St Kilda, explore Iceland's moon-like landscape, sail through one of the best places in the world for blue whales, stand on the Arctic Circle, visit the home of the last breeding pair of great auks, explore the most remote and mysterious island in the North Atlantic, cruise along the Greenland pack ice, and look for polar bears in the high Arctic.

## HIGHLIGHTS

- Travel on our exclusively chartered, very comfortable and safe, ice-strengthened polar expedition ship – the *Ortelius* – with plenty of deck space.
- Good-sized and stable ship for comfortable sea crossings (ships that are too small take considerably longer and give a rougher ride).
- All cabins have private bathrooms.
- Wonderfully varied journey with superb wildlife-watching in spectacular settings.
- Join Mark and award-winning landscape photographer Joe Cornish, Mark's Wildlife Worldwide founder Chris Breen, project manager Rachel Ashton, and naturalist, Tim Stenton.
- A full 16 nights on board the ship – with long hours of daylight – giving maximum time to explore.
- Join the ship in Oban, saving the cost and trouble of an international flight (there is a morning coach transfer from Glasgow to Oban as it's easier to travel to Glasgow).
- Wildlife we hope to see includes huge colonies of Atlantic puffins, little auks, gannets and other seabirds, ivory gulls, king eiders, polar bears, walruses, seals (harp, hooded, bearded, grey, common, ringed and others), and a wide variety of cetaceans (including bowhead whales, blue whales, northern bottlenose whales, fin whales, sei whales, minke whales, humpback whales, belugas, killer whales, white-beaked dolphins, Atlantic white-sided dolphins, and harbour porpoises).



*This exclusive trip has been put together in partnership with Wildlife Worldwide*

To book, please contact Rachel Ashton T: +44 (0) 117 904 8934 E: [rachel@markcarwardine.com](mailto:rachel@markcarwardine.com)



- Explore Iceland's Westman Islands, and Grímsey Island, part of which is in the Arctic Circle, as well as the remote and rarely visited Jan Mayen.
- Cruise along the northeast Greenland pack ice – where few people get to go – to look for polar bears, bowhead whales, harp seal haul-outs, and lots more.
- Exciting cruises in inflatable Zodiacs for up-close encounters with wildlife and wild places.
- We will give you a link to the comprehensive slideshow presented on the last night, together with marine charts and wildlife checklists.
- Fabulous photographic and video opportunities.

#### ITINERARY

**Tue 27 May:** Make our own way to Glasgow and transfer by coach to **Oban** around 10am (please bear in mind that we strongly advise you to arrive a day early, just to be safe). Embark the *Ortelius* mid-afternoon and set sail. We navigate through the Sound of Mull, which can be a great place to see white-tailed



eagles, minke whale, harbour porpoise and both of the UK's native seal species, common and grey.

#### **Wed 28 May:**

We plan to spend the day visiting the **St Kilda archipelago**, the UK's only dual UNESCO World Heritage Site and home to nearly a million seabirds – northern gannets, fulmars, kittiwakes, guillemots, Manx shearwaters, storm petrels and great skuas, as well as the UK's largest colony of Atlantic puffins,

with an estimated 300,000 breeding pairs. We hope to visit Stac Lee and Stac an Armin and, if weather allows, we may be able to Zodiac cruise around these impressive geological features. During the night we will head westwards.

**Thu 29 May:** We hope to arrive this afternoon at the small granite islet of **Rockall**, which is 170 nautical miles off St Kilda and continues to be the subject of sovereignty claims from a number of nations.

**Fri 30 May:** At sea, looking for a wide variety of seabirds and whales, dolphins and porpoises, and enjoying entertaining illustrated talks and workshops.

**Sat 31 May:** Today, we begin our exploration of **Iceland**, the land of ice and fire. Most people's first impression of this wonderful country – with its dark lava fields, rugged mountain slopes and imposing volcanoes – is of landing on the moon. With more uninterrupted elbow room than any other European country (bar Greenland) it is a naturalist's paradise. We reach the southern coast, and visit **Heimaey**, the largest and only inhabited island in the **Westman Islands**. Here, there is a chance to hike across the volcanic lava field of the Eldfell volcano eruption and visit the museum which documents the impact this had upon the islanders, go on a guided walk with the onboard ornithologist or simply enjoy the delights of the small town. The waters around the Westman Islands should provide a good opportunity to observe cetaceans and are a particular hotspot for orca.

**Sun 1 June:** We travel through **Faxaflói Bay**, overlooked by Reykjavik, which is a hotspot for whales and dolphins, including white-beaked dolphins, minke and humpback whales.

We continue around the bay towards the **Snaefellsnes Peninsula**, and the **Snaefellsjökull Volcano** (made famous by Jules Verne in his classic *Journey to the Centre of the Earth*); once again there are whale-watching opportunities as we make our around the peninsula.

**Mon 2 June:** We continue sailing around the north-west coast of Iceland, and you can either enjoy lectures and presentations or head out onto the deck to watch wildlife along the shoreline. If weather allows, we may have the chance to land at Vigur island in the Westfjords, which is another haven for birdlife including Atlantic puffins, Arctic terns, black guillemots, and king eider. Its most treasured bird is the common eider, which the inhabitants of Vigur have throughout the ages, worked hard to protect and nurture. To this day, the islanders still sustainably and ethically collect the valuable down from the duck's nests which in turn is used to fill cushions, duvets and coats.

**Tue 3 June:** We explore the north coast of Iceland, in particular **Skjaldfandi Bay** – June is the peak time for encountering blue whales in the bay, as well as white-beaked dolphins, minke whales and harbour porpoises.

**Wed 4 June:** We then visit **Grímsey Island** for another landing. This small island – home to fewer than 100 people and more than a million seabirds – is divided by the Arctic Circle, and we will get a chance to stand astride it. Snow buntings, golden plovers, whimbrels and wheatears are summer visitors we also hope to observe whilst exploring this beautiful island. The chorus of kittiwakes and fulmars never stops during the long hours of daylight here, but it is the puffins that are the highlight. Grímsey is home to one of the largest puffin colonies in Iceland. It also has one of the country's largest Arctic tern colonies, and there are black guillemots, common guillemots, Brunnich's guillemots and razorbills galore.

After dinner, we will sail by the tiny islet of **Kolbeinsey**, which marks the northern-most limit of Iceland's territorial waters.

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**Thu 5 June:** We leave Iceland behind and continue our adventure northwards. As before, lectures, presentations and scanning for wildlife from the deck will be the order of the day.

**Fri 6 June:** Today we explore the breathtakingly beautiful volcanic island of **Jan Mayen**, home to a small Norwegian meteorological station, as well as king eiders, little auks, fulmars and Brunnich's guillemots. Few people ever get to visit this incredibly remote island in the middle of the Arctic Ocean. Dominated by the still active glacier-covered Beerenburg Volcano, it has no indigenous population and is only accessible by ice-strengthened ships (though supplies are flown in a few times every year by Hercules military transport planes – hairy flights that involve landing on a lava airstrip).

**Sat 7 June:** We head northwest in search of the spring pack ice, which congregates along the east coast of **Greenland**, and then plan to sail along its edge.

**Sun 8 - Tue 10 June:** We explore this unique pack-ice habitat looking for a variety of Arctic wildlife, including polar bears, bowhead whales, harp seals and a variety of Arctic birds from ivory gulls to king eiders. We hope to head out in the Zodiacs where we can really immerse ourselves in the breathtaking scenery. We then head northeast to Svalbard.

**Wed 11:** We arrive in central **Svalbard**, and hope to visit Poolepynten, a popular site for walrus to haul out. With luck we may also see Arctic fox and Svalbard reindeer. We hope to head south towards Isfjord and en route have the chance to view some of the larger baleen whales that frequent these waters. Depending on wildlife sightings, we may have one last off ship activity in the vicinity of Alkhornet or the Ymerbukta Glacier. As we enjoy our final dinner on board the *Ortelius*, we continue to sail deeper into Isfjord in preparation for our disembarkation in Longyearbyen the following morning.

**Thu 12 June:** We disembark in Longyearbyen, capital of Svalbard, at 78 degrees north, and transfer to the airport for our flights home.



*Please note: this tour is highly weather-, sea- and ice-dependent. Although we will stick to the itinerary as closely as possible, it may change to make the most of local conditions. It's part of the fun of remote exploration!*

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## LEADERS

Mark Carwardine will be hosting the trip and will also give lectures and run workshops. He will be accompanied by Britain's best-known landscape photographer, Joe Cornish (owner of his own photographic gallery and author of many books), Tim Stenton a highly experienced naturalist and wildlife-spotter, and Wildlife Worldwide founder Chris Breen. They will share their extensive knowledge, expertise and stories during the trip. There will also be a highly experienced resident expedition team on board, and Rachel Ashton (Mark's project manager since 2004, and trip administrator) who will produce a slideshow of the trip for everyone.

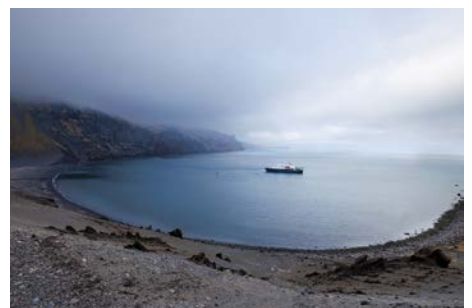
## WHY THIS TRIP?

We've designed what we believe to be the ultimate island-hopping trip across the North Atlantic to the high Arctic. In two packed weeks you'll get to see the very best wildlife and wild places the region has to offer. As with all our trips, the aim is to make it good value for money, informative and fun. We also plan to pack in as much as possible, so we'll spend maximum time wildlife watching and going ashore (you don't have to do every landing, of course, and you don't have to stay for the whole time, but we believe in giving you the opportunity to see and do as much as possible). Since we've chartered the whole ship – and we are hosting the trip – we have the flexibility to make the best use of outstanding wildlife sightings or weather. It also means that we can start in Oban, thus saving all the time and hassle of an international flight.

## WEATHER AND SEA CONDITIONS

The weather where we're going is highly variable – we're likely to get a bit of everything (bright sunshine, cloud, rain and possibly even snow). Temperatures in late May and early June typically range from 3°C to 11°C (but could be colder or warmer). With appropriate clothing, this can be exhilarating and not at all uncomfortable. It is very warm on the ship – many people wander around in T-shirts.

We'll have quite a few days at sea. Sea conditions are hard to predict, of course. Mark has done similar journeys through the North Atlantic many times: a few have been rough enough to make a small number of passengers feel sick, many have been with a swell but perfectly comfortable, and quite a few have been glassy calm.



## SHIP DETAILS

The *Ortelius* (91.24m in length) is a modern, safe, comfortable, ice-strengthened vessel, like a floating wilderness lodge. It is ideally suited for remote and polar exploration. Originally named *Marina Svetaeva*, she was built in Poland in 1989, and served as a special purpose vessel for the Russian Academy of Sciences. The

*Ortelius* makes a great expedition vessel for polar expeditions with lots of deck space and a large bridge open to passengers, as well as en suite facilities in every cabin. As the number of passengers and our own leaders is limited to 108, flexibility assures maximum wildlife opportunities.



## ACCOMMODATION & PRICES (excluding flights)

All the cabins have ensuite facilities, and are pleasantly decorated and have a writing desk and chair, and storage. All of them have windows or portholes, with some of the most spectacular views in the world!



### **Quadruple share with portholes**

**(4 available):** two bunk beds, private bathroom/shower, hairdryer and TV.  
**£6,895 per person**

*If you would like to book as a Triple share, please contact us.*



### **Twin share with portholes**

**(26 available):** two single beds, private bathroom/shower, hairdryer and TV  
**£8,495 per person**



### **Twin share with windows**

**(12 available):** two single beds, private bathroom/shower, hairdryer and TV  
**£8,995 per person**



### **Twin deluxe with windows**

**(2 available):** a corner cabin so with better views; two single beds, private bathroom/shower, hairdryer, TV and fridge  
**£10,395 per person**



### **Twin superior (6 available):**

1 double bed and sofa bed, private bathroom/shower, hairdryer, TV, fridge and separate lounge  
**£11,595 per person**

*If you would like to book a cabin to yourself, please contact us.*

**Price includes:** 16 nights' accommodation in comfortable cabin on the *Ortelius*, with daily housekeeping; all breakfasts, lunches and dinners, tea and coffee, throughout the voyage; guide services of Mark Carwardine, Joe Cornish, Chris Breen, Tim Stenton, Rachel Ashton, and the onboard team from embarkation at Oban; leadership throughout the voyage by the resident Expedition Team; coach transfer from Glasgow airport to Oban on 27 May; all shore landings and excursions during the cruise; comprehensive pre-departure advice and information; all miscellaneous service taxes and port charges throughout the voyage; ship-to-airport transfer post-voyage; loan of Wellington boots; conservation fund contribution.

**Price does not include:** transport to Glasgow; Oban-to-ship transfer pre-voyage; flights from Longyearbyen to the UK; airport/government arrival and departure taxes; hotels, transfers and other land arrangements pre- and post-voyage (ie not listed in 'Price includes'); passport and visa expenses; polar gear; excess baggage charges; cancellation, baggage and travel insurance (compulsory); meals on shore; alcoholic and soft drinks; items of a personal nature such as laundry and telecommunications charges; medical expenses; crew and resident expedition staff gratuities (we suggest about US\$10 per day – it's usually collected just prior to the end of the cruise).

### **OPTIONAL FLIGHT PACKAGE**

Wildlife Worldwide offers a flight back from Longyearbyen to Heathrow (via Oslo) for £550 economy per person (contact us if you wish to fly in a different class or back to another UK airport).

### **PAYMENT SCHEDULE PER PERSON:**

- Non-refundable 20% deposit due on booking.
- 10% instalment due 20 May 2024.
- 10% instalment due 16 September 2024.
- 10% instalment due 20 January 2025.
- Final balance due 17 March 2025.



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