



**Shetlands Summer - 1<sup>st</sup> to 10<sup>th</sup> July 2012**



**Tour Leader: Paul Hobson**

## **Itinerary**

**Day 1:** We are all due to arrive at Sumburgh Airport, Mainland Shetland from our chosen destinations at roughly the same time. If you can send Natures Images your flight numbers then I will meet you at the airport. Once we have all checked out we will head straight to the Sumburgh Head Hotel our base for the next 3 nights.

**Day 2:** It is worth noting that during the trip we are governed by the weather conditions so the itinerary could change at any time so we need to be flexible to make the most of the photographic opportunities. If the weather is in our favour it will be an early start heading down to Sumburgh Head. This is an RSPB reserve which is a superb place for photographing auks especially puffins, but also fulmars and some dramatic coastal scenery. In the past I have managed some really nice wheatear images here where they nest in the lichen clad walls. In the afternoon we will be taking our first boat trip to the island of Mousa. We will spend the rest of the day on this island working with Shetland specialties like black guillemot and arctic skua.



**Day 3:** Again it will be an early start to head over to the island of Noss. We have to first cross the ferry to the island of Bressay and then take a short trip in a zodiac to the Isle of Noss. Noss is one of the most important seabird colonies in Britain and the

scenery is spectacular. We will again get the chance to photograph puffins, black guillemots and gannets. Noss is a big island and we will be spending the entire day here so we will be taking packed lunches with us.



**Day 4:** Again dependant on the weather we will be travelling to the northern isles at some point but hopefully we will get the chance to go back to Sumburgh Head in the morning. We then travel north to get the connecting ferry to Yell and eventually to Unst to check into the Baltisound hotel our accommodation for the next five evenings.

**Days 5:** Fetlar is a beautiful island with very special birds and we will be exploring this island for the day looking for red-necked phalaropes and whimbrel around Loch Funzie. We will also be exploring the coastline looking for otters especially around Brough pier which can be excellent for this elusive mammal.



**Day 6:** Hermaness National Nature Reserve is at the tip of Unst, the northern most part of the British Isles. A full day is planned to explore this fantastic location. The early part of the walk often has a couple of golden plovers around and at any time we may come across breeding dunlin, a lovely little wader now in its full breeding plumage. Walking across the moor on the board walk we will bump into many great skuas and we will spend time photographing this impressive bird. Once we get to the cliffs the scenery is something you will remember for a long time as it is so dramatic. Gannets and puffins nest here in their thousands and good shots are very likely.

**Day 7:** Keen of Hammar is a wonderful place for some interesting flowers and some like the Edmondson chickweed which is found nowhere else in the UK. We will be spending some time here looking for some of these floral delights. In the evening we will head back to Yell to a location in the south for some more time with black guillemots.



**Day 8:** Hermaness is such a dramatic and special place that I propose we go back for a second look and make the most that this wonderful reserve has to offer. Every time I go I always come back with something completely different. We could also look into going back to Fetlar for some more time with the phalaropes and with luck, otters.

**Day 9:** We shall be heading back to mainland Shetland at some point during the day but we will make the most of our last morning on Unst and Yell where we will be spending some more time looking for otter and maybe an early start back to the black guillemot location. This is the best site I have found in the UK for this beautiful species. If we get back to our base (the Sumburgh Head hotel) early enough we could also head north to Eshaness one of the most wild and dramatic coastal scenes in Europe for some awesome photographic chances.



**Day 10:** Sadly our last day, most of us are due to fly out at the same time around midday so if any would fancy an early start we could head down to Sumburgh head for one last go at some puffins for a couple of hours before we have to pack for our return journey.

**We have to be very flexible with our itinerary for this trip because of the weather so timings and locations can change at the last minute. We may of course bump into anything along the way including some really dramatic scenery or wild flowers, so please if you want to stop to photograph please say so as we are here to accommodate everyone. And don't forget we will see the Britain's most northerly and impressive bus stop!**



### **What to Bring**

Our accommodation is clean and comfortable with all bedding and towels provided so you simply need to bring yourself, any special dietary requirements you may have – please let me know if there's anything you can't/won't eat!! In terms of clothing you'll obviously need plenty of warm and weatherproof clothing. The vast majority of your time will involve spending time in the field and the weather is so unpredictable in the Shetland Isles and the wind is always blowing so it will be cold. You won't need serious arctic gear for this trip but the following are very much recommended - a

good pair of strong waterproof walking boots, good waterproof overtrousers. For the top half it's very much a question of having several layers – like a thermal type vest, t-shirt, thin jumper, fleece and then a waterproof coat with a spare jumper or two at hand as well, you'll know your own cold thresholds but it really is a question of build it up in layers. A good hat, some fingerless mittens. The weather is difficult to predict at this time of the year it could be cold or it could be very warm, if the latter then you must look into buying some sun block especially if you are like me and burn easily. Midges are usually not a problem in the Shetland Isles as the wind is always there but on occasions the wind stops and the midges come out in force, so bring some repellent with you.



## **Camera Equipment**

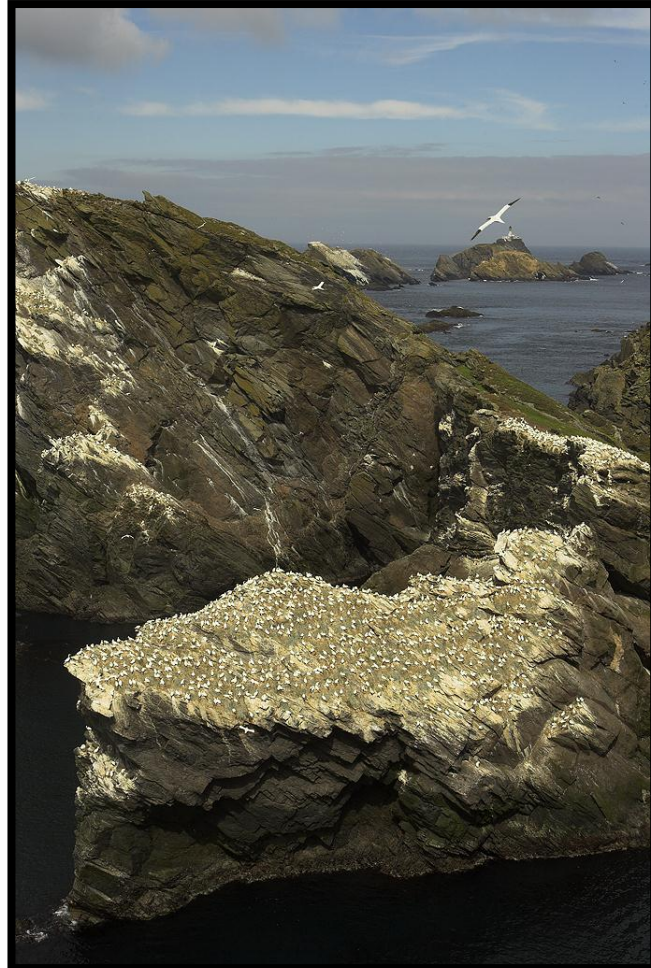
In terms of camera kit you'll need the longest lens you have (300mm or 500mm + convertor would be my recommendation/choice) and then some supplementary lenses for other opportunities such as a 24-70mm for landscapes and then maybe an intermediate zoom (70-200 or 100-400) so that I don't miss anything in terms of opportunity. A macro lens as well because the flowers will be at their peak. You'll get the chance to decide what you want/need each evening anyway so you won't be burdening yourself with it all all of the time either but the distances to some of the locations like Hermaness and Noss are long so we need to consider this.

Tripods are essential. Bring plenty of compact flash cards with you as well because if we get a good day you will take alot of images.

During the evenings we will have a chance to critique and look at individuals work if you so wish so feel free to bring anything you'd like to share on either a laptop or memory pen/CD.

My contact number in the build up to and for the duration of the trip is 07505 351821, and my home number is 0114 2323699. Please don't hesitate to contact me even if you think it is a minor question I am here to help.

*Paul*



Registered Office:  
4 Deer Park Drive, Newport, Shropshire TF10 7HB  
Tel: 01952 411436  
E-Mail: [sales@natures-images.co.uk](mailto:sales@natures-images.co.uk)  
[www.natures-images.co.uk](http://www.natures-images.co.uk)  
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