

Tour Report Shetland Isles with Mike Dilger 22 -29 June 2024

Gannet



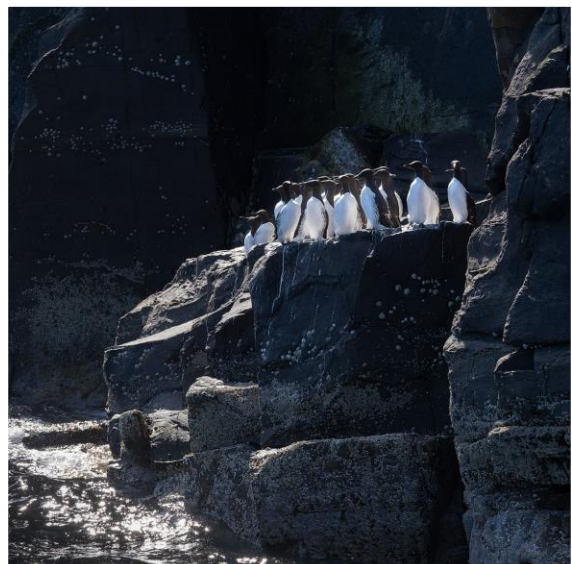
Arctic mouse-ear



Snipe



Guillemots



Compiled by Mike Dilger

Day 1:**Saturday 22 June 2024**

Southpunds (Levenwick), Clumlie Loch & Mousa

Weather: calm and high cloud, followed by a southwesterly wind, overcast and with a small amount on rain

Mike Dilger (MD) met his small yet perfectly formed group at 6pm in the Sumburgh Hotel reception for a brief introductory chat. Everyone had arrived in Shetland relatively unscathed; one guest had come the previous evening, while MD had picked up the remaining two from an Aberdeen flight earlier that day.

Following introductions, MD's group joined a larger group led by Dave Fairhurst (DS) for dinner. Both groups then gathered outside in preparation for their trip to Mousa. MD first took his group to Southpunds, overlooking a wetland area renowned as one of the best breeding locations on the archipelago for the elusive red-necked phalarope, one of the trip's most sought-after birds.

As we prepared to leave the hotel grounds, a male wheatear was seen feeding its young in the car park, and en route, the ever-present oystercatcher and curlew were spotted. Upon arriving at Southpunds, the stillness was so unusual that the first wildlife encounter was getting bitten by midges—a rare event in typically windy Shetland!

Despite the distance of about 400 metres from the ponds, MD quickly found a couple of red-necked phalaropes, with the light as late as 9pm still being sufficient to see them well. It was thrilling to observe such a rare breeding wader with its UK stronghold in Shetland. MD then assured the group they would hopefully see them closer later in the week. The air was also filled with skylarks' songs and occasional drumming snipe, while common gulls were also seen on the water.

Bothered by midges, the group returned to the minibus and drove the short distance to Loch Clumlie, where they quickly found a pair of whooper swans that had not managed to breed this year. MD explained that only around 30 pairs currently rear young in the UK, with most of the population returning to Iceland for breeding. A couple of Arctic terns flew over the loch, amid the calls of curlews. The wetland plants also fascinated the group, with MD pointing out ragged robin and extensive stands of common cottongrass.

Before heading to Sandsayre jetty, the group spotted a redshank over the water and a male wheatear perched atop a post. A brief stop at a lay-by on the main road also offered a magnificent view of Mousa Island, with fulmars and common gulls flying by. MD also spotted three gannets out at sea, likely heading to breeding colonies at either Noss or Hermaness.

Upon reaching Sandsayre, where the Mousa jetty is located, everyone used the facilities before admiring a female eider duck with three ducklings out on the water. As the wind began to pick up, everyone layered up for the short 10-15 minute boat trip to the island. MD pointed out a black guillemot in summer plumage as a few Arctic terns flew past.

Disembarking the boat, skipper Rodney allowed MD and DS's groups to head to the Iron Age Broch first. The brisk walk warmed everyone up, with the sound of snipe chipping as we passed through sheep pastures and boggy moorland. Passing a drystone wall, the churring call of the first storm petrel of the night was heard — a sound some describe as 'fairies being sick!'.

At the broch, MD shared insights about the ancient building, as they admired the tufted sea-air lichen covering every rock. Climbing the steps inside the double wall, all were able to enjoy the view from the top. Next positioning themselves outside to wait for the birds to arrive, the first male petrels could be heard churring from within the broch.

Soon, the first storm petrel was spotted whizzing around the broch, with numbers rapidly rising as more birds returned from their fishing expeditions. MD also found time to discuss the birds' fascinating lifecycle, noting their tendency to both pair for life and desire to return to exactly the same crevice each year to raise their single chick.

Find out more about our [Shetland Isles with Mike Dilger](#) trip or [contact us](#)

01962 302086 sales@wildlifeworldwide.com www.wildlifeworldwide.com

As both the wind and bird calls intensified, the best views were obtained by MD and the guests lying on their backs, as the birds whizzed overhead. Time swiftly passed, and at around 12:30am, we began to return to the boat, enriched by a unique experience. Once everyone was aboard, Skipper Rodney ferried us all back to the mainland, and upon returning to the hotel, the tired but delighted guests eventually headed to their beds around 1:45am, having truly enjoyed Shetland Isles' Simmer Dim.

Day 2:

Sunday 23 June 2024

Pool of Virkie, Sumburgh Head, Scatness, Loch of Spiggie (west end) Scousborough, St. Nininian's & Loch of Clumlie

Weather: mostly sunny with fresh breeze from the southwest

The group reconvened outside after breakfast, ready for their first full day on Shetland. With favourable tides, MD led them initially to the Pool of Virkie to search for waders. Upon parking, they spotted shelduck feeding at the water's edge and a female eider with ducklings. At the back of the pool, several curlew were seen, while a fulmar flew past the group.

A couple of black-headed gulls in breeding plumage added to the gull sightings. Scanning the shoreline a little further along, MD then identified three bar-tailed godwits alongside a few curlew, allowing for a handy size comparison between the species. The constant chirping of a house sparrow was heard from a nearby house. Just as we were about to get back into the minibus, a flock of small waders were spotted flying in. A quick and impromptu scoping session revealed most of the birds to be dunlin, with a single sanderling in full summer plumage among them.

Our next destination was Sumburgh Head, with a brief stop en route at Scord Beach, where the rising tide revealed another 15 sanderlings running in and out along the tideline. The drive to Sumburgh passed a disused quarry where numerous pairs of fulmars were nesting on the back wall. After parking, the group walked up to the cliffs, instantly locating puffins along with more fulmars.

With some guests interested in the coastal flowers, an impromptu botanical session followed, as thrift, sea campion, bird's-foot trefoil, and sea chamomile were all noted around the puffin nesting area. Further up, a single twite posed briefly but really well on the wall behind the Visitor Centre, alongside more beautifully showing puffins. A Shetland wren belonging to the distinct sub-species Zetlandicus, was also spotted atop the wall, while guillemots and razorbills were observed on the rocks below. Finally, wild rock doves also appeared intermittently along the cliffs.

As herring gulls drifted past our position, a great black-backed gull with two large chicks was spotted on a rocky peninsula. While everyone enjoyed the puffins, MD also spotted a dark phase Arctic skua patrolling the cliff-face, giving him the opportunity to discuss the two colour phases (or morphs) of this polymorphic species. As the group descended the hill, another wheatear appeared, before busily defending its territory from a rock pipit. But this was quickly trumped by a couple of twite, which fed on the ground right in front of the group - giving more terrific views of this rarely seen passerine. The cliffs below then offered more views of guillemots and razorbills, while MD explained the key identification features of the kittiwakes flying past. Before leaving, a second dark phase skua - with its distinct pintail feathers - was seen while cruising past the cliff looking for victims to steal food from.

After a tea break, MD then drove the group to Scatness, where a quick scan of the loch revealed a second pair of whooper swans, this time with four cygnets. A short walk past the loch and onto the headland also yielded sightings of wild thyme, lesser stitchwort, and spring squill, as a bonxie and hooded crow flew over.

The next stop was at the Loch of Spiggie's southern shore, where a large group of non-breeding bonxies were split between a flock on the water and one on the adjacent land. Four adult whooper swans with six cygnets were spotted close by too. Nearer to the watching group, about 30 tufted ducks represented a good Shetland record, before we then headed to Spiggie Beach for lunch. While enjoying our sandwiches, Arctic

Find out more about our [Shetland Isles with Mike Dilger](#) trip or [contact us](#)

01962 302086 sales@wildlifeworldwide.com www.wildlifeworldwide.com

terns and fulmars flew past, with a roosting black guillemot perhaps the best 'lunchtime' bird.

By scanning the western end of the loch, sand martins hunting insects over a marsh and at least six mute swans were then quickly added to the week's trip list. Suitably replete, we then moved a little further north to catch up with the seals at Scousburgh. Initially spotting just one harbour seal, this was soon joined on the beach by a mother and pup, followed by another mother and pup playing in the sea. MD then spotted a great northern diver feeding out in the bay, followed by Britain's other species of seal – the grey.

As we were about to depart, one of the guests noticed a number of orchids by the roadside. Further inspection revealed these to be northern marsh orchids, among a host of other plants such as kidney vetch, marsh thistle, sheep's bit, devil's-bit scabious, heather, viviparous bistort, and Magellanic ragwort – an exciting, new plant for MD.

With beautiful weather, we parked above St. Ninian's Beach to admire the tombolo. Walking to the beach, we subsequently located a red-throated diver in full summer plumage feeding nearby, though it frequently dived underwater. A small party of long-tailed ducks and a flock of three razorbills were also spotted in the bay on the other side of the tombolo. By now the weather was wonderful, allowing all to revel in both the sun and the picturesque location.

Leaving St. Ninian's, we noted the plant dame's violet growing by the roadside en route to our last stop of the day - this being the Loch of Clumlie. Despite a quick detour to search for a possible phalarope at a roadside lochan, we instead found a single ringed plover. At Clumlie, MD pointed out a breeding red-throated diver, the resident whoopers, and three kittiwakes bathing. DF's group joined them while MD highlighted another Magellanic ragwort. A guest then spotted a female red-necked phalarope, providing stunning views for 20 minutes at very close quarters.

Energised by such a terrific sighting, our final stop was at a decidedly smelly Voe Sea inlet, where we observed a pair of shelducks with at least six ducklings, along with dunlin and more ringed plovers. At nearly 5pm, we returned to the hotel for a rest before the evening checklist and dinner, concluding a fine day of key Shetland species sightings.

Day 3:

Monday 24 June 2024

Tingwall Loch, Lax Firth Pier, Laxo Ferry Terminal, Road to Brettabister, Road to Laxo Voe

Weather: Windy from the southwest all day, cloudy and then largely sunny and warm

After breakfast, the group loaded up and set off at 8:30am to explore central mainland Shetland. The first birds logged were a couple of juvenile wheatears in the garden, indicating a promising 2024 breeding season for many Shetland species, followed by a drumming snipe. Heading north, two ringed plovers flashed past the minibus, followed by a curlew.

Arriving at Dingwall Loch, we listened for a corncrake that had been heard there recently. Almost immediately, a couple of goosander were spotted, along with a possible female scaup, though poor lighting made confirmation difficult.

Parking at the northern end, we observed some tufted ducks on the water alongside a single redshank. In a nearby field, we spotted black-headed, lesser black-backed, and common gulls. On the loch, a displaying common sandpiper was heard and then seen along with a female common teal, which appeared to be breeding here. A male reed bunting then flew over, before settling in the scrub and offering good views to the assembled group.

Next, we headed to Lax Firth, a renowned site for otters. Along the bumpy track, on the way in, we saw a pair of oystercatchers with large chicks. Parking by the scrapyard, we crept around the corner and almost immediately spotted an otter on a skerry, busily consuming a large fish at a distance of no more than 40 metres away. A male merlin then flashed past, offering great - if fleeting - views, and MD went back to the

Find out more about our [Shetland Isles with Mike Dilger](#) trip or [contact us](#)

01962 302086 sales@wildlifeworldwide.com www.wildlifeworldwide.com

minibus to inform DF about the otter. By the time MD returned, the otter had slipped away, but it was nevertheless a fine sighting, a new species for a number of the group and a terrific moment.

Continuing north, we saw more whooper swans on Loch Vaxter, though they seemed not to have bred. At Laxo Ferry terminal, after using the facilities, we had a quick cuppa. Despite the cold and windy conditions, we walked onto the pier and were rewarded with sightings of rock doves, which had all the hallmarks of genuine wild birds. Lots of Arctic terns flew by, while a rock pipit with food was noted at the pier's end.

Heading back west, we then spotted a bait ball out in the bay with numerous birds feeding or diving in. The gulls included kittiwakes, great black-backed, common, and herring, while auks were represented by guillemots and razorbills. Arctic terns and shags were also mixed in. A couple of bonxies then appeared, with one attacking a great black-backed gull and stealing its food, with MD joking "there to be no honour amongst thieves!".

Further west lies a sand bar at the head of Lax Voe, where we were able to briefly log redshank, mallards, and note a breeding colony of Arctic terns. The terns then suddenly flew up in dread when a bonxie flew over. Heading next inland to Bettavister and South Nesting Bay, we parked and walked down the road, noting displaying snipe and appreciating the rich flora which cross-leaved heath, crowberry, round-leaved sundew and common cotton-grass.

While scanning for mountain hares, MD then heard a whimbrel, before spotting one as it chased away a gull. A second whimbrel then began displaying on the other side of the road, with its song and rattling call audible to all. After enjoying the whimbrel, MD walked back up the road to retrieve the minibus, before driving to South Nesting Bay for lunch. The wind had by now dissipated, and with the sun out, we enjoyed views of black guillemots and twite, with the highlight being super views of Shetland bumblebees nearing on marsh thistles. Post-lunch, a guest feeling unwell was taken back to the hotel, while the rest journeyed north to a moorland spot where DF had seen mountain hares earlier in the day. A swift, unusual this far north, was also spotted as we headed north once more.

En route, we stopped at Loch of Houland to observe eight whooper swans, with MD also locating a female common scoter at the back of the loch. At the moorland west of Dury Voe, we quickly located a mountain hare, thrilling the group. MD also heard a golden plover on the moorland above, but couldn't locate it initially. Two female grouse with chicks and another mountain hare were then spotted, before the group finally managed to locate the plover on a ridge.

Returning to the hotel, we briefly stopped at West Voe to scan the water, and were rewarded with a small flock of red-breasted mergansers. Back at the hotel, everyone took a short break before reuniting with our final member, who was beginning to feel better. A fine dinner then followed as we prepared for an early start the next day, with Noss on the agenda.

Day 4:

Tuesday 25 June 2024

Noss, Road to Laxo Voe, Eshaness & Hillswick

Weather: Misty & then largely sunny with a northwesterly wind

With the boat trip for Noss scheduled for an 8am departure, it was an earlier start than usual. Both DF and MD's groups reconvened on the quay to meet skipper Darren. The weather was misty and overcast, but we hoped it would improve as we set off into Sandsayre Wick.

The first notable bird was a female eider with ducklings. Once on the open water, fulmars became the most prominent seabird, as they glided past us on distinctively stiff wings. A bonxie was next, and as we headed towards Bressay, a pale morph Arctic skua represented the first one of the trip. Gannets, guillemots, and kittiwakes also began to appear in ever increasing numbers.

At Bressay, we noted roseroot near the cave entrance, with fulmar and kittiwake nests at the entrance, while

Find out more about our [Shetland Isles with Mike Dilger](#) trip or [contact us](#)

01962 302086 sales@wildlifeworldwide.com www.wildlifeworldwide.com

a few shags had opted to nest in the relative darkness offered inside. Exiting the cave, Darren then navigated us skillfully through a narrow arch close by where, we spotted several black guillemots, before heading to the main seabird colonies on the eastern side of Noss.

Upon reaching the cliffs, the weather had improved significantly, with the sun shining and calmer seas. The guillemot and gannet colonies were awe-inspiring, and the sky was filled with seabirds. After an hour, pop craning our necks up in awe, Darren then began tossing mackerel pieces over the boat, attracting hundreds of gannets in the process, which dived right beside us—a truly remarkable spectacle.

Heading back towards Mousa, we briefly encountered a pod of Risso's dolphins, seeing at least three or four before they disappeared. After an exhilarating trip, MD's group headed to South Nesting Bay to search for mountain hares and spotted harbour seals en route. Although we didn't relocate the hares, we achieved far better views of golden plovers than had been obtained the previous day.

Taking lunch there, we saw our first lapwing of the trip fly past before heading west towards Eshaness. Stopping at Skierda Water, on the way, we enjoyed excellent views of a summer-plumaged red-throated diver, a ringed plover on the shore, and displaying whimbrels on the adjacent moorland. On the road to Eshaness, we also spotted hooded crows and, at Black Mire another pair of red-throated divers was noted. Yet more curlew and oystercatchers with chicks were observed here too, with another pair of red-throated divers observed close by on West Loch. With the landscape here simply breathtaking we then took a moment to admire the natural arch off the Skerry of Eshaness.

Parking up at Eshaness Lighthouse, the group then took a stroll along the sea cliffs, noting fulmars and puffins on the sheer faces below our feet. The weather was delightful, as all enjoyed spotting the flowering spring squill and thrift near the cliff-ledges. A rock pipit then flew over with its characteristic 'wheest!' call as the group got down on their hands and knees to enjoy a rock covered in at least five different lichen species.

Driving east towards Hillswick, a brief stop at Helga Water revealed another pair of red-throated divers, along with the usual waders: redshank, oystercatcher, curlew, and lapwing. After using the facilities at Magnus Bay Hotel, we were rewarded with sightings of collared doves and, in the bay, black guillemots and red-breasted mergansers as we drove back to the head of Ora Firth to end the day with a special plant.

Leading the group along the shingle beach, MD pointed out the oysterplant colonies. Susceptible to both grazing and trampling, oysterplant has become a plant of astonishing rarity in modern Britain, so it was great to see it doing so well here, alongside an assortment of plants, such as sea sandwort, sea campion, heath and common spotted orchids. A possible buff-throated bumblebee was briefly spotted in amongst the plants here, while the calm, flat conditions also allowed for more sightings of red-throated divers, Arctic terns, and mergansers in the bay.

After checking into the hotel, everyone rested before gathering for a fine Magnus Bay dinner, followed by some football for those interested in Euro 24!

Day 5:

Wednesday 26 June 2024

Hermaness NNR, Keen of Hammer - Unst

Weather: Sunny & moderate wind, overcast later with some rain

The group's day began with an early start for two ferry rides, first heading across to Yell. At the terminal, Arctic terns, herring gulls, and a few dunlin were easily spotted as we set off. On the ferry itself we then enjoyed sightings of red-throated divers, gannets, and the occasional bonxie. Our first cormorant of the trip was also observed by MD, along with puffins and guillemots feeding out in the strait.

A quick drive next across Yell brought us to the Unst ferry, and our third island of the morning. We then drove straight to Hermaness National Nature Reserve (NNR), before preparing for the walk across the

Find out more about our [Shetland Isles with Mike Dilger](#) trip or [contact us](#)

01962 302086 sales@wildlifeworldwide.com www.wildlifeworldwide.com

moorland. Along the way, MD pointed out heath rush, heath wood-rush, heath bedstraw, and tormentil. We quickly found insectivorous plants too, including round-leaved sundew and common butterwort.

Bird activity was mostly confined to that of meadow pipits and skylarks, with occasional bonxie overhead. As we walked on, more plants were added to our list, such as bog asphodel, heath milkwort, deer grass, wavy hair grass, viviparous fescue, common cotton-grass, and hares'-tail cotton-grass.

Finally reaching the coast, we enjoyed stellar views across the cliffs and away to the lighthouse at Muckle Flugga - the most northerly part of Britain - with numerous gannets and fulmars flying past. Moving next around to the main nesting cliffs, we were awestruck by tens of thousands of gannets and thousands of auks and fulmars in the full throes of the breeding season.

On the walk back, DF pointed out a pair of bonxies with a chick, a remarkable sight given that their population is thought to have dropped by around 80% in Shetland due to the bird flu pandemic in 2022. Close to the boardwalk, we also delighted in a couple of snipe chicks with their distinct long bills alongside nervous parent, a first-ever sighting of the young of this species for all the group.

As we continued, DS showed us a couple of lesser twayblade orchids right by the path. These diminutive and hard to find orchids were slightly past their prime but still an impressive find for the group. Retiring to the minibuses we then drove the short distance to enjoy lunch by the Viking ship. Sightings here included a single common tern - which was the first of the week - a great northern diver, several ringed plovers, a turnstone and sand martins.

Next, we headed to the Keen of Hamar. Walking across the tundra, we discovered simply vast amounts of mountain everlasting, along with lesser clubmoss, frog orchid, moss campion, northern marsh orchid, slender St. John's wort, fairy flax, spring squill, and moonwort - all in one patch!

Higher up, and after a bit of searching - we eventually located a couple of flowers of Shetland mouse-ear, nearing the end of their blooming season, and northern rock-cress. MD discovered a single plant of Norwegian sandwort, highlighting the diversity of this seemingly barren habitat. Sea campion, sea plantain, and black bog-rush added surprises higher up. We also took time to appreciate the uniqueness of the site - with MD describing it 'as the only true representative of Arctic tundra in the UK.'

On our way down, MD took us to the Final Checkout Cafe, the most northerly cafe in Britain. As the weather worsened, birding became a touch more limited, with a close-up black guillemot being the sole notable sighting. The day then concluded with a fine dinner at the Magnus Bay Hotel before everyone retired.

Day 6:

Thursday 27 June 2024

Fetlar - Mires of Houbie, Loch of Funzie, Hamars Ness & Tingwall Loch

Weather: Foggy & intermittent rain, clearing later

Leaving at 8am, MD led the group northwards, with the planning to spend most of the day on the island of Fetlar. On the way to the first ferry at Toft, three mute swans were noted near Sandy Loch. Continuing our journey north, a brief stop at Sullen Voe revealed an eider with ducklings and some ringed plovers along the water's edge. Another quick scan at Garth's Voe unearthed a few oystercatchers, six red-breasted mergansers, more eiders with ducklings, and two red-throated divers on the water.

Taking the ferry across to Yell, we then headed straight for Fetlar, via a brief stop at the Gutcher Ferry Terminal on Unst. Despite the increasingly foggy weather, a spot of birding on our journey still managed to reveal gannets and numerous black guillemots. Upon arriving in Fetlar, the weather had unfortunately turned windy, rainy, and foggy, yet the group's enthusiasm remained undimmed. Through the gloom we managed to spot starlings, a snipe on a fence post, while a second snipe posed long enough for some excellent photographs. A female wheatear was also seen along the roadside as we stopped to admire a large patch of copper-coloured variety of monkeyflower.

Find out more about our [Shetland Isles with Mike Dilger](#) trip or [contact us](#)

01962 302086 sales@wildlifeworldwide.com www.wildlifeworldwide.com

At Mires of Houbie, renowned for its red-necked phalaropes, the fog limited our visibility, but we were still able to pick up a couple of lapwings and redshanks before heading further east. There, we spotted a couple of skylarks and a flock of around 20 lapwings, with several immature birds indicating it had been a successful breeding season. At Funzie, at least three snipe flitted around the loch's edge, along with a few redshanks before the poor weather forced us back to Houbie, where we enjoyed teas, coffees, and cake.

Feeling refreshed and ready to tackle the poor weather again, we then took a short walk along the coast near the Hamar's Ness ferry terminal. We were astonished by the number of heath-spotted orchids out in flower here, as ragged robin, marsh lousewort, and Arctic eyebright all delighted the botanists in the group. As the weather cleared slightly, we returned to Mires of Houbie and were able to briefly spot a red-necked phalarope on the water. From the bridge close by, we were also able to add marsh cinquefoil to our plant list. Nearby, the Wick of Aith held a part of six redshank, a family of eiders, and a harbour seal out in the bay.

With time running short, we headed to the ferry terminal, with MD having to race across Yell in order to catch the second ferry back to the mainland. One final stop was at Tingwall Loch, where there had been reports of a corncrake, but despite the stunning weather, the bird steadfastly refused to call. Reflecting on the day's adventures, we were certainly able to appreciate just how fortunate we had been with the weather, prior to our wet and foggy adventure to Fetlar!

After reconvening for dinner, everyone headed to bed, full aware of the dead news that just one full day remained of the trip.

Day 7:

Friday 28 June 2024

Sandness, Bannamin, Scalloway, Ux Ness & Sumburgh Head

Weather: Overcast, then wet and windy!

With one day left, the general consensus among the group was for more otters, so MD headed up to Sandness following reports that an otter had been showing well in the bay a few days previously. Heading north, MD then turned west for the small village of Sandness.

Passing the Bridge of Walls, two ravens were spotted harassing a carrion crow, while greylag geese were also picked up en route. Heading straight for the western end of the bay, and by the toilet block, the group commenced scanning. It was a couple of hours after low tide and the array of waders was terrific along the water's edge, with nine turnstone, six or seven ringed plover, three sanderling, a few dunlin and a couple of oystercatcher. A Shetland wren was seen while singing on a nearby drystone wall, while a blackbird's song all added to the serene nature of the location.

Scanning where the nearby burn cuts across the beach, a couple of young pied wagtails were also observed here, while out at sea all four species of auks could be seen feeding, along with a grey seal and a distant great northern diver. While no otter could initially be found, we eventually picked one out on the other side of the bay. Thrilled to have finally caught up with an animal that can sometimes be called a 'notter!', we then proceeded to watch it for over an hour as it continually dived and surfaced with a whole array of food.

Feeling we had been lucky with both the otter and the weather we headed back south and Bannamin for lunch close to the beach. On the way back we had a pair of red-throated divers of Lunga Water. By the time we reached Meol Beach, however, the weather had taken a turn for the worse, necessitating a 'minibus lunch' as we sat out the worst of the rain. With the rain abating marginally, we then drove down to the carpark at Bannamin. But with conditions still too poor for a walk on the beach we decided instead to go for a hot drink in Scalloway, by way of the Bus Stop Memorial in the town.

Leaving the cafe by mid-afternoon, MD suggested that the weather might be better in the southern half of the archipelago, with a trip to Sumburgh Head perhaps a good way to end the week. Passing the hotel, the weather had indeed cleared, so MD dropped off two guests to enjoy the nearby Viking settlement of Jarlshof,

Find out more about our [Shetland Isles with Mike Dilger](#) trip or [contact us](#)

01962 302086 sales@wildlifeworldwide.com www.wildlifeworldwide.com

and took the remaining guest for one last look at the puffins. It proved an inspired choice, as with the wind so strong, the puffins were frequently both hovering at eye-level and no more than a couple of metres away, as they used the up-draughts from the cliffs. Heading back down to the hotel it was, in essence, an exhilarating, and windy end to the week!

Day 8:

Saturday 29 June 2024

Sumburgh Airport and home

With early flights for both MD and all three guests back to the mainland, all had checked out early after a breakfast, for the short trip to the airport. Fond farewells were then made as all headed back towards their respective homes, after another magical week enjoying the very best wildlife the Northern Isles had to offer.

Sign up to our e-news

Sign up to our e-news to find out more about our tours, events, late availability, offers and tour reports at <https://www.wildlifeworldwide.com/subscribe>

Checklist for Shetland Isles with Mike Dilger



| | Common Name | Scientific Name | Day 1 | Day 2 | Day 3 | Day 4 | Day 5 | Day 6 | Day 7 |
|----|------------------------|----------------------------------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|
| | BIRDS | | | | | | | | |
| 1 | Greylag goose | <i>Anser anser</i> | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
| 2 | Mute swan | <i>Cygnus olor</i> | | ✓ | ✓ | | | ✓ | ✓ |
| 3 | Shelduck | <i>Tadorna tadorna</i> | | ✓ | | | | | |
| 4 | Eurasian teal | <i>Anas crecca</i> | | | ✓ | | | | |
| 5 | Mallard | <i>Anas platyrhynchos</i> | | | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | | ✓ |
| 6 | Tufted duck | <i>Aythya fuligula</i> | | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | | ✓ | |
| 7 | Scaup | <i>Aythya marila</i> | | | ✓ | | | | |
| 8 | Common eider | <i>Somateria mollissima</i> | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | | ✓ | ✓ |
| 9 | Velvet scoter | <i>Melanitta fusca</i> | | | | | | | ✓ |
| 10 | Common scoter | <i>Melanitta nigra</i> | | | ✓ | | | | |
| 11 | Red-breasted merganser | <i>Mergus serrator</i> | | | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
| 12 | Red-throated diver | <i>Gavia stellata</i> | | ✓ | | ✓ | | ✓ | ✓ |
| 13 | Great northern diver | <i>Gavia immer</i> | | ✓ | | | | | ✓ |
| 14 | Storm petrel | <i>Hydrobates pelagicus</i> | ✓ | | | | | | |
| 15 | Fulmar | <i>Fulmarus glacialis</i> | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
| 16 | Gannet | <i>Morus bassanus</i> | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
| 17 | Shag | <i>Phalacrocorax aristotelis</i> | | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
| 18 | Cormorant | <i>Phalacrocorax carbo</i> | | | | | ✓ | ✓ | |
| 19 | Oystercatcher | <i>Haematopus ostralegus</i> | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
| 20 | Lapwing | <i>Vanellus vanellus</i> | | | | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
| 21 | Golden plover | <i>Pluvialis apricaria</i> | | | ✓ | ✓ | | | |
| 22 | Ringed plover | <i>Charadrius hiaticula</i> | | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
| 23 | Turnstone | <i>Arenaria interpres</i> | | | | | ✓ | | ✓ |
| 24 | Curlew | <i>Numenius arquata</i> | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |

Find out more about our [Shetland Isles with Mike Dilger](#) trip or [contact us](#)
 01962 302086 sales@wildlifeworldwide.com www.wildlifeworldwide.com

| | | | | | | | | | |
|----|--------------------------|-----------------------------------|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 25 | Whimbrel | <i>Numenius phaeopus</i> | | | ✓ | ✓ | | | |
| 26 | Bar-tailed godwit | <i>Limosa lapponica</i> | | ✓ | | | | | |
| 27 | Dunlin | <i>Calidris alpina</i> | | ✓ | ✓ | | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
| 28 | Sanderling | <i>Calidris alba</i> | | ✓ | | | | | ✓ |
| 29 | Red necked phalarope | <i>Phalaropus lobatus</i> | ✓ | ✓ | | | | ✓ | |
| 30 | Common sandpiper | <i>Actitis hypoleucos</i> | | | ✓ | | | | |
| 31 | Redshank | <i>Tringa totanus</i> | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
| 32 | Snipe | <i>Gallinago Gallinago</i> | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
| 33 | Kittiwake | <i>Rissa tridactyla</i> | | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
| 34 | Black-headed gull | <i>Chroicocephalus ridibundus</i> | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | | ✓ | ✓ |
| 35 | Lesser black-backed gull | <i>Larus fuscus</i> | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
| 36 | Great black-backed gull | <i>Larus marinus</i> | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
| 37 | Herring gull | <i>Larus argentatus</i> | | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
| 38 | Common gull | <i>Larus canus</i> | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
| 39 | Common tern | <i>Sterna hirundo</i> | | | | | ✓ | | |
| 40 | Arctic tern | <i>Sterna paradisaea</i> | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
| 41 | Great skua | <i>Stercorarius skua</i> | | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | | ✓ |
| 42 | Arctic skua | <i>Stercorarius parasiticus</i> | | ✓ | | ✓ | | ✓ | ✓ |
| 43 | Guillemot | <i>Uria aalge</i> | | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
| 44 | Razorbill | <i>Alca torda</i> | | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
| 45 | Black guillemot | <i>Cepphus grylle</i> | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
| 46 | Atlantic puffin | <i>Fratercula arctica</i> | | ✓ | | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
| 47 | Collared dove | <i>Streptopelia decaocto</i> | | | | ✓ | ✓ | | |
| 48 | Rock dove | <i>Columba livia</i> | | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
| 49 | Swift | <i>Apus apus</i> | | | ✓ | | | | |
| 50 | Merlin | <i>Falco columbarius</i> | | | ✓ | | | | |
| 51 | Hooded crow | <i>Corvus cornix</i> | | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
| 52 | Raven | <i>Corvus corax</i> | | | | | | ✓ | ✓ |
| 53 | Skylark | <i>Alauda arvensis</i> | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
| 54 | Sand martin | <i>Riparia riparia</i> | | ✓ | | | ✓ | | |
| 55 | Swallow | <i>Hirundo rustica</i> | | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
| 56 | Wren | <i>Troglodytes troglodytes</i> | | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | | ✓ |
| 57 | Starling | <i>Sturnus vulgaris</i> | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
| 58 | Blackbird | <i>Turdus merula</i> | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | | ✓ |
| 59 | Wheatear | <i>Oenanthe oenanthe</i> | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |

Find out more about our [Shetland Isles with Mike Dilger](#) trip or [contact us](#)
01962 302086 sales@wildlifeworldwide.com www.wildlifeworldwide.com

| | | | | | | | | | |
|----|------------------------------|------------------------------|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 60 | House sparrow | <i>Passer domesticus</i> | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | | ✓ |
| 61 | Pied wagtail | <i>Motacilla alba</i> | | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | | | ✓ |
| 62 | Grey wagtail | <i>Motacilla cinerea</i> | | | | | | | |
| 63 | Meadow pipit | <i>Anthus pratensis</i> | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
| 64 | Rock pipit | <i>Anthus petrosus</i> | | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | | ✓ | |
| 65 | Linnet | <i>Linaria cannabina</i> | | | | ✓ | | | |
| 66 | Twite | <i>Linaria flavirostris</i> | | ✓ | ✓ | | | | |
| 67 | Reed bunting | <i>Emberiza schoeniclus</i> | | | ✓ | | | | |
| | | | | | | | | | |
| | MAMMALS | | | | | | | | |
| 1 | Mountain hare | <i>Lepus timidus</i> | | | ✓ | | | | |
| 2 | European rabbit | <i>Oryctolagus cuniculus</i> | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
| 3 | Otter | <i>Lutra lutra</i> | | | ✓ | | | | ✓ |
| 4 | Grey seal | <i>Halichoerus grypus</i> | | ✓ | | ✓ | ✓ | | ✓ |
| 5 | Common seal | <i>Phoca vitulina</i> | | ✓ | | ✓ | | ✓ | |
| 6 | Risso's dolphin | <i>Grampus griseus</i> | | | | ✓ | | | |
| | | | | | | | | | |
| | INSECTS | | | | | | | | |
| 1 | Shetland bumblebee | | | | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
| 2 | Northern white-tailed bumble | | | | ✓ | | | | |
| 3 | Latticed heath moth | | | | ✓ | | | | |
| 4 | Large white | | | | | ✓ | ✓ | | |
| | | | | | | | | | |