

40th Anniversary Cruise of the British Isles

Naturetrek Tour Report

23rd May – 4th June 2026



Ailsa Craig



Orca (Killer Whale)



Puffin



Common Dolphin

Tour report by Matthew Capper, Neil McMahon and Jenny Wilshire
Photos by Matthew Capper and Sara Frost



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Summary

To celebrate forty years of wildlife tours around the world is no mean feat, especially when you consider some of the incredible destinations that Naturetrek have visited over the years. But with the fortieth anniversary cruise, it is fair to say that this was an itinerary that more than matched the occasion.

Every day brought a different bucket list destination, and we completed one of the finest wildlife voyages possible in the British Isles. To combine places like St Kilda, the Shiant Islands, Fair Isle, Foula, North Ronaldsay and Skomer in a single trip was truly remarkable.

Our coast and its many islands gave us some of the most wonderful scenery, and the flora provided a colourful backdrop, from the floral diversity of the Scilly Isles, to damp meadows on Iona, flushed gold with Kingcups, and the towering cliffs further north, carpeted with white Sea Campion, pink Thrift and blue Spring Squill.

The wildlife managed to match the landscapes and we enjoyed bow riding dolphins, eagles, Otters and a magical encounter with two Orcas. Many of the islands are well known for bird migration, and this helped to deliver a list of rare and scarce birds, from Golden Oriole to Marsh Warbler, Iceland and Glaucous Gulls, Red-necked Phalarope and Icterine Warbler.

Equally impressive were the seabird colonies, from sea stacks white with gannets, to boulder-strewn slopes packed with Razorbills. Add to that the countless cliffs we cruised beneath by Zodiac, alive with noise, scent and movement, and the spectacle was unforgettable.

Of course, on a journey to the wild edges of Britain, the weather makes the rules, but, apart from a couple of rainy days and Fair Isle fog, we were truly blessed: we had calm seas and several days of bright sunshine.

The MV Ocean Nova proved to be an ideal base for the trip, and we were looked after incredibly well. The crew and expedition team did us proud, making sure we made memories which will live long in the memory.

Happy Birthday Naturetrek!

Day 1

Saturday 23rd May

Arrival in Poole – embarkation & sailing through the English Channel

We started our anniversary tour at either the station or the port in Poole. It wasn't the best day, travel-wise, with delays on the roads, football fans heading to Wembley and, for one of the leaders, the tricky task of fitting a moth trap onto an already crowded train. Luckily, a hen-do adopted both him and the trap.

At the station, we loaded the luggage onto the coach and it ferried us across to the terminal in two goes. For those on the second trip, the first good bird of the trip appeared, in the form of a Peregrine next to its nest on a nearby

tall building. Despite the travel issues, everyone arrived in good time, although Neil cut it finer than most, having just flown back from leading a tour in Iceland.

Once the luggage had been sorted, we were transferred over to the dock side and boarded the MV Nova, our home for the next twelve days. Introductions were made, and we headed up on deck to see Poole Harbour, Brownsea Island and the Purbeck peninsula. A lagoon on Brownsea Island had plenty of birds, and we added Common and Sandwich Terns, Mediterranean Gull, Avocet and Oystercatcher.

There was a lovely, excited buzz on the viewing platform, and we slowly made our way past Sandbanks and then Old Harry Rocks, the chalk stacks which mark the eastern end of the Jurassic Coast in Dorset. There were no Ospreys or White-tailed Eagles from the recent reintroductions to wave us off, but we did pick up distant Pomarine and Arctic Skuas.

We had the first of many fabulous dinners, and then people either relaxed or headed back up on deck to find some more birds. A few Manx Shearwaters were seen, along with Gannets, Guillemots and Fulmars on the water. It was a nice taster for what was to come, and was accompanied by a beautiful pink sunset.

Day 2

Sunday 24th May

Isles of Scilly – Annet and St Agnes

The day began at sea, with the early risers rewarded by calm conditions, clear light and low mist lying over the land. As we passed The Lizard, St Michael's Mount and Land's End, a distant feeding flock produced our first cetaceans of the trip: Common Dolphins. They headed straight for the ship and briefly rode the bow wave.

By late morning, the Isles of Scilly came into view, with St Mary's, St Martin's, St Agnes and the distant Bishop Rock lighthouse gradually emerging from the haze. The pilot came out to meet us, and guided us into the sheltered anchorage of St Mary's Roads. Shags were scattered across the water, and we picked up both first-summer and adult-plumaged Great Northern Divers, while Jenny was finding plants before we had even landed.

After lunch, we boarded the tender 'Kingfisher', for a cruise around Annet. This gave us our first close Puffins of the trip, some on the water and others flying low and fast over the waves. There were also plenty of Shags and Rock Pipits around the island.

Having landed on St Agnes, we split into our walking groups and set off to explore one of the most charming islands in the archipelago. The narrow lanes were lined with the island's distinctive "fences" of *Escallonia* and *Pittosporum*, while lichen-covered stone walls supported Ivy-leaved Toadflax, Common Navelwort and Biting Stonecrop. The verges were bright with Bluebells, Three-cornered Leek, Meadow Buttercup, Herb Robert and Bird's-foot Trefoil, while Red Valerian attracted Painted Ladies and Hummingbird Hawk-moths. Along the shoreline we found Rock Samphire, Sea Beet and Common Scurvy Grass, while Oystercatchers and Whimbrels fed among the rocks. Near the cricket pitch, Wheatears and Meadow Pipits were accompanied by a rather puzzling warbler which prompted much discussion, before eventually being identified as an oddly plumaged Willow Warbler.

Troytown Farm's famous ice cream proved every bit as popular as expected, and two groups converged there at the same time. While enjoying our refreshments, we watched Whimbrels, Curlews and the distinctive Scilly form of Blackbird, with its bright orange bill and eye-ring. Despite searching suitable habitat, there was sadly no sign of the hoped-for Turtle Doves, although a lucky few actually saw a Quail.

The day ended with a return to the ship, for some via a pint in the Turk's Head, before we raised anchor and headed back into open water. More Common Dolphins provided a fitting end to our first island day.

Day 3

Monday 25th May

Lundy, Grassholm and Skomer

We began the day with a landing on Lundy, where Peregrines circled overhead as we stepped ashore. The warden, Simon, met us in the Land Rover, and the groups set off to explore this wonderful island. The landing area immediately offered botanical interest, with Kidney Vetch, English and Biting Stonecrop, Sheep's-bit and the endemic Lundy Cabbage growing on the cliffs. This plant is famously home to the equally endemic Lundy Cabbage Flea Beetle. Around Millcombe House, the shaded banks were lush with ferns, Bluebells and Red Campion, while the cropped turf of the plateau held Tormentil, Common Lousewort, Dog Violet and Lesser Celandine.

The herd of Sika Deer was seen up on the top of the island and some visited the lighthouse for the views, while others made use of Lundy's famous postal service. Birds were plentiful across the island: Linnets, Swallows, Meadow Pipits and Skylarks were everywhere, with Stonechats, Wheatears and Ravens also seen. Avian highlights included Turtle Dove, Spotted Flycatcher and Hobby, although the undoubted star for those who saw it was a superb male Golden Oriole.

After returning to the ship, we cruised towards Grassholm in beautifully calm conditions, with Common Dolphins appearing regularly en route, and our first Harbour Porpoise. Grassholm was an extraordinary sight: a white-topped island alive with Gannets. Although numbers remain below the pre-avian flu peak, the colony is still one of the great seabird spectacles of the British Isles.

In the evening, we reached Skomer for a Zodiac cruise in perfect light. Puffins were everywhere, rafting on the sea, swirling overhead and peppering the hillsides with burrows. Choughs were flying along the clifftop, and the sunset over the island made the whole experience feel rather magical. Sadly, that meant it was too bright and moonlit for the Manx Shearwaters to return in large numbers. However, the evening cruise around Skomer was still one of the great scenic highlights of the trip.

Day 4

Tuesday 26th May

At sea and the Calf of Man

Those on deck early were treated to a beautiful sunrise, mirror-calm seas, and rafts of Manx Shearwaters. The conditions were ideal for cetacean watching, and the morning produced three Minke Whales, several parties of Common Dolphins, and good numbers of Harbour Porpoises.

The highlight of the morning came shortly after Sara's talk, when a group of five, possibly six, Risso's Dolphins appeared close to the ship. At one point you could pick them up as pale shapes beneath the surface, before they surfaced properly alongside us. They lingered, rolling and interacting, giving everyone superb views of their pale bodies and battle-scarred skin.

In the afternoon, we reached The Calf of Man. A Zodiac cruise along the cliffs gave us our first real experience of the sound and smell of a busy seabird colony, with Kittiwakes calling from the ledges, and Guillemots, Razorbills and Shags packed onto the cliffs. 'Bridled' Guillemots were picked out among the rows of birds, while Choughs, Hooded Crows, Ravens and Buzzards added interest overhead.

Later, we landed on The Calf itself. The evening light was lovely, and we walked towards the lighthouses, some groups continuing further and others taking a more leisurely return. Choughs were enjoyed by all, black Rabbits were seen, and Oystercatchers and Wheatears seemed to be everywhere. Those who walked furthest were rewarded with a ringtail Hen Harrier, while patient watchers saw Choughs bringing food to chicks in one of the lighthouse buildings.

The return to the ship was not quite as straightforward as planned. The Ocean Nova had to reposition, and one Zodiac had a rather longer and wetter ride back than expected, but everyone eventually made it safely back on board.

Day 5

Wednesday 27th May

Ailsa Craig and Rathlin Island

We woke with Ailsa Craig directly ahead of us, and Gannets streaming overhead on their way back to the colony. A pre-breakfast Zodiac cruise had been planned, and conditions initially looked promising, but as embarkation began the weather changed quickly. The call was made to abort the Zodiac operation, and those already on the water returned rather wet, while the rest retreated to the upper deck for coffee and pastries.

Instead, we enjoyed a ship's cruise around this magnificent landmark in the Firth of Clyde. Gannets filled the air above the colony, while auks skimmed low over the water, including our first Black Guillemots of the trip.

After lunch, we reached Rathlin Island in bright sunshine and on calm seas. The Zodiacs carried us into the harbour, where Eiders and Black Guillemots showed well. Simon from the expedition team had gone ahead and located a singing Corn Crake, just beyond the pub. Remarkably, there were two birds in the field, and most of the group managed to see at least one.

We explored the shore, finding Sanderlings, Dunlins and Ringed Plovers, including tiny chicks. Early Purple Orchids were much admired, while Sparrowhawk and Redpoll were also noted around the Corn Crake field.

The verges were colourful with Red Campion, Cuckooflower, Bird's-foot Trefoil and Common Vetch. Heathland areas held impressive numbers of Heath Spotted Orchids, while small lochs supported White Water-lilies. Grey lichen-covered walls hosted Maidenhair Spleenwort, Wall-rue and Navelwort. It had been a lovely sunny visit, and

a good number of people ended the excursion with a drink in McCuaig's Bar, the only offshore island pub in Northern Ireland.

In the evening, Hannah set out a cunning and revised plan. We had been watching the weather carefully, with a view to ensuring a landing on St Kilda. An easterly wind was forecast for the following day, potentially making Village Bay tricky; the day after was westerly, but looked much worse. The decision was made: we would steam north overnight and hope that the weather gods were with us.

Day 6

Thursday 28th May

St Kilda

The day many had most looked forward to dawned calm, bright and full of promise. St Kilda appeared on the horizon and slowly drew nearer over the next hour or so. For those who had previously tried and failed to reach these fabled islands, it felt as though fortune was finally on their side.

We landed on Hirta, scoped an Iceland Gull on the shore, and were welcomed by the warden, along with Marion, whose father had been born on St Kilda. Maps were handed out, and we had time to look around the shop before exploring the village. Almost immediately, we found our first St Kilda Wrens, their trilling song carrying among the cleits (stone huts) and stone walls.



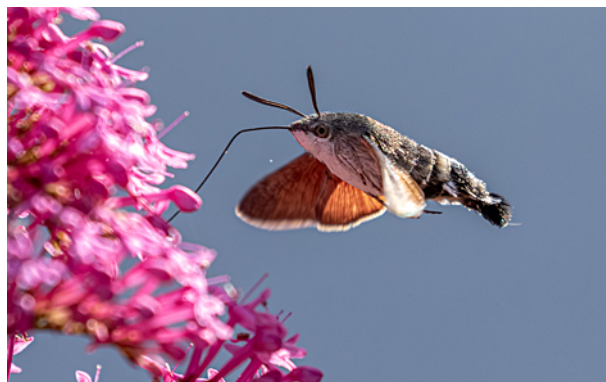
St Kilda



Gannet



Rathlin Island



Hummingbird Hawk-moth

Some of the group climbed the slopes of Conachair, home to Britain's highest sea cliffs, where Arctic and Great Skuas (Bonxies) and Snipes were on territory. Fulmars incubated at the base of the walls, and Wheatears perched on the cleits. The rest of us explored the settlement more slowly. We recreated the famous photograph of the St

Kildan men standing in the street, adopting suitably serious expressions, then visited the cemetery and walked along the road for the classic view back over the village.

The iconic landscape of St Kilda owes much to centuries of grazing, and is dominated by short, sheep-cropped turf. Yet even this apparently simple habitat was rich in flowers. Tormentil, Daisy, Heath Milkwort, Lesser Celandine and Common Lousewort were scattered across the slopes, while Heath Spotted Orchids and Cotton Grass added colour to damper areas. We also found two carnivorous plants: Butterwort and Round-leaved Sundew. However, the most noteworthy was the endemic St Kilda Dandelion, thought to have originated in Iceland and only given full species status in 2012.

Among the walls of the village, bright green tufts of Brittle Bladder Fern grew from the stonework, while patches of Nettles and Yellow Iris provided valuable cover for birds. Freshly arrived migrants included Chiffchaffs among the boulders, and a Marsh Warbler, which proved typically elusive in the iris beds. But patience was rewarded when it showed well, even perching briefly on a post.

After lunch on board with the warden and Marion, we cruised around Hirta and Soay, and then steamed out towards Boreray and the Gannet stacks. It was a breathtaking spectacle: cliffs, stacks, seabirds and sea all combining in one of the most dramatic landscapes in the British Isles. A Golden Eagle floated above the scene, and was even whacked by a Bonxie, adding yet another unforgettable moment to an already remarkable day.

Day 7

Friday 29th May

Iona, Staffa and Ulva

After our successful St Kilda detour, we had covered a great distance overnight and were back in the Inner Hebrides, approaching the southern tip of Iona. The weather was grey and drizzly, with a noticeable swell, but the Sound of Iona gave us enough shelter to launch the Zodiacs.

We were greeted by our first genuine Rock Doves, and most of the group began around the St Columba Hotel garden, where at least two Corn Crakes were rasping away from cover. One flew briefly, giving a lucky few a view. Song Thrushes showed nicely on the telegraph posts, and the damp meadows were bright with Kingcups. The longer walk headed towards the north of the island, where Great Northern Diver was seen offshore, although the wind made telescope use almost impossible. Spring Squill was a lovely botanical highlight.

As the tide dropped, the boat had to keep repositioning, making the return to the ship slightly longer than expected. Once we left the shelter of the sound, the swell built again, and it was clear that landing on Lunga would not be safe. We passed Staffa by ship instead, enjoying views of the basalt columns and Fingal's Cave, accompanied appropriately by Mendelssohn's Hebridean Overture over the ship's loudspeakers.

The alternative was a sheltered visit to Ulva, off the west coast of Mull. This proved a very pleasant Plan B, with our first White-tailed Eagle and a superb male Hen Harrier showing for those on the longer walk. Woodland birds included Great Spotted Woodpecker and Treecreeper, Buzzards were overhead, a nice pair of Red-breasted Mergansers slept on the shore, and there was a lovely garden to explore. There were midges too, but these proved

to be the only ones of the trip. Those who chose to stay in the Zodiac for a cruise were rewarded with a couple of Otters, and one of them showed for a couple of the other boats as we returned to the ship.

Day 8

Saturday 30th May

The Shiant Islands, Handa and Cape Wrath

The Shiant Islands deserve to be recognised as one of the finest wildlife spectacles in Britain. Even in wet and windy conditions, they made a huge impression. The eradication of Black Rats in 2015–16 has helped the islands recover further, and the seabird spectacle is now extraordinary.

As we arrived, Bottlenose Dolphins appeared briefly off the starboard side, although they didn't linger. We then headed out by Zodiac, well wrapped up in waterproofs. The cruise began superbly, with White-tailed Eagles drifting overhead. Two became three, and eventually five birds were in the air at once, mostly young birds drawn by the seabird abundance.

The Razorbill colony was especially impressive. Birds nested among huge boulders, while the surrounding sea was so crowded that it seemed almost like Razorbill soup. Puffins, Guillemots and other seabirds added to the sheer sense of abundance.

Handa was the second of the day's destinations. It was another damp and at times choppy Zodiac cruise, but in better weather than the morning. We cruised around the island, and there was a mass of birds feeding out on the sea: it was an amazing spectacle. Grey Seals surfaced close to us, and we saw both Great Northern and Red-throated Diver. As ever, Hooded Crows were the ubiquitous corvids, along with smaller numbers of Jackdaws and Ravens.

We were now travelling through waters where Orcas had been reported over recent days, and the leaders scanned relentlessly, even taking dinner in shifts. Despite the effort, it remained all quiet on the cetacean front. Still, the passage around Cape Wrath was atmospheric, with the lighthouse just visible through the murk. Despite its dramatic name, "Wrath" comes not from stormy weather but from the Old Norse *hvarf*, meaning "turning point", a fitting marker as we headed onwards to Orkney.

Day 9

Sunday 31st May

Orkney, Papa Westray, North Ronaldsay — and Orcas

Today was a packed day, with an early start and much excitement at the end. We had made good time, and Hannah had rejigged things to allow us an extra island landing. We therefore started with Papa Westray, and our first experience of the Orkney Isles.

A ringtail Hen Harrier showed a couple of times as we assembled on shore, and the island held plenty of Snipes, Curlews, Starlings, House Sparrows and Linnets. It felt like stepping back in time to the countryside of fifty or sixty years ago.

Papa Westray is home to one of the oldest stone buildings in Europe, the wonderfully preserved house complex of the Knap of Howar. Older even than the more famous Skara Brae, one of the walks took in this fabulous site, finding Otter and Great Northern Diver offshore, and enjoying an adjacent Sand Martin colony. The long walk found a flock of Sanderlings which contained a single Little Stint, although they didn't stay long.

North Ronaldsay was our destination for the afternoon, and we were able to spend a good few hours here. We landed at Dennis Head, where there were some ducks and Arctic Terns on a small freshwater pool and a few waders along the shore, including Bar-tailed Godwits and Turnstones. We enjoyed two centuries of lighthouse history side by side: the Old Beacon of 1789, one of Scotland's earliest lighthouses, and its imposing Victorian successor, the tallest mainland lighthouse in Britain.

A particular highlight was meeting Bill Muir, the former lighthouse keeper. Bill's stories brought the lighthouse to life in a way that no information board ever could. Adding to the occasion, he was wearing the smart uniform that the islanders had bought for him when he travelled to London to receive his MBE in 2009.

We had started as three walks, but most of us eventually made our way down the island to the new hide overlooking Ancum Loch. The effort was rewarded, with a stunning Red-necked Phalarope spinning around in the margins, while a couple of Wood Sandpipers, a Ruff and Whimbrels fed nearby. Snipes, Redshanks and Lapwing swere all breeding, and there were Northern Marsh Orchids to be seen by the path.



Fulmars



Orca (Killer Whale)



Otter



Risso's Dolphin

The afternoon had already delivered fine wildlife and island atmosphere. But the greatest moment of the entire voyage was still to come. Most people were back on board relaxing, while Matthew, Tom, Neil and the expedition team were still ashore, packing equipment before the final Zodiac return. In the lounge, Lesley glanced out of the window and saw an enormous black fin slide slowly through the water. It reappeared, attached to a huge bull Orca!

The effect was electric. On board there was a sudden rush for the decks; on shore, bags and kit were flung into the Zodiac, followed rapidly by several humans. A second bull Orca appeared alongside the first, and the pair surfaced around fifty metres behind the ship, cruising through the bay in search of seals. At one point the water was so shallow that they could not fully submerge.

Out on the Zodiac, we kept our distance, cut the engine and watched in awe as they passed between us and the Ocean Nova. After all the searching, the Orcas had simply come to us. Once back on board, we joined the excitement. Later, as the ship headed towards Shetland, the bird observatory confirmed that the two males were Hulk and Nótt, well known Iceland/Scotland Orcas. Both were first catalogued in Iceland in 1999, and are therefore at least 27 years old, although they are probably older.

The story was not over, though. Hannah was on the bridge and the guides continued scanning from the top deck. Eventually, the Orcas were picked up again ahead of us. At first, they remained distant, but then they turned to the west and surfaced much closer. A loudspeaker announcement brought everyone back onto deck.

The next views were the stuff of dreams. The two bulls surfaced ahead of us on the port side, then reappeared on either side of the bow. They kept pace perfectly with the ship for several minutes, and then, after a final set of breaths, we left them to continue their wanderings in peace. It had been an unforgettable encounter.

Day 10

Monday 1st June

Papa Stour and Foula

Our Shetland exploration began with Papa Stour, before we continued to Foula, one of the most remote and distinctive inhabited islands in Britain. The morning weather for our Zodiac cruise was chilly and damp, but we stayed dry on calm seas. There were lots of caves and tunnels to explore around Papa Stour, and the usual array of seabirds, Rock Pipits, Eiders and seals all around us.

For one of the boats, an Otter surfaced just a few metres away. A later search of the same spot brought a second, equally close sighting, but again, it was gone by the time other boats appeared.

Foula was a wonderful island and crept into the hearts of many of us. It had a wonderful open landscape, a few bits of cover where migrants birds could be found, and friendly and welcoming islanders, who opened the school for refreshments and souvenirs and later, joined us on the boat for dinner.

Some of the group were shown how to cut peat, something which is still a necessity in this part of the world, while others were treated to an introduction to the island's botany from Sheila Gear, local naturalist and author of *The Flora of Foula*. She not only showed us the plants, but also told us the local names and traditional uses associated with many species.

Highlights included the tiny Small Adder's-tongue Fern, only recently emerged, along with Chickweed Wintergreen, Heath Spotted Orchid, Butterwort and Round-leaved Sundew. Spring Squill was abundant, and Sheila explained how it was traditionally known as "Grice's Onions", and is a favourite food of pigs. Silverweed, known locally as "Muriks", was valued for its edible roots, while Tormentil roots were once used in tanning.

The 'long walkers' were able to add Icterine Warbler and Glaucous Gull to the trip list, and other avian highlights included a lone Whooper Swan, a calling Quail, Puffins and Fulmars on the cliffs, Red-throated Diver, Golden Plovers, and fantastic sightings of Great and Arctic Skuas, including twenty-five Bonxies bathing on the edge of a loch. The Snipes here were of particular note though. Always in the sky above us, the evocative 'drumming' sound was a backdrop to the visit, and they often perched up in full view in the fields, or on fenceposts.

Day 11

Tuesday 2nd June

Sumburgh Head, Mousa and Lerwick

Another full Shetland day began with a ship cruise past Sumburgh Head. Mist clung to the cliff tops, and the Stevenson lighthouse appeared and disappeared through the cloud, giving the scene an ethereal quality. Fulmars and auks moved along the cliffs as we continued north, and we encountered several Harbour Porpoises.

After breakfast, we landed on Mousa, a privately owned island managed as an RSPB nature reserve. The great broch dominates the island, and is famous for the Storm Petrels which nest in its walls. Sadly, a rat had recently been detected, and monitoring tubes and bait stations were in place as part of the rapid response. We were all asked to be especially careful when landing and leaving.

Most people climbed to the top of the broch, while everyone had the chance to step inside and listen quietly to the strange purring and churring sounds of Storm Petrels hidden deep within the stonework. Nearby, a pair of Oystercatchers with two chicks gave lovely views, and a breeding-plumaged Red-throated Diver was found on a small loch. Another Harbour Porpoise surfaced briefly in the bay, before vanishing behind the ship.

We then sailed north past the gannetry at the Noup of Noss, enjoying atmospheric views before we reached Lerwick. The afternoon was spent in Lerwick, with people free to do what they wanted: a bit of shopping, a walk round the museum, or straight to the pub! However, for those still not satiated, there were further opportunities to see more wildlife.

We were on scanning duty as we came into Victoria Pier, but it wasn't until we were ashore that we picked up the female King Eider (or 'Queen' Eider, therefore), a young bird and not easy to distinguish from the larger, paler-billed female Common Eiders with it. However, next to us and at point-blank range was a slightly dishevelled summer-plumaged Great Northern Diver. Many of our views had been a bit distant, but this one was showing down to a few metres.

In order to get closer views, we headed along the coast, and eventually the King Eider drifted ever closer, allowing us to see all the salient features more clearly. The diehards then walked round the coastal path to Tesco, chasing a rumour of a regular Otter. En route, there were both species of skuas, regular Arctic Terns, and a brief view of a Twite.

The Otter wasn't initially on show, but then a fellow Naturetrek group who had just left Fair Isle called to say they were watching a big male at the Broch of Clickimin. Everyone who made the effort managed to see it, but those already there were treated to insanely close views of it crunching on a Eel.

The briefing and daily wildlife log was followed by a merry evening: we had arranged for the Andy Kane Band to come on board and entertain us with traditional Shetland music. There wasn't much space in the lounge, but we still managed to do some jigs and sang a round of Auld Lang Syne. A good number of giggles were had, largely at Matthew's expense! It was a lovely way to end our time in Lerwick, but we still had one more island to go.

Day 12

Wednesday 3rd June

Fair Isle

Our final island stop was Fair Isle, a place which holds almost mythical status among birders. Few places of its size have such an extraordinary bird list, and its history of rare and scarce migrants is legendary. It is also an internationally important seabird island, and we began with an early Zodiac cruise below the north-west cliffs.

Mist hung over the island, but the cliffs were still alive with seabirds. Gannets were seen on their nests, and the Zodiacs explored caves, tunnels and rock arches where conditions allowed. Fair Isle Wrens could be heard singing in the narrow, rocky geos: these proved to be the only ones we recorded.

Landing was more complicated. Work at North Haven, ahead of the new ferry arrangements, meant that we had to relocate to the south of the island. The now heavy mist made orientation difficult and delayed the landing, reminding us that, after St Kilda, Fair Isle was one of the trickier islands on the itinerary.

Once ashore, we explored the cropped island turf, bright with Spring Squill and the familiar mix of Daisy, Tormentil, Heath Milkwort, Heath Dog Violet and Lousewort. Carla, the seasonal ranger, helped guide us to a cliff gully where Thrift formed a beautiful pink carpet against the seabird cliffs. Puffins, Shag, Fulmar and Black Guillemot were all on view, although the photos were still on the misty side!

People were free to explore the island with what limited time remained, and the locals had kindly laid on a couple of cars to taxi people up and down the island if they wanted. Some managed to make it all the way up to the famous Bird Observatory, and were rewarded with a Marsh Warbler in the hand, along with a Reed Warbler and a female Crossbill. Back down the road, a single Common Rosefinch showed only briefly in the garden of a house, along with a Sedge Warbler and several Chiffchaffs. Skylarks were an ever-present backdrop, and Wheatears and Twites showed in the fields.

Despite the fog and the logistical challenges, it felt special simply to be on Fair Isle. Even on a short visit, we had seen just how good the potential is, here at one of British birding's great destinations.

We had a long way to go, so the afternoon was spent at sea, including a talk on the environmental sustainability work that Naturetrek undertakes, and an auction to raise money for the new charitable foundation that will be the vehicle for this work. In the evening, we thanked our incredible crew, had a farewell drink, and reviewed the trip with a wonderful presentation of photos.

Day 13

Thursday 4th June

Arrival in Aberdeen

The boat had clearly been motoring overnight, and we started the last day with grey skies and Aberdeen coming into view in the distance. The sea here was productive: there were plenty of birds on the water, and a couple of feeding flocks of auks and kittiwakes. Our first Manx Shearwater for a few days cruised past on the starboard side, and there was a very brief view of a Minke Whale which surfaced twice in quick succession, but was not relocated.

At 7.00am, Cheryl, one of our auction winners, came over the loudspeaker with the morning wake-up call. It was delivered perfectly, and reminded everyone to be on the lookout for Bottlenose Dolphin as we came into Aberdeen. The prediction proved to be accurate, and we soon had the resident pod in our binoculars, just outside the harbour entrance.

In a trip of never-ending highlights, it was a final flurry that brought us all back together on deck. It was the last sighting of note before we docked, had breakfast and prepared to disembark. Some were off to the airport, some to the train station, and others were making their own arrangements. The first of many farewells were therefore made, and we reluctantly made our way down the gangplank, accompanied by a Scottish piper.

We had been on an epic journey, seeing places many only dream of, and wildlife spectacles that will live long in the memory. It certainly felt that we could not have celebrated Naturetrek's fortieth anniversary in a more fitting way.



DESTINATIONS

ISLES OF SCILLY

- Annet (tender cruise)
- St Agnes (landed)

LUNDY AND PEMBROKESHIRE

- Lundy (landed)
- Grassholm (ship cruise)
- Skomer (Zodiac cruise)

ISLE OF MAN

- Isle of Man (Zodiac cruise)
- Calf of Man (landed)

NORTH CHANNEL

- Ailsa Craig (ship cruise)
- Rathlin Island (landed)

ST KILDA ARCHIPELAGO

- Hirta (landed)
- Soay Stac Lee, Armin & Boreray (ship cruise)

INNER HEBRIDES

- Iona (landed)
- Staffa (ship cruise)
- Ulva (landed)

NORTH-WEST HIGHLANDS

- Shiant Islands (Zodiac cruise)
- Handa (Zodiac cruise)
- Cape Wrath (ship cruise)

ORKNEY ISLANDS

- Papa Westray (landed)
- North Ronaldsay (landed)

SHETLAND ISLANDS

- Papa Stour (Zodiac cruise)
- Foula (landed)
- Sumburgh Head (ship cruise)
- Mousa (landed)
- Lerwick (landed)
- Fair Isle (landed)

Otters, orcas and a thousand puffins

A Naturetrek expedition round the British Isles, as viewed by a vagrant Wiltshire gentleman

1. It all started at Poole station
Naturetrekkers on location
A special anniversary peregrination.

2. First up the Isles of Scilly
No time to dally-dilly
Anchoring up in St Mary's Roads
Soon we're off to St Agnes's coves.

3. Some go on the long walk
Some go on the short
And some go in-between;
But most end up in Troy Town
For lashings of lush ice-cream.

4. On Monday we are off to Lundy
For razorbills, guillemots and shags;
With kittiwakes and fulmars I'm soon puffin-ed out
While the gannets are too many to count.

5. The weather is quite amazing
Blue sky, light winds and a sun
Which is forever blazing -
Perfect for birding, boating and fun.

6. There's even more puffins on Skomer
And kittiwakes on the Calf of Man
This journey is worthy of Homer
Crossing seas and shores and land.

7. The call of the Zodiac is daily
Lifejackets and waterproofs a must
To carry you over safely
The skippers are maniacs¹ you can trust.

8. The weather is drier in Iona
And the Abbey is looking grey
The corncrakes are rasping but hiding
As the terns soar over the Bay.

9. Now we are pottering by Ulva
Calm waters and a tree-lined Sound;
A ferry, a pub and lobster pots
As two otters bob up and down!

10. Next day we reach the Shiant
Sadly it's windy and wet;
But the Zodiacs will dance
To the tune of the terns
And five soaring eagles – what chance!?

11. At Ronaldsay we visit the lighthouse
And say hello to the fulmars;
But later the lounge is a madhouse
As we all rush to see the Orcas!

12. And so our expedition is ending, it seems
After gorging on wildlife galore;
Seascapes and landscapes will fill our dreams
With otters and seals on the shore.

13. So hats off to Ocean Nova
And its brilliant, hardworking crew;
We are just sorry it's all over
Now washing up is for us to do.

14. And hats off to our tour leaders
Making the schedule flow
On point, on time and in order
In an (almost) seamless show.

15. And all will say:
Hats off to celebrate
Naturetrek's fortieth birthday!

Trevor Cherrett
June 2026

¹ Just because it rhymes with Zodiacs – honest, guv.

Species lists

Birds (H=heard only)

I=Introduced		May - June 2026													
Common name	Scientific name	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	31	1	2	3	4	
Mute Swan	<i>Cygnus olor</i>	✓								✓					
Whooper Swan	<i>Cygnus cygnus</i>										1				
Canada Goose	<i>Branta canadensis</i>	✓						✓							
Greylag Goose	<i>Anser anser</i>					✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓			
Common Shelduck	<i>Tadorna tadorna</i>	✓	✓			✓				✓			✓		
King Eider	<i>Somateria spectabilis</i>											1♀			
Common Eider	<i>Somateria mollissima</i>				✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		
Red-breasted Merganser	<i>Mergus serrator</i>		✓					✓	✓	✓		✓			
Tufted Duck	<i>Aythya fuligula</i>					✓	✓			✓	✓	✓			
Northern Shoveler	<i>Spatula clypeata</i>									✓					
Mallard	<i>Anas platyrhynchos</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓		✓	✓	✓	✓		
Common Teal	<i>Anas crecca</i>					✓									
Common Pheasant	<i>Phasianus colchicus</i>			✓	✓			H							
Common Quail	<i>Coturnix coturnix</i>		✓								H				
Little Grebe	<i>Tachybaptus ruficollis</i>					✓				✓					
Common Cuckoo	<i>Cuculus canorus</i>			✓	✓			H					✓		
European Turtle Dove	<i>Streptopelia turtur</i>			1											
Eurasian Collared Dove	<i>Streptopelia decaocto</i>		✓			✓	✓			✓		✓			
Common Wood Pigeon	<i>Columba palumbus</i>		✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓			
Rock Dove	<i>Columba livia</i>							✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		
Feral Rock Dove - I	<i>Columba livia</i>		✓	✓			✓	✓				✓			
Stock Dove	<i>Columba oenas</i>			✓											
Water Rail	<i>Rallus aquaticus</i>					H									
Corn Crane	<i>Crex crex</i>					✓		✓							
Common Moorhen	<i>Gallinula chloropus</i>					✓				✓			✓		
Eurasian Coot	<i>Fulica atra</i>					✓				✓					
Pied Avocet	<i>Recurvirostra avosetta</i>	✓													
Eurasian Oystercatcher	<i>Haematopus ostralegus</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	

I=introduced		May - June 2026													
Common name	Scientific name	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	31	1	2	3	4	
European Golden Plover	<i>Pluvialis apricaria</i>									✓	✓		H		
Common Ringed Plover	<i>Charadrius hiaticula</i>			✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		
Northern Lapwing	<i>Vanellus vanellus</i>					✓		✓		✓	✓		✓		
Eurasian Whimbrel	<i>Numenius phaeopus</i>		✓		✓		✓			✓	✓	H			
Eurasian Curlew	<i>Numenius arquata</i>		✓					✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		
Bar-tailed Godwit	<i>Limosa lapponica</i>									✓					
Common Snipe	<i>Gallinago gallinago</i>						✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		
Common Sandpiper	<i>Actitis hypoleucos</i>							✓	✓						
Red-necked Phalarope	<i>Phalaropus lobatus</i>									1					
Wood Sandpiper	<i>Tringa glareola</i>									2					
Common Redshank	<i>Tringa totanus</i>									✓	✓	✓	✓		
Ruddy Turnstone	<i>Arenaria interpres</i>			✓						✓		✓			
Ruff	<i>Calidris pugnax</i>									1					
Sanderling	<i>Calidris alba</i>					✓			✓	✓	✓				
Dunlin	<i>Calidris alpina</i>		✓			8			✓	✓		H			
Purple Sandpiper	<i>Calidris maritima</i>								1						
Little Stint	<i>Calidris minuta</i>									1					
Arctic Skua	<i>Stercorarius parasiticus</i>	✓			✓		✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		
Pomarine Skua	<i>Stercorarius pomarinus</i>	✓													
Great Skua	<i>Stercorarius skua</i>						✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		
Atlantic Puffin	<i>Fratercula arctica</i>		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		
Black Guillemot	<i>Cepphus grylle</i>				✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		
Razorbill	<i>Alca torda</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		
Common Guillemot	<i>Uria aalge</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
Sandwich Tern	<i>Thalasseus sandvicensis</i>	✓	H							✓					
Arctic Tern	<i>Sterna paradisaea</i>							✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		
Common Tern	<i>Sterna hirundo</i>	✓				✓	✓	✓	✓			✓			
Black-legged Kittiwake	<i>Rissa tridactyla</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
Black-headed Gull	<i>Chroicocephalus ridibundus</i>	✓				✓	✓	✓		✓		✓	✓	✓	
Mediterranean Gull	<i>Ichthyætus melanocephalus</i>	✓													
Common Gull	<i>Larus canus</i>					✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓			✓	

I=introduced		May - June 2026												
Common name	Scientific name	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	31	1	2	3	4
European Herring Gull	<i>Larus argentatus</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Great Black-backed Gull	<i>Larus marinus</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Glaucous Gull	<i>Larus hyperboreus</i>										1			
Lesser Black-backed Gull	<i>Larus fuscus</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓			✓	
Iceland Gull	<i>Larus glaucoideus</i>						1							
Red-throated Diver	<i>Gavia stellata</i>				✓	✓			✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
Great Northern Diver	<i>Gavia immer</i>		2					✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		
Black-throated Diver	<i>Gavia arctica</i>					✓			✓					
European Storm Petrel	<i>Hydrobates pelagicus</i>			✓	✓		✓		✓	✓		H		
Northern Fulmar	<i>Fulmarus glacialis</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Sooty Shearwater	<i>Ardenna grisea</i>		✓											
Manx Shearwater	<i>Puffinus puffinus</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓			
Northern Gannet	<i>Morus bassanus</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
European Shag	<i>Gulosus aristotelis</i>		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Great Cormorant	<i>Phalacrocorax carbo</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓
Little Egret	<i>Egretta garzetta</i>	✓												
Grey Heron	<i>Ardea cinerea</i>	✓						✓		✓	✓			
Common Swift	<i>Apus apus</i>		✓	✓										
Golden Eagle	<i>Aquila chrysaetos</i>						1		1					
Eurasian Sparrowhawk	<i>Accipiter nisus</i>					✓								
Hen Harrier	<i>Circus cyaneus</i>				✓			✓		✓				
White-tailed Eagle	<i>Haliaeetus albicilla</i>							✓	6					
Common Buzzard	<i>Buteo buteo</i>	✓		✓	✓	✓		✓	✓					
Great Spotted Woodpecker	<i>Dendrocopos major</i>							H						
Common Kestrel	<i>Falco tinnunculus</i>			✓				✓						
Eurasian Hobby	<i>Falco subbuteo</i>			✓									✓	
Peregrine Falcon	<i>Falco peregrinus</i>	✓		✓	✓		1							
Eurasian Golden Oriole	<i>Oriolus oriolus</i>			✓										
Red-billed Chough	<i>Pyrrhocorax pyrrhocorax</i>			✓	✓	✓								
Western Jackdaw	<i>Coloeus monedula</i>			✓	✓	✓		✓	✓			✓		
Rook	<i>Corvus frugilegus</i>							✓						

I=introduced		May - June 2026												
Common name	Scientific name	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	31	1	2	3	4
Northern Raven	<i>Corvus corax</i>			✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		
Carrion Crow	<i>Corvus corone</i>	✓	✓	✓										
Hooded Crow	<i>Corvus corone cornix</i>				✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
Eurasian Blue Tit	<i>Cyanistes caeruleus</i>							✓						
Great Tit	<i>Parus major</i>		✓			✓		✓						
Eurasian Skylark	<i>Alauda arvensis</i>			✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
Icterine Warbler	<i>Hippolais icterina</i>										1			
Sedge Warbler	<i>Acrocephalus schoenobaenus</i>			H	H	✓		✓		✓			✓	
Marsh Warbler	<i>Acrocephalus palustris</i>						1							
Common Reed Warbler	<i>Acrocephalus scirpaceus</i>	✓											✓	
Sand Martin	<i>Riparia riparia</i>			✓		✓		✓		✓				
Barn Swallow	<i>Hirundo rustica</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	
Western House Martin	<i>Delichon urbicum</i>		✓	✓		✓	✓	✓		✓	✓		✓	
Willow Warbler	<i>Phylloscopus trochilus</i>		✓	✓		✓		✓		✓			✓	
Common Chiffchaff	<i>Phylloscopus collybita</i>			✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓		✓	
Eurasian Blackcap	<i>Sylvia atricapilla</i>		✓	✓				✓		✓	✓		✓	
Lesser Whitethroat	<i>Curruca curruca</i>												✓	
Common Whitethroat	<i>Curruca communis</i>			✓	✓	✓		✓						
Eurasian Treecreeper	<i>Certhia familiaris</i>							✓						
Eurasian ('British') Wren	<i>Troglodytes troglodytes</i>		✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓				
St Kilda Wren	<i>Troglodytes troglodytes hirtensis</i>						✓							
Shetland Wren	<i>Troglodytes troglodytes zetlandicus</i>										✓	✓		
Fair Isle Wren	<i>Troglodytes troglodytes fridariensis</i>												H	
Common Starling	<i>Sturnus vulgaris</i>		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	
Mistle Thrush	<i>Turdus viscivorus</i>							✓						
Song Thrush	<i>Turdus philomelos</i>		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓						
Common Blackbird	<i>Turdus merula</i>		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
Spotted Flycatcher	<i>Muscicapa striata</i>			✓				✓		✓				
European Robin	<i>Erithacus rubecula</i>		✓	✓	✓	✓		✓		✓				
European Stonechat	<i>Saxicola rubicola</i>		✓	✓	✓	✓		✓						
Northern Wheatear	<i>Oenanthe oenanthe</i>		✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	

I= introduced		May - June 2026												
Common name	Scientific name	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	31	1	2	3	4
Dunnock	<i>Prunella modularis</i>		✓	✓		✓		✓						
House Sparrow	<i>Passer domesticus</i>		✓	✓	✓	✓		✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	
Pied Wagtail	<i>Motacilla alba yarrellii</i>		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	
Meadow Pipit	<i>Anthus pratensis</i>		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	
European Rock Pipit	<i>Anthus petrosus</i>		✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓
Eurasian Chaffinch	<i>Fringilla coelebs</i>		✓	✓		✓		✓						
Common Rosefinch	<i>Carpodacus erythrurus</i>												1♀	
Eurasian Bullfinch	<i>Pyrrhula pyrrhula</i>							✓						
European Greenfinch	<i>Chloris chloris</i>							✓						
Twite	<i>Linaria flavirostris</i>											1	✓	
Common Linnet	<i>Linaria cannabina</i>		✓	✓	✓	✓		✓		✓	✓		✓	
Redpoll	<i>Acanthis flammea</i>					✓		✓			✓	✓	✓	
Crossbill	<i>Loxia curvirostra</i>												1	
European Goldfinch	<i>Carduelis carduelis</i>		✓	✓	✓	✓		✓						
Eurasian Siskin	<i>Spinus spinus</i>						✓	✓						
Common Reed Bunting	<i>Emberiza schoeniclus</i>					H		✓		H				

Mammals

		May - June 2026												
Common name	Scientific name	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	31	1	2	3	4
European Rabbit	<i>Oryctolagus cuniculus</i>			✓	✓	✓				✓	✓	✓	✓	
Mountain (Irish) Hare	<i>Lepus timidus</i>					✓								
Brown Rat	<i>Rattus norvegicus</i>											✓		
Wood Mouse	<i>Apodemus sylvaticus</i>									✓				
Common Minke Whale	<i>Balaenoptera acutorostrata</i>				3	3		1	1					
Killer Whale	<i>Orcinus orca</i>									2				
Risso's Dolphin	<i>Grampus griseus</i>		3-4		6									
Common Bottlenose Dolphin	<i>Tursiops truncatus</i>								6			20		6
Common Dolphin	<i>Delphinus delphis</i>			100	✓				2					
Harbour Porpoise	<i>Phocoena phocoena</i>		150+	4	20	2			6	✓		4		

		May - June 2026												
Common name	Scientific name	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	31	1	2	3	4
Sika Deer	<i>Cervus nippon</i>			✓										
Grey Seal	<i>Halichoerus grypus</i>		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
Harbour Seal	<i>Phoca vitulina</i>					14		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
Eurasian Otter	<i>Lutra lutra</i>							✓		✓	✓	✓		

Amphibians

		May - June 2026													
Common name	Scientific name	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	31	1	2	3	4	
Common Toad	<i>Bufo bufo</i>							✓							
Common Frog	<i>Rana temporaria</i>										✓				

Butterflies

		May - June 2026												
Common name	Scientific name	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	31	1	2	3	4
Common Brimstone	<i>Gonepteryx rhamni</i>					✓								
Clouded Yellow	<i>Colias croceus</i>		✓											
Large White	<i>Pieris brassicae</i>		✓	✓		✓		✓						
Small White	<i>Pieris rapae</i>		✓	✓		✓								
Holly Blue	<i>Celastrina argiolus</i>		✓	✓										
Common Blue	<i>Polyommatus icarus</i>		✓											
Painted Lady	<i>Vanessa cardui</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓				✓	✓	✓		
Red Admiral	<i>Vanessa atalanta</i>		✓	✓		✓				✓	✓		✓	
Peacock Butterfly	<i>Aglais io</i>				✓									
Small Heath	<i>Coenonympha pamphilus</i>			✓										
Speckled Wood	<i>Pararge aegeria</i>		✓											

Moths

L=larva		May - June 2026													
Common name	Scientific name	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	31	1	2	3	4	
Six-spot Burnet	<i>Zygaena filipendulae</i>					✓									
Grass Eggar	<i>Lasiocampa trifolii</i>			L											
Oak Eggar	<i>Lasiocampa quercus</i>			L											
Fox Moth	<i>Macrothylacia rubi</i>					L									
Hummingbird Hawk-moth	<i>Macroglossum stellatarum</i>		✓	✓									✓		
Vestal	<i>Rhodometra sacraria</i>		✓												
Cinnabar	<i>Tyria jacobaeae</i>					✓									
Silver Y	<i>Autographa gamma</i>						✓						✓		

Other fauna & fungi

		May - June 2026												
Common name	Scientific name	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	31	1	2	3	4
Dor Beetle	<i>Geotrupes stercorarius</i>			✓										
Lion's Mane Jellyfish	<i>Cyanea capillata</i>				✓	✓		✓						
Blue Jellyfish	<i>Cyanea lamarckii</i>			✓				✓	✓					
Common Eel	<i>Anguilla anguilla</i>						✓					✓		
Sea Gooseberry	<i>Pleurobrachia pileus</i>								✓					
Heath Navel (fungus)	<i>Lichenomphalia umbellifera</i>										✓			

Plants

I=Introduced		
Scientific name	Common name	Comments
Equisetaceae	Horsetails	
<i>Equisetum fluviatile</i>	Water Horsetail	Common in wet ditches
<i>Equisetum arvense</i>	Field Horsetail	Seen frequently
Ophioglossaceae	Adder's-tongues	
<i>Ophioglossum azoricum</i>	Small Adder's-tongue	Seen in clifftop turf on Foula
Dennstaedtiaceae	Brackens	
<i>Pteridium aquilinum</i>	Common Bracken	Common
Dryopteridaceae	Buckler Ferns	
<i>Dryopteris filix-mas</i>	Common Male Fern	Seen regularly
<i>Dryopteris dilatata</i>	Broad Buckler Fern	Lundy
Polypodiaceae	Polypodys	
<i>Polypodium vulgare</i>	Common Polypody	Seen regularly on walls
Athyriaceae	Lady Ferns	
<i>Athyrium filix-femina</i>	[Common] Lady Fern	Seen regularly
<i>Cystopteris fragilis</i>	Brittle Bladder Fern	St Kilda
Blechnaceae	Hard-ferns	
<i>Struthiopteris spicant</i>	Common Hard Fern	Seen occasionally
Aspleniaceae	Spleenworts	
<i>Asplenium scolopendrium</i>	Hart's-tongue	Seen regularly
<i>Asplenium marinum</i>	Sea Spleenwort	Lundy and Iona
<i>Asplenium trichomanes</i>	Maidenhair Spleenwort	"
<i>Asplenium ruta-muraria</i>	Wall-rue	"
Cupressaceae	Cypress Family	
<i>Juniperus communis</i>	Common Juniper	
Orchidaceae	Orchids	
<i>Orchis mascula</i>	Early Purple Orchid	Robust specimen on Rathlin
<i>Dactylorhiza maculata</i>	Heath Spotted Orchid	Seen regularly
<i>Dactylorhiza purpurella</i>	Northern Marsh Orchid	Seen occasionally
Liliaceae	Lily Family	
<i>Narcissus poeticus</i>	Pheasant's Eye	Iona

I=Introduced		
Scientific name	Common name	Comments
Iridaceae	Iris Family	
<i>Gladiolus communis</i>	Eastern Gladiolus - I	St Agnes - Planted?
<i>Crocasmia x crocosmiiflora</i>	Montbretia - I	"
<i>Iris foetidissima</i>	Stinking Iris	Leaves only
<i>Iris pseudacorus</i>	Yellow Iris	Seen regularly
Amaryllidaceae	Amaryllis Family	
<i>Allium triquetrum</i>	Three-cornered Garlic - I	St Agnes - Planted?
Asparagaceae	Asparagus Family	
<i>Hyacinthoides non-scripta</i>	Common Bluebell	Seen regularly
<i>Scilla verna</i>	Spring Squill	Seen widely
Cyperaceae	Sedge Family	
<i>Eriophorum angustifolium</i>	Common Cottongrass	Seen occasionally
Juncaceae	Rushes	
<i>Luzula multiflora</i>	Heath Wood-rush	
<i>Juncus articulatus</i>	Jointed Rush	
Poaceae	Grasses	
<i>Phalaris arundinacea</i>	Reed Canary-grass	Planted widely
<i>Calamagrostis arenaria</i>	European Marram	Sand dunes
<i>Dactylis glomerata</i>	Common Cock's-foot	Seen widely
<i>Cynosurus cristatus</i>	Crested Dog's-tail	"
<i>Poa annua</i>	Annual Meadow-grass	"
<i>Poa trivialis</i>	Rough Meadow-grass	"
<i>Bromus hordeaceus</i>	Common Soft-brome	"
<i>Elymus repens</i>	Common Couch	"
<i>Phragmites australis</i>	Common Reed	"
Papaveraceae	Poppy Family	
<i>Fumaria muralis</i>	Common Ramping-fumitory	Seen occasionally
<i>Papaver rhoeas</i>	Common Poppy	"
Ranunculaceae	Buttercup Family	
<i>Ficaria verna</i>	Lesser Celandine	Common
<i>Ranunculus acris</i>	Meadow Buttercup	"
<i>Ranunculus repens</i>	Creeping Buttercup	"

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Scientific name	Common name	Comments
<i>Ranunculus bulbosus</i>	Bulbous Buttercup	"
<i>Ranunculus sardous</i>	Hairy Buttercup	
<i>Caltha palustris</i>	Marsh-marigold	Prolific in places
Crassulaceae	Stonecrop Family	
<i>Umbilicus rupestris</i>	Common Navelwort	Seen regularly on walls
<i>Rhodiola rosea</i>	Roseroot	Seen occasionally on cliffs
<i>Sedum acre</i>	Biting Stonecrop	Seen regularly on walls
<i>Sedum anglicum</i>	English Stonecrop	"
Geraniaceae	Crane's-bills	
<i>Geranium robertianum</i>	Common Herb-Robert	Seen regularly
<i>Geranium maderense</i>	Giant Herb-Robert	St Agnes - planted
<i>Erodium cicutarium</i>	Common Stork's-bill	Seen regularly
Onagraceae	Willowherb Family	
<i>Fuchsia magellanica</i>	Magellanic Fuchsia - I	St Agnes - naturalised
<i>Chamaenerion angustifolium</i>	Rosebay Willowherb	Seen occasionally
Lythraceae	Purple Loosestrife Family	
<i>Lythrum salicaria</i>	Purple Loosestrife	"
Polygalaceae	Milkworts	
<i>Polygala serpyllifolia</i>	Heath Milkwort	Seen in short turf - mostly white
Fabaceae	Pea Family	
<i>Ulex europaeus</i>	Common Gorse	Seen occasionally
<i>Ulex gallii</i>	Western Gorse	St Agnes and Lundy
<i>Anthyllis vulneraria</i>	Common Kidney Vetch	Lundy
<i>Lotus corniculatus</i>	Common Bird's-foot-trefoil	Seen widely
<i>Lotus pedunculatus</i>	Greater Bird's-foot-trefoil	Seen occasionally
<i>Trifolium repens</i>	White Clover	Seen regularly
<i>Trifolium occidentale</i>	Western Clover	St Agnes
<i>Trifolium campestre</i>	Hop Trefoil	Seen regularly
<i>Trifolium dubium</i>	Lesser Trefoil	"
<i>Trifolium pratense</i>	Red Clover	"
<i>Trifolium subterraneum</i>	Subterranean Clover	St Agnes
<i>Vicia sativa subsp. segetalis</i>	Common Vetch	Seen Regularly

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<i>Galega officinalis</i>	Goats Rue	Lundy
Fagaceae	Oak Family	
<i>Quercus petraea</i>	Sessile Oak	Seen regularly
<i>Quercus robur</i>	Pedunculate Oak	"
Myricaceae	Wax-myrtles	
<i>Myrica gale</i>	Bog-myrtle	Seen occasionally
Betulaceae	Birch Family	
<i>Betula pendula</i>	Silver Birch	"
<i>Betula pubescens</i>	Downy Birch	"
<i>Alnus glutinosa</i>	European Alder	"
<i>Corylus avellana</i>	European Hazel	"
Rosaceae	Rose Family	
<i>Rubus fruticosus</i> agg.	Common Bramble	Common
<i>Potentilla erecta</i>	Common Tormentil	"
<i>Potentilla reptans</i>	Creeping Cinquefoil	"
<i>Argentina anserina</i>	Silverweed	"
<i>Fragaria vesca</i>	Wild Strawberry	Rathlin
<i>Crataegus monogyna</i>	Common Hawthorn	Seen occasionally
<i>Sorbus aucuparia</i>	Common Rowan	
Urticaceae	Nettle Family	
<i>Urtica dioica</i>	Common Nettle	Common
Sapindaceae	Soapberry Family	
<i>Acer pseudoplatanus</i>	Common Sycamore - I	Seen regularly
Malvaceae	Mallow Family	
<i>Malva arborea</i>	Common Tree-mallow - I	Iona
Brassicaceae	Crucifers	
<i>Coincya monensis</i> subsp. <i>wrightii</i>	Lundy Cabbage	Endemic to Lundy
<i>Hesperis matronalis</i>	Common Dame's-violet	Iona
<i>Nasturtium officinale</i>	Common Water-cress	Seen regularly
<i>Cardamine pratensis</i>	Cuckooflower	"
<i>Cardamine flexuosa</i>	Wavy Bitter-cress	
<i>Cochlearia officinalis</i>	Common Scurvygrass	Seen regularly on cliffs

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Scientific name	Common name	Comments
<i>Cochlearia danica</i>	Early [Danish] Scurvygrass	Seen occasionally
<i>Crambe maritima</i>	Common Sea Kale	St Agnes
<i>Cakile maritima</i>	Sea Rocket	"
<i>Rhamphospermum arvense</i>	Charlock	"
Oxalidaceae	Wood-sorrels	
<i>Oxalis articulata</i>	Common Pink-sorrel - I	Garden escape
<i>Oxalis pes-caprae</i>	Cape Sorrel [Bermuda-buttercup] - I	
Violaceae	Violets	
<i>Viola riviniana</i>	Common Dog-violet	Seen regularly
<i>Viola canina</i>	Heath Dog Violet	Seen occasionally
<i>Viola palustris</i>	Marsh Violet	"
Salicaceae	Willow Family	
<i>Salix cinerea</i>	Grey Willow	Seen regularly
<i>Populus tremula</i>	European Aspen	"
Hypericaceae	St John's-worts	
<i>Hypericum androsaemum</i>	Common Tutsan	St Agnes
<i>Hypericum tetrapterum</i>	Square-stalked St John's-wort	St Agnes and Iona
Tamaricaceae	Tamarisks	
<i>Tamarix gallica</i>	Common Tamarisk - I	"
Plumbaginaceae	Leadwort Family	
<i>Armeria maritima</i>	Common Thrift	Prolific!
Polygonaceae	Dock Family	
<i>Rumex acetosella</i>	Sheep's Sorrel	
<i>Rumex acetosa</i>	Common Sorrel	Seen widely
<i>Rumex crispus</i>	Curled Dock	Seen occasionally
<i>Rumex pulcher</i>	Fiddle Dock	"
<i>Rumex obtusifolius</i>	Broad-leaved Dock	"
Droseraceae	Sundews	
<i>Drosera rotundifolia</i>	Round-leaved Sundew	St Kilda, Foula
Caryophyllaceae	Campion Family	
<i>Spergularia rupicola</i>	Rock Sea-spurrey	St Agnes
<i>Spergularia rubra</i>	Sand Spurrey	"

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Scientific name	Common name	Comments
<i>Honckenya peploides</i>	Sea Sandwort	"
<i>Silene uniflora</i>	Sea Campion	Seen regularly on cliffs
<i>Silene dioica</i>	Red Campion	Seen regularly
<i>Silene flos-cuculi</i>	Ragged-Robin	Seen occasionally
<i>Rabelera holostea</i>	Greater Stitchwort	"
<i>Stellaria media</i>	Common Chickweed	"
<i>Cerastium fontanum</i>	Common Mouse-ear	"
Amaranthaceae	Amaranth Family	
<i>Beta vulgaris</i> subsp. <i>maritima</i>	Sea Beet	St Agnes
Aizoaceae	Iceplants	
<i>Carpobrotus edulis</i>	Hottentot-fig - I	St Agnes - garden escape
Montiaceae	Blinks Family	
<i>Montia fontana</i>	Blinks	Seen occasionally
Primulaceae	Primrose Family	
<i>Primula vulgaris</i>	Common Primrose	Rathlin, St Kilda , Fair Isle
<i>Trientalis europaea</i>	Chickweed Wintergreen	Foula
Ericaceae	Heath Family	
<i>Calluna vulgaris</i>	Common Heather	Seen regularly
<i>Erica cinerea</i>	Bell Heather	"
<i>Vaccinium myrtillus</i>	Common Bilberry	Seen occasionally
Campanulaceae	Bellflower Family	
<i>Jasione montana</i>	Sheep's-bit	Lundy
Menyanthaceae	Bogbean Family	
<i>Menyanthes trifoliata</i>	Bogbean	Seen occasionally
Asteraceae	Aster Family	
<i>Arctium minus</i>	Lesser Burdock	"
<i>Cirsium vulgare</i>	Spear Thistle	Seen regularly
<i>Cirsium palustre</i>	Marsh Thistle	"
<i>Cirsium arvense</i>	Creeping Thistle	"
<i>Hypochaeris radicata</i>	Common Cat's-ear	"
<i>Pilosella officinarum</i>	Common Mouse-ear-hawkweed	"
<i>Senecio vulgaris</i>	Common Groundsel	Seen occasionally

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Scientific name	Common name	Comments
<i>Jacobaea vulgaris</i>	Common Ragwort	
<i>Matricaria discoidea</i>	Pineappleweed	Lundy
<i>Leucanthemum vulgare</i>	Oxeye Daisy	Seen occasionally
<i>Bellis perennis</i>	Common Daisy	Common
<i>Olearia traversiorum</i>	Ake-ake - I	Hedging on St Agnes
<i>Taraxacum officinale</i>	Dandelion	Common
<i>Taraxacum pankhurstianum</i>	St Kilda Dandelion	Endemic to St Kilda
<i>Taraxacum faeroense</i>	Faeroes Dandelion	Seen on North Ronaldsay
Escalloniaceae	Escallonias	
<i>Escallonia rubra</i>	Red Escallonia - I	St Agnes
Viburnaceae	Viburnum Family	
<i>Sambucus nigra</i>	European Elder	Seen occasionally
Caprifoliaceae	Honeysuckle Family	
<i>Lonicera periclymenum</i>	Common Honeysuckle	"
<i>Centranthus ruber</i>	Red Valerian	St Agnes
Pittosporaceae	Pittosporums	
<i>Pittosporum tenuifolium</i>	Kohuhu - I	Hedging on St Kilda
Araliaceae	Aralia Family	
<i>Hydrocotyle vulgaris</i>	Marsh Pennywort	Seen regularly in damp ditches
<i>Hedera helix</i>	Common Ivy	Common
Apiaceae	Umbellifers	
<i>Eryngium maritimum</i>	Sea-holly	? St Agnes
<i>Smymium olusatrum</i>	Common Alexanders	Seen occasionally
<i>Anthriscus sylvestris</i>	Cow Parsley	"
<i>Daucus carota</i>	Common Carrot	St Agnes
<i>Aegopodium podagraria</i>	Ground-elder	Common
<i>Crithmum maritimum</i>	Rock Samphire	Seen regularly
<i>Conopodium majus</i>	Pignut	Lundy
<i>Heracleum sphondylium</i>	Common Hogweed	"
Convolvulaceae	Bindweed Family	
<i>Calystegia sepium</i>	Hedge Bindweed	"

I=Introduced		
Scientific name	Common name	Comments
Boraginaceae	Borage Family	
<i>Myosotis arvensis</i>	Field Forget-me-not	Seen occasionally
<i>Myosotis discolor</i>	Changing Forget-me-not	
Rubiaceae	Bedstraw Family	
<i>Rubia peregrina</i>	Wild Madder	"
<i>Sherardia arvensis</i>	Field Madder	"
<i>Galium verum</i>	Lady's Bedstraw	"
<i>Galium saxatile</i>	Heath Bedstraw	"
<i>Galium aparine</i>	Common Cleavers	"
Oleaceae	Olive Family	
<i>Fraxinus excelsior</i>	European Ash	"
Plantaginaceae	Plantain Family	
<i>Cymbalaria muralis</i>	Ivy-leaved Toadflax	Common on walls
<i>Digitalis purpurea</i>	Common Foxglove	St Agnes, Lundy
<i>Plantago coronopus</i>	Buck's-horn Plantain	Seen widely
<i>Plantago lanceolata</i>	Ribwort Plantain	"
<i>Veronica persica</i>	Common Field Speedwell	"
<i>Veronica x franciscana</i>	Hedge Veronica - I	Planted
Scrophulariaceae	Figwort Family	
<i>Scrophularia scorodonia</i>	Balm-leaved Figwort	Lundy - rare
<i>Scrophularia nodosa</i>	Common Figwort	
Lentibulariaceae	Butterworts	
<i>Pinguicula vulgaris</i>	Common Butterwort	St Kilda, Foula
Phrymaceae	Monkeyflower Family	
<i>Erythranthe guttata</i>	Common Monkeyflower - I	
Lamiaceae	Dead-nettle Family	
<i>Prunella vulgaris</i>	Common Selfheal	Seen occasionally
<i>Glechoma hederacea</i>	Ground-ivy	
<i>Mentha aquatica</i>	Water Mint	
<i>Thymus praecox ssp. britannicus</i>	Wild Thyme	
<i>Teucrium scorodonia</i>	Wood Sage	Seen regularly
<i>Ajuga reptans</i>	Common Bugle	Seen regularly

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<i>Ajuga pyramidalis</i>	Pyramidal Bugle	Ulva
<i>Lamium confertum</i>	Northern Dead-nettle	
Orobanchaceae	Broomrape Family	
<i>Rhinanthus minor</i>	Lesser Yellow Rattle	Seen occasionally
<i>Euphrasia officinalis</i>	Common Eyebright	? Seen - not easy to tell apart
<i>Euphrasia arctica</i>	Arctic Eyebright	"
<i>Euphrasia foulaensis</i>	Foula Eyebright	"
<i>Euphrasia micrantha</i>	Slender Eyebright	"
<i>Euphrasia scottica</i>	Scottish Eyebright	"
<i>Euphrasia heslop-harrisonii</i>	Heslop-Harrison's Eyebright	"
<i>Pedicularis sylvatica</i>	Common Lousewort	Seen regularly in short turf