

# ICELAND

## LAKE MYVATN

## AND SNAEFELLSNES PENINSULA

Gyr Falcon (Gavia Travel)



**Tuesday June 8th – Sunday June 13th**

**Leader: Mark Finn and local guides**

**Group Size: 8**

**Birds: 60 – 75**

Iceland is situated in the North Atlantic Ocean and geographically isolated from mainland Europe. The country is sparsely populated within the interior and dominated by vast tracts of beautiful and stunning countryside. Habitats range from bird-rich sea cliffs on the west coast to Lake Myvatn in the extreme north, an exceptional region for nesting water birds. We have also added the island of Flatey to the itinerary, an exceptional area for birds including Grey (Red) Phalaropes. Iceland also has several glaciers, geysers and other natural attractions. This tour should produce all of Iceland's special birds including the big four Gyr Falcon, Harlequin Duck, Barrow's Goldeneye and Brunnich's Guillemot.

**Day 1:** Morning flight to Keflavik, arriving mid-afternoon. Before we head toward Reykjavik and our base at Hellnar a visit to the lighthouse at Garoskagi is planned. If the winds are northerly we expect to find Manx Shearwaters and Great Skua offshore, and lingering waders on the beach which may include Sanderling, Purple Sandpiper, Ruddy Turnstone and Dunlin. We head north to Hellnar fields which often hold Whooper Swan, Greylag Geese, Whimbrel, European Golden Plover and Common Snipe. Two night stay at Hellnar, where the hotel has unobstructed views of a 5000 foot ice-cap

**Day 2:** Today we visit Svortuloft Lighthouse that protects shipping from the cliffs of Snaefellsnes. On the way, a moorland area should provide us with Rock Ptarmigan, Purple Sandpiper and Northern Wheatear. Svortuloft Cliffs have an abundance of nesting auks including Brunnich's Guillemot. Offshore we have a chance of observing pods of White-beaked Dolphins and Orcas. Further east, the towns of Hellissandur and Olafsvik have harbours and coastal lagoons holding large numbers of Glaucous Gulls and Arctic Terns. Our travels take us towards the small town of Rif, a noted area for Common Eiders and, on past visits, King Eider. We return to Hellnar via the mountains with territorial Snow Buntings for company.

**Day 3:** We leave Brekkubaer, travelling along the coast to Stykkisholmur. On arrival in Stykkisholmur, we board a boat



Snaefellsnes (Gavia Travel)

to visit an island for White-tailed Eagles, Atlantic Puffins and European Shags. On our return to the port of Stykkisholmur, we connect with an afternoon ferry to the remote island of Flatey for an overnight stay. The island of Flatey is literally in a time-warp all of its own and is renowned for its abundant wildlife during the summer months. On arrival, we make an initial exploration of Flatey, home to a small population of Grey (Red) Phalaropes. Other species present include colonies of Arctic Terns, Arctic Skua, Black Guillemot, Atlantic

Puffin, Snow Bunting and literally dozens of Red-necked Phalaropes.

**Day 4:** Morning birding around Flatey before returning to Stykkisholmur and on to the domestic airport at Reykjavik for a late afternoon flight to Akureyri in North-central Iceland. Transfer to Reynihlid situated on the shores of Lake Myvatn for two nights.

**Day 5:** Lake Myvatn holds the highest concentration of nesting ducks in Europe. Along the Laxa River both

Red-necked Phalarope (Gavia Travel)



Harlequin Duck and Barrow's Goldeneye occur in good numbers. Lake Myvatn itself is bordered by cliffs, lava flows and bubbling sulphur pools. Interesting species on Lake Myvatn include Red-throated and Great Northern Divers, Common Scoter and Greater Scaup. Birch woods hold Redwing, Common Redpoll, the Icelandic race of Wren and, on occasions, Brambling. Meadows

attract displaying Common Snipe, Whimbrel, Black-tailed Godwit and European Golden Plovers. A visit to Husavik harbour in the afternoon may produce a lingering Iceland Gull and on recent visits immature Ross's Gull although the latter is by no means reliable. Further east the road passes through moorland bordered by sea cliffs, home to Merlin, Gyrfalcon, Short-

eared Owl, Great and Arctic Skuas and roadside-loving Rock Ptarmigans. Vikingavatin is a coastal lake attracting waterfowl including scarce breeding species in Northern Pintail and Northern Shoveler.

**Day 6:** Transfer to Akureyri with Common Gulls near the airport. Flight to Reykjavik where we transfer to Keflavik for our journey back to England.

**Tour Price London/London: £1945**

**Tour Price Reykjavik/Reykjavik: £1740**

**Single room: £190**

**Deposit: £250**

This holiday is fully inclusive of international and internal flights, boat trip, accommodation and meals, transport, guidance, tips and taxes.

**Not included:** drinks, insurance and items of a personal nature.

Comfortable accommodation with en-suite facilities.

Transport by 9-seater minibus. Walking on flat, rocky terrain. Warm, waterproof clothing and stout footwear are essential.