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Tour Report
Arctic Fox Photography
1 – 7 March 2026

Harlequin



Blue morph Arctic fox



Blue morph Arctic fox



Blue morph Arctic fox



Compiled by Bret Charman

Sunday 1 March 2026

Day 1:
London Heathrow to Keflavik; transfer to Reykjavik

The official group flights were leaving at lunchtime on the Sunday, with a direct flight (with Icelandair) to Keflavik. We enjoyed a smooth flight across the North Atlantic, landing on time at Iceland's busy international airport. After passing through immigration and collecting our luggage, we were met by our driver, and it wasn't long before we were on the road.

There had been some heavy snowfall, and the landscape was covered in a layer of fresh snow. We made good time as we drove into Iceland's capital. The group were dropped off at Sunna Guesthouse in the late afternoon, where we checked in and headed to our rooms. Some of the group had arrived separately, and so I contacted everyone to let them know about our dinner plans this evening.

All but one of the group members met up for dinner, wandering the short distance into Reykjavik city centre. It was a crisp evening with plenty of snow and ice on the ground, while the Hallgrimskirkja church looked particularly striking this evening – particularly with the bright moon behind the towering steeple.



Our chosen restaurant is a reliable and 'reasonably' priced (as reasonable as you can get in Iceland's capital) Italian, where we enjoyed an excellent first meal together. Once everyone had had their fill, we paid our bills and wandered back to the guesthouse.

Monday 2 March 2026

Day 2:
Fly from Reykjavik to Ísafjörður; boat transfer to Kviar Lodge

We awoke to an icy and breezy morning in Reykjavik. Meeting outside the guesthouse entrance before the sun had risen, we were waiting for our transfer to Reykjavik. This small airport is only five minutes away from Sunna Guesthouse. Our van and driver turned up on time, before we were whisked the short distance to the airport. Upon our arrival, we unloaded our bags and settled ourselves into the small terminal building. They only check in forty minutes before departure and they opened on time which was a good sign.

I was liaising with the team in Ísafjörður, checking on the weather and all sounded promising. Suddenly, however, the flight was delayed. The delay was supposedly due to the weather, but everything sounded fine at the airport in Ísafjörður. Around an hour after the delay, the weather did deteriorate, and now flying looked extremely unlikely. To our surprise, they called us for boarding. Walking out into an ice-cold wind, we boarded the aircraft and took our seats. Within only a few minutes of sitting down, the pilot announced that due to the poor weather, we would be waiting on the tarmac. Eventually, the pilot made the call to delay the flight further and we were to disembark and return to the terminal.

Having settled back into our seats, the news came that they would delay the flight until after lunch. We didn't have anywhere to go and so I went up to the desk. The ground staff confirmed that we would be getting a food voucher to spend at the airport and the weather looked much more promising later on.

We passed the time chatting and sharing stories before buying some lunch from the airport café. We were delighted when they told us to check in our luggage once again and the call to board the aircraft came over the speaker. The group walked out into the bracing wind once again, before climbing up the steps and boarding the plane once again. This time, the engines started up and we taxied down the runway before taking off and heading north towards Iceland's Westfjords. There's always a chance that the plane can be turned back, but on this occasion the weather gods were kind to us.

The plane touched down in Ísafjörður as per the delayed arrival time. The group was greeted by our local guide Justin (well, he's American, but he's lived in the area for years). As soon as we had our luggage, it was loaded into the back of the van and we were driven around the fjord to the harbour. Everyone helped in loading the bags onto the boat, before settling in their seats for the crossing to Hornstrandir Nature Reserve. Our home for the next few nights would be Kviar Lodge. Nestled on the edge of Jokulfirdir, this remote farmhouse is the perfect base to photograph the habituated Arctic foxes that call this wild place home.

As we left the harbour, there were hundreds of common eider, as well as long-tailed and harlequin ducks too. The journey started off nice and smoothly, but as soon as we entered the main fjord, the strong westerly winds had whipped up a choppy swell. Being aboard this boat means it is never a problem; it is well equipped to deal with these seas and we made good progress. We arrived in front of Kviar after around an hour's voyage. The group once again helped to move the bags onto the zodiac, before we landed the luggage and some of the guests on shore. The rest of us followed on the second Zodiac trip ashore.

There, waiting for us, was our first Arctic fox. We had all our camera gear packed away and with lots to sort out this evening, we heaved our luggage up to the house. There was plenty of snow and the landscape was absolutely stunning today. It looked as though we would be lucky with foxes and the snow. We just had to hope it would continue throughout our stay. Once everyone was in the house, with our luggage and our supplies in place too, we showed everyone to their rooms.

The day had flown by, despite the delay, and it was soon time for dinner. Everyone had settled into their

rooms, and so we used dinner as an opportunity to explain how everything worked in the house, what the rules were regarding watching and photographing the foxes, and finally, what we could expect from the coming days. I shared some images from previous trips and delved a little deeper into settings and techniques for photographing our charismatic targets. After a long day, most of the group headed off for an early night, catching up on some rest.

Tuesday 3 March 2026

Day 3:
Hornstrandir Nature Reserve

Everyone awoke to a beautifully still morning, with the moon shining over the fjord. It was still dark as everyone stirred, meeting in the dining room for breakfast. Freshly brewed coffee and tea were ready, while everyone helped themselves to what was laid out on the table before them. The sun had started to rise, casting a pink glow across the sky, while the deep blue of water in the fjord provided a magical vista. Suitably fuelled for the day ahead, everyone headed outside and started to photograph the incredible views that were all around.



As the sun continued to rise, the pinks and purples turned to whites and blues. Now we just need a fox to provide everyone with their first images, just to take off the pressure. So, we set about scanning from out the front of the house to see if we could see our furry quarry. One member of the group had a thermal scope and spotted a glowing shape under the trees close to the house. Using my binoculars, I confirmed it was indeed a fox and we started to approach. The trees are a no-go area for us, to give the foxes somewhere to rest without disturbance, but we approached as close as was ethical. It was while we were here that we spotted a number of ptarmigan also using the trees for cover. Everyone spent a fair bit of time trying to get into the best position to photograph both species, but the options here were limited.

While the group photographed the fox and the ptarmigans, I decided I would head out along the coastline to see if I could find any other foxes for the group to photograph. I wandered along the small ridgeline running along the beach, finding plenty of evidence that the foxes were actively using the area. There were sea urchins and mussels, at least there were the remnants, while the foxes had left their scat in prominent positions along the ridge. One of the group had come with me to Hornstrandir before and decided to join me. It was as we climbed up a steep bank of snow (avoiding a deep gully) that we heard the calls of a fox up on the ridgeline above us.

Knowing I had someone watching the fox, I turned back and jogged (where possible) to tell the others that we had a fox in what looked like a more promising position. As I neared the house, where the group were just the other side, I spotted another fox ahead of me. I managed to gesture towards one of the group that a fox was coming up and they were rewarded with a brief view and a quick photo opportunity. I couldn't move quickly enough to catch up with the fox and instead paused for a moment to photograph a harlequin duck that was posing perfectly, only a few metres off the shoreline. Harlequins and eiders are common here, but they are not always the most cooperative species to photograph.



However, with the foxes being our primary focus, I rounded up the rest of the group and took them on an adventure across the snowfields to where I had left the guest with the fox on the ridgeline. We worked our way there to find that the fox had moved and was heading further up the ridgeline. Instead of what I had hoped would be a chance for some striking close-ups, we had to make do with environmental shots of the fox resting before it worked its way up the mountain. It was still a beautiful sight, but it wasn't quite what we had in mind. The great thing about Hornstrandir, though, is that you never know when a fox will show up and we still had plenty of time to get what we wanted.



The wind was already starting to pick up, and it was becoming a little wilder as we wandered back to the house. Having spent most of the morning outside, it was time for a well-deserved break to warm up and enjoy a hot drink. It actually wasn't too long before lunch, and so we stayed inside for lunch with the plan to head out at low tide to try and photograph a fox as they scavenged along the strand line.

Things didn't quite go to plan, though. During lunch, the wind had really started to pick up and there was now a large amount of spindrift flying through the air. The snow blowing across the frozen landscape added a difficult extra element to deal with. We all headed down to the beach, hoping the foxes were going to be searching for any easy pickings. With the northerly gusts, we had hoped that being down on the beach might give us a little shelter. However, by now the winds were reaching gale force and it was becoming increasingly difficult to see with massively reduced visibility. It reached a point where I decided it was time for us all to head indoors – for safety reasons.

With the winds expected to increase as the day went on, we made the decision to call time on the day's activities and stay inside. It gave everyone a first opportunity to back up their images (for those that wanted to) and unwind in Europe's remotest corner. Despite the wild weather, we'd had a great first day on Hornstrandir and we enjoyed another excellent meal prepared by Justin. One by one, the group retreated to their rooms for another night's sleep in Kviar.

Wednesday 4 March 2026

Day 4:
Hornstrandir Nature Reserve

We awoke to another clear morning. The calm after the storm. All was quiet around the house first thing, so we sat down for breakfast without any need to rush. With the weather looking calmer today, we hoped for a full day of photography with the foxes. It had actually rained overnight and the snow cover had reduced a little as a result.

Once everyone was ready, we headed out once again in all our winter kit to see what the day had in store for us. It was a slower start to the day, with the foxes keeping themselves out of sight for the most part and having limited opportunities first thing. With this in mind, I went out across the snow fields hoping to find a fox in a position that might reward the group with some photographic opportunities. It was noticeably more icy today, and progress was a little slower than usual on the ice-crusted snow. As I wandered over a small, snow-free mound, a fox erupted from underneath my feet, before pausing out in an open snow field. Luckily, it was a fox I was familiar with, and it didn't take long for her to settle back in her original position.



Having found a fox, I turned back and went as quickly as I could to where everyone else was scanning for any sign. As a group, we worked our way across the snow and positioned ourselves close to the female fox.

One guest, who had stayed with the female, had also spotted a second fox, this one was a male. So, now we were presented with two different foxes, but the female seemed to be particularly relaxed with our presence. As everybody moved into position to photograph the female, which was resting on the edge of some vegetation, the male suddenly got up and decided to come and have a look at us. He had a good nose around behind us, with most of us turning around to capture the moment, before returning to its original spot and curling up once more.





Once the male had settled back down, the female decided to put on a great show as she scratched and groomed herself only metres away from the group. In between these frantic moments of self-care, she would curl up and close her eyes.



Every now and then, she would open a solitary eye, just to make sure that none of us were getting closer. This behaviour went on for nearly two hours, and everybody was able to build up an incredible range of imagery. Whether people wanted to capture intimate portraits or whether they wanted shots of the foxes in this wintry world, the opportunities were exceptional.





Eventually, our subjects decided they had had enough of our presence and they took it upon themselves to move. They were in no way bothered by us being there, but they obviously had things to do. In fact, we walked back towards the house and for a little while, the female walked alongside us. We couldn't have asked for a better session. Everybody was delighted with the glut of images they had now added to their portfolio. This is what Hornstrandir is all about.



Having had the foxes be so compliant and pose perfectly for us all, we all agreed that we would carry on and leave them in peace. Returning to the house, it was the perfect time to enjoy a hot drink and a snack. What a fabulous morning we'd been treated to. You really can't ask for more than that. Looking at the tides, we

knew we had a good chance to get the foxes feeding along the beach at low tide after lunch. We'd make a concerted effort to photograph the foxes in the seaweed-covered beach, capturing an entirely different scene and photographic opportunity.



We enjoyed another delicious lunch, prepared by Justin as usual. Always on hand to look after the group and keep the house running smoothly, Justin is integral to keeping all our tours a success when staying at Kviar. Having had our fill once more, helped tidy everything away and clean up, and everyone headed out for the next 'session'. With the foxes' lives based around the tidal movements along their home territories, we just had to hope that they would do as we expected. The weather wasn't quite as pleasant as what we had experienced in the morning, with overcast conditions now dominating. However, this meant that we had great soft light for our afternoon search for foxes. After a little patience, we heard the calls of the resident male fox and he appeared on the ridgeline above the shore, close to the house.



He didn't hang around too long, but provided some of the group with a brief opportunity to capture some images. We then spent the next hour or so photographing foxes on the beach. We were spoilt with the number of opportunities and the striking photographic encounters.





It's amazing to see the blue morph Arctic foxes moving across this rich habitat. Although their thick winter coats are perfectly adapted to keep them warm in the freezing conditions, they do stick out like a sore thumb on the snowy landscape above the tide line. However, as soon as they are in this rocky world, covered in seaweed and algae, they blend in perfectly. In fact, it can be remarkably difficult to spot them until they move.

When photographing the foxes in this habitat, the best thing is to get ahead of them. We kept moving ahead of the fox we were hoping to photograph, letting them come to us. This means that each member of the group were able to capture images from more environmental in nature, to close-up portraits. Everybody built up yet another in-depth portfolio of imagery, maximising the opportunities afforded to us.



After filling up our cards with countless stunning portraits, the fox moved further up the beach, out of sight.



After an action-packed day of photography, we retreated to the house to warm ourselves and prep for dinner. Justin was busy in the kitchen once again, cooking up another veritable feast, while we set the table and enjoyed some warm drinks before dinner was served. We enjoyed yet another superb meal and talked about the fantastic fox opportunities we all enjoyed today.

Thursday 5 March 2026

Day 5:
Hornstrandir; transfer to Ísafjörður

Today, perched on the edge of Hornstrandir Nature Reserve, we awoke to another glorious morning. The moon was shining brightly and was reflecting off the water in the fjord. Yet another pinch me moment in Europe's wildest and most remote corner. Unfortunately, we had the news confirmed that we would have to leave Kviar Lodge early due to extreme weather even forecast for the following day, and the next few days after that. The team on the ground agreed that we could spend the whole day, maximising the photographic opportunities, with an evening pick up from the beach in front of the house.





Justin pulled out all the stops for our final breakfast, with freshly made pancakes providing this morning's culinary delight. We knew we had one final day to maximise our photographic opportunities, and everyone was out promptly after breakfast. The light was absolutely magical this morning, once again, with the morning sun illuminating the snow-clad mountain behind the house. We had some action almost immediately around the house, with foxes moving by at speed. It wasn't the best opportunity for photography, but it was good to know that the foxes were about.

It was then that everything went a little quiet. We had hoped the foxes might come to us this morning, but it seemed as if we'd have to work a little harder than that. With that in mind, we set off along the shore, heading to some of the previous spots we had spotted foxes over the couple of days prior.

We were being thoroughly spoilt by the weather so far. The wind was slight and as we walked along in the bright sunshine, it was surprisingly warm. The foxes continued to elude us. Eventually, we made it all the way to the spit which is where an old walled field sits with water on two sides. There was plenty of evidence of our fox friends, but no sign of the cunning mammals themselves. We took to simply enjoying the moment. The majestic scenery, absolute peace and serenity, bar the odd wooing of an eider or the distant calls of gulls on the breeze. It was one of those moments where all the world's worries disappear and you revel in the moment. The sound of the waves was crashing on the shingle shore when a small group of harlequins came surprisingly close. They offered a brief opportunity to photograph them as they swam by, with the rich blue waters providing contrast against their variable colours. Keeping them smaller in the frame really helped give a sense of scale. A tiny duck bobbing around in a huge fjord with the rich blue waters primarily making up the frame.



With only limited time today, we decided it was probably time to head back and see if we could find a fox. The group slowly retraced their steps along the coast, winding their way back toward the house. It was just as we approached the house that I heard the call of a fox close by. There, sat on a slight ridge, was a fox curled up in the tundra. We had another fox to work with in a stunning position. What more could we ask

for? The group ensured they didn't disturb the fox, always keeping their distance, allowing the fox to stay relaxed and provide the best photographic opportunities.



We'd been photographing the fox whilst it was curled up, enjoying the warmth of the later winter sun, when suddenly it woke. It gave a couple of loud calls, asserting its claim over the surrounding territory, before trotting off. When the foxes are on the move, we generally don't follow them and, on this occasion, we decided it was probably time to leave the fox in peace and wander back to the house to warm up.

The group used the time to get their things together and move everything outside so that we would be ready for the boat's departure this evening. It wasn't long before everyone's luggage was outside and ready to go, but it was soon time for lunch. Once everyone had finished eating, I helped Justin with the housework, while the group soon headed back outside.

It was all timed perfectly, as the tide was out as the group put on their warm clothing. Wandering down the beach, it wasn't long before they spotted a fox. They wandered down to a spot where a fox had found a prize and the perfect meal. It looked like it was a whole cod. Several of the group photographed the amazing behaviour as the fox fed and then stashed its food, travelling several hundred metres inland to bury the excess of its feast.

By the time I had joined the group outside, the fox had already either eaten or caught the fish, and so we focused our efforts on the other foxes, which were busy searching for food down on the beach. The group were now following a young fox along the beach, keeping their distance, while I was approaching from the other direction. This little fox was completely relaxed and was just going about its business, putting on one heck of a show for everyone, providing them with a great selection of images and just further adding to their now bulging portfolio.

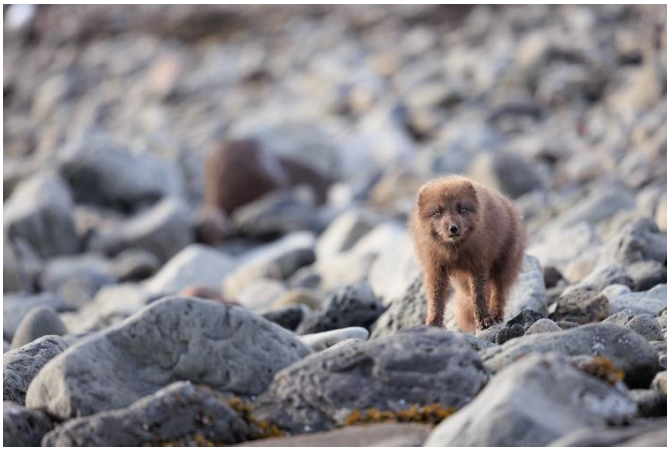


Everybody was having an exceptional final day on Hornstrandir, we couldn't have asked for more.



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Trying to get ahead of this small, but beautiful fox, we got to a point where she decided to head along the beach with speed and that was our cue to pause. However, just as soon as the small fox had moved on, the large resident male made an appearance above us.



What luck! We couldn't believe it. Our day just got better and better. The male started off by exploring the ridgeline up above us, before working its way along the large snowbank in front of us. By sitting on this large snow drift, it meant the group were able to overexpose and focus on capturing some striking high-key imagery.

It's hard to get this style of photography right. You need to overexpose enough to ensure the fox is correctly exposed, while keeping the whites white, without blowing them out. Thanks to modern mirrorless cameras and exposure simulation, this task has become infinitely easier and it is possible to even check the histogram through the viewfinder. The group were once again firing away as the fox decided to put on quite a show for everyone.



The minimal approach of high key photography is particularly rewarding when you get it right.



There wasn't just the one fox moving around; there were at least three exploring the area along the foreshore to the east of the house. We watched two squabble over a hundred yards away, interrupting our stunning close sessions. This is what Hornstrandir is all about. The foxes here are used to people, but they definitely do their own thing and regularly come and go as they please.

The day had raced by and everybody was grinning after another fantastic session with the Arctic foxes. As I am sure you can tell from this report, the opportunities afforded to us were exceptional and it's just one of the reasons I am delighted to keep coming back. However, one of the big draws of this place is its solitude and the magnificent natural beauty. Below is another panoramic taken from right outside the house, just to give you a sense of the area's majesty.



There was time for tea and coffee before starting to move our luggage and all the used supplies down to the beach. The warmth of the sun was fading away as the afternoon turned to evening and the light began to fade. The boat appeared on the horizon and was soon anchored in the fjord. The skipper drove the zodiac to shore, picking up Justin, before returning to the boat. Once everything was set, Justin returned to shore to pick up the luggage and the group. After two runs, all the group and the luggage were safely aboard. The first half of the crossing was very comfortable, before we rounded the headland and entered the larger fjord. The swell suddenly picked up, and the last 20 minutes or so were a little choppier. However, we made good progress and were soon on the quayside in Ísafjörður.

Our team on the ground and back in the office had quickly made arrangements for us, booking us into a guesthouse in the town centre. Once we were in our rooms, we met up soon after and wandered the short distance to the restaurant in the hotel. Whilst eating in the modern restaurant, we chatted about what an excellent trip we'd had and the magnificent sightings and photography we had enjoyed. Wandering back to the guesthouse, we said goodnight and retreated to our rooms.

Friday 6 March 2026

Day 6:
Ísafjörður to Reykjavik

We awoke to the calm before the storm. It had snowed a little overnight, which made navigating our way to breakfast a little easier. The guesthouse is owned by the main hotel in the town, and therefore breakfast was included. There wasn't much wind yet, but it was due to start later this morning, while the cloud was already covering the mountain tops. It looked as if our flight was going to be cancelled today – this morning's flight was already delayed and unlikely to leave Reykjavik.

With an 11 am checkout, Justin came and met us at the guesthouse to pick up our luggage and drop it at the hotel, using their storeroom for the day. We used the hotel lobby as a comfortable rest area while waiting for news on our flights. There was also the opportunity to utilise the town's facilities and grab some lunch. Justin had spoken with the airport staff and they suggested we find alternative arrangements out of town as they didn't expect any flights to arrive or depart today. With international flights for many of the group the following morning, we decided it was probably best to organise a bus to drive us to Reykjavik.

Justin did a fantastic job organising a driver and a purpose-built Icelandic minibus to drive us all the way to our accommodation in Reykjavik. We left at lunch time and headed through the spectacular scenery of the Westfjords towards the small town of Hólmavík. Here we had to stop for 40 minutes to allow our driver to meet his mandatory rest requirements before carrying on south to Iceland's capital city. The weather was wild at times and the snow-laden landscape was beautiful. Many of the group enjoyed the drive as they got to see the western side of this rugged island. Arriving in Reykjavik only half an hour later than our flight had been scheduled to land, we soon met up and headed to a nearby Thai restaurant for our final meal as a group.

Saturday 7 March 2026

Day 7:
Fly to London

For those of us on the group flights, we had an early departure from the guesthouse in our private transfer. We made good time, arriving at Keflavik with plenty of time, particularly as we had found out overnight our flight was to be delayed due to the extreme weather conditions. Once we had dropped our bags off at check-in, we proceeded through security and found a table to sit down and enjoy some breakfast. Passport control wasn't even open, so we had to wait before being allowed into the non-Schengen Area part of the terminal. Eventually, we boarded our flight back to the UK. Despite a bumpy start, the rest of the journey was very smooth and we arrived at London Heathrow safe and sound.

Once we had passed through immigration, we met up in baggage reclaim. With the group having collected their bags, we said our goodbyes and made our own respective journeys home.

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