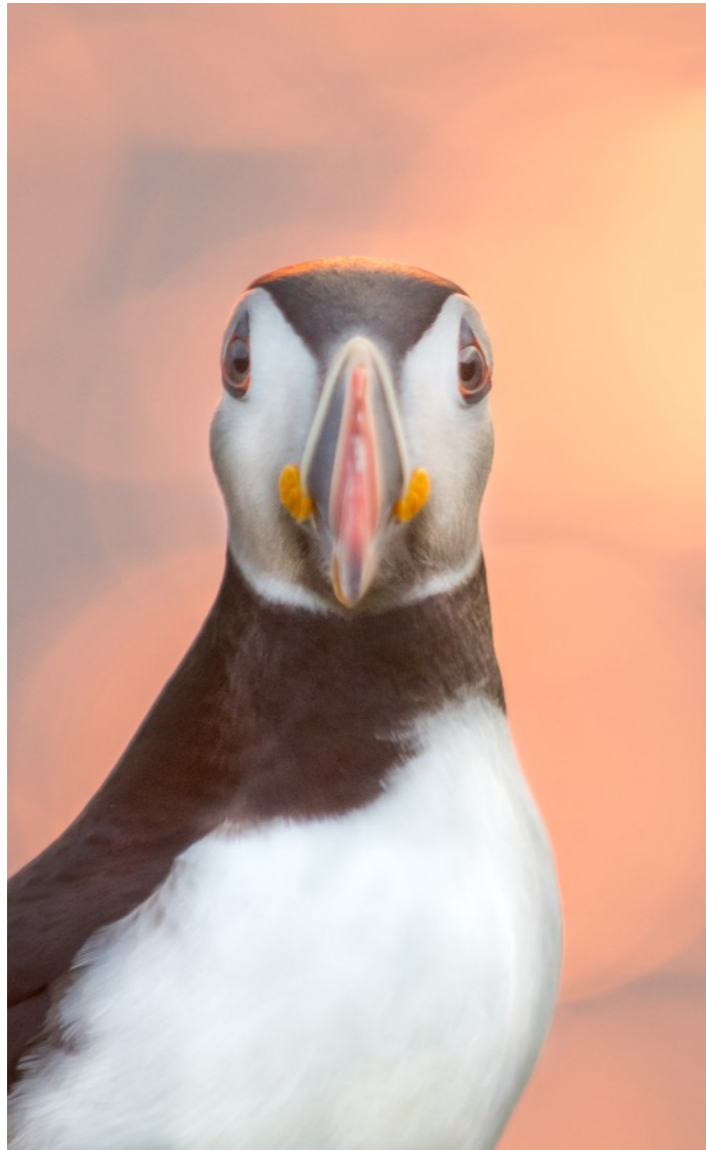


Shetland Nature

THE SHETLAND SUMMER PHOTO-TOUR





Tour Overview

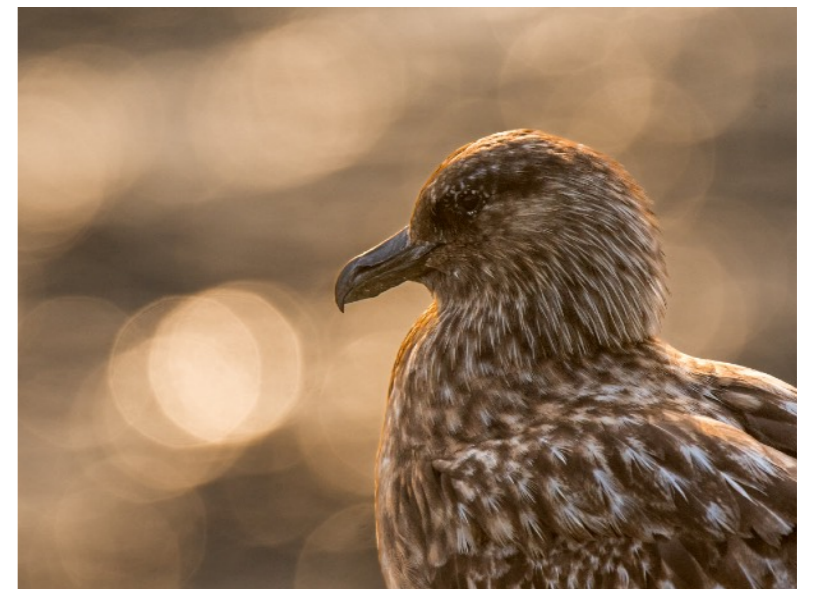
Newly revised for our 2023 summer program, this photo-tour offers unparalleled opportunity and insight for photographers seeking to capture the best of Shetlands summer wildlife. Designed by Shetland naturalist and photographer, Brydon Thomason, this tour is inspired by a lifetime of knowledge of the islands and their wildlife.

Downsizing our previous group size by half, this new program upsizes on all other levels. With a three-to-one guest/guide ratio, we have focused very much on a 'less is more' approach to this tour, offering a more personalized and hands-on, engaging and interactive experience.

Further adding to the exclusivity of this itinerary, we block-book the superbly situated Boardanoost Lodge on Unst for the full week. So as our meals are planned with flexibility to suit our photography, the catering is provided by a private company, assuring meal times are planned to suit our shoots, not the other way round!

The importance of fieldcraft and understanding of behavior are fundamental to how we lead and work on each species. On each and every assignment we pull on our field experience with the species we work on to ensure we work responsibly. Intimate knowledge of each species, their routines and locations, even their body language is at the forefront of every shoot. It is with this level of knowledge that we make sure the balance is levelled between getting the image, but making sure it is taken ethically.

With the small guest-to-guide ratio we make time for tuition where appropriate, helping to shoot creatively and think outside the box in each and every encounter whether it be high-key Arctic Terns, backlit Bonxies or bokeh Puffin sunset- this is your time to learn, shoot and create and our turn to talk and teach!



Holiday overview at a glance:

- Intimate and up-to-date local knowledge
- Exclusivity of just three-four photographers
- Based on Unst, the most northerly island in Britain
- Otter assignments throughout the week-long itinerary
- Exclusive occupancy of Boardanoost Lodge for full week
- Flexible meal times to maximize opportunities in the field
- Use of purpose-built hides for iconic northern breeding birds
- Learn the importance of fieldcraft and understanding subject behavior
- Techniques & tuition tailored for as appropriate for each photographer
- Exclusive boat charters for gannet feeding frenzy & dramatic seabird colonies



Dates 2023

Saturday 3rd June to Saturday 10th June, 2023

Saturday 17th June to Saturday 24th June, 2023

Saturday 8th July - Saturday 15th July 2023

Saturday 22nd July - Saturday 29th July 2023

The Itinerary

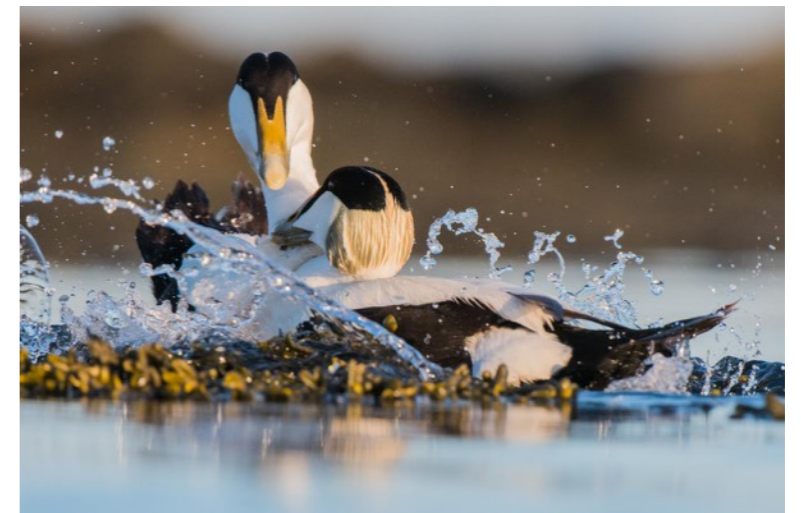


This tour prioritises assignments at the very best locations such as Sumburgh Head, Noss and Hermaness, not to mention many of our off the beaten track locations and goes well beyond with the exhilarating opportunity to photograph diving Gannets at point blank range from a boat as well as a unique evening charter to Hermaness, to photograph the awe-inspiring cliffs, colonies and lighthouse from sea level.

Arguably however, the star attraction (and our signature species) is the Otter. To facilitate the chance of this notoriously difficult species the group size is set to just 3, (for four we split into two's) allowing opportunities simply not possible in larger groups. Throughout the week we will work around the tide times on assignments to make sure everyone enjoys opportunities to photograph these charismatic animals.

Led by photographers with intimate knowledge of the islands and their wildlife the itinerary is structured in such a way that guests get the best opportunities, with the wildlife at the best times for light and behaviour. With this in mind the itinerary needs to remain flexible, where logistically possible. This again is where the small group size works so well, giving you more of a say and choice in what we do and go after.

And always during summer, there is a decent chance of Orca. Although even with Shetlands track record, these are far from guaranteed, we regularly connect with these awesome sea mammals. Connected via various local sightings networks, news travels fast and increases our chances of success.



The Itinerary

Saturday (Day 1)

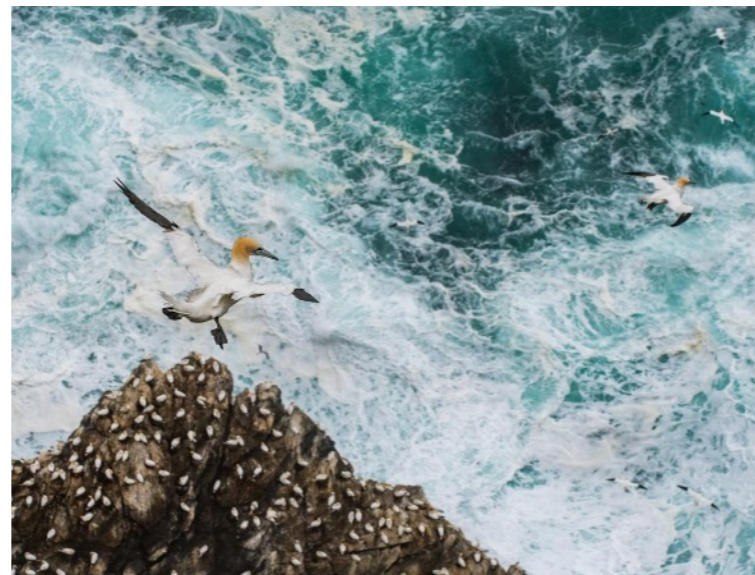
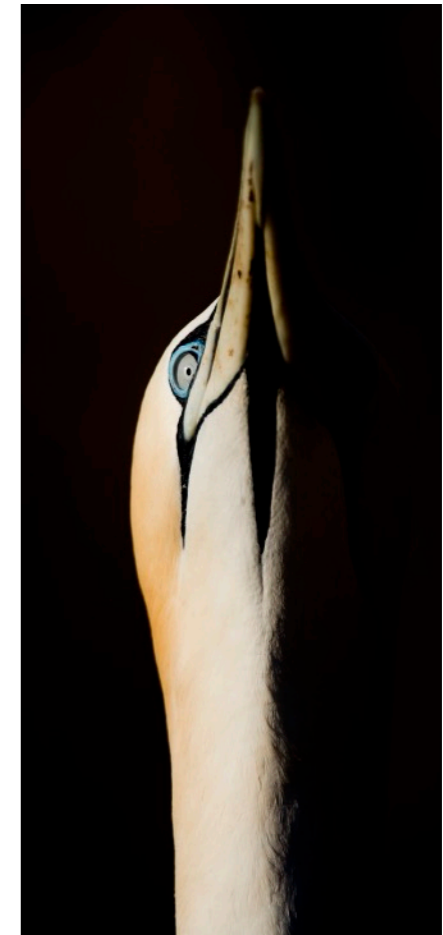
Arrive in Shetland via ferry or plane and our guide will arrange a meeting time with you depending on when you arrive. Once everyone is collected, we will head up to Unst where we will be staying for the whole trip. Last pickup would be 4pm from the airport

Accommodation: Bordanoost (Unst)

Sunday (Day 2)

To start the trip off we visit the world-renowned Hermaness National Nature Reserve on Unst - the most northerly headland of the British isles. With the heady blend of its breathtaking sea cliffs, thousands of seabirds, sea stacks and lighthouse it is often described as the most spectacular seabird colony in the world. Target species here are Gannets, Great Skua and Puffin with a wide range of shooting opportunities for each. The 35 minute walk out across the reserve follows a boardwalk access route along which we will enjoy many opportunities for Great Skua, Golden Plover, Skylark and Common Snipe may also be possible here.

Accommodation: Bordanoost (Unst)



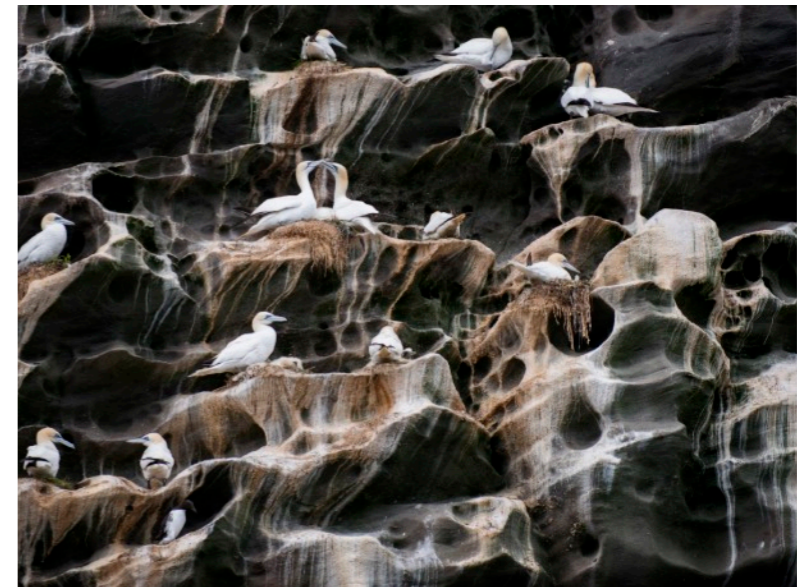
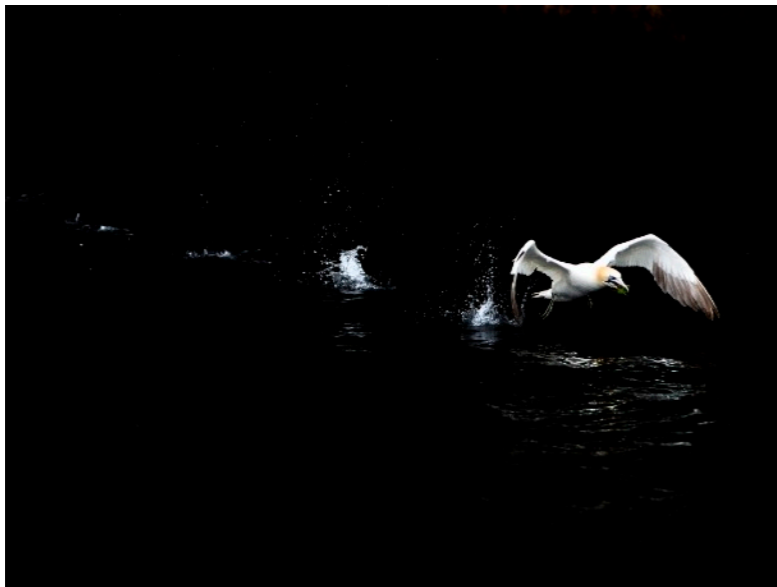
The Itinerary

Monday (Day 3)

We head back to mainland shetland and visit Sumburgh head photographing the charismatic puffins on the cliff tops. After the morning here we head to Lerwick where we will embark for our seabird boat charter to the cliffs of Noss and its spectacular seabird cliffs. The charter will headline the extraordinary Gannet feeding frenzy, where thousands of birds swirl overhead and dive after the fish we through in, just meters away from you. With a chartered boat and only 3 photographers, this gives us plenty of time to check photos, techniques and work on images. Bring go pros or underwater housings and we can put you in positions to capture some unique footage and photos.

We will also photograph an array of wildlife including Grey Seals, Guillemots, Razorbill, Kittiwakes, Puffin and Shag whilst on the boat.

Accommodation: Bordanoost (Unst)



The Itinerary

Tuesday (Day 4)

Today we will concentrate our efforts on otters. This will be our main day where we head out and solely concentrate on the species. Throughout the week we will photograph them if we happen to come across them but today will be everything otter. We will look for signs, learn the fieldcraft and photographing these shy and elusive animals.

With a large team of guides out everyday with otters most days of the year, we have up to date knowledge of individuals/families, routines and behaviours, giving you the very best photography opportunities throughout your trip.

Accommodation: Bordanoost (Unst)



The Itinerary

Wednesday (Day 5)

We will travel to Lerwick where we catch the ferry to Bressay from where we will be ferried across the Noss National Nature Reserve where spend the day walking around the seabird colony. Here where we will concentrate primarily on puffins and gannets and will enjoy a wide range of shooting opportunities for both species.

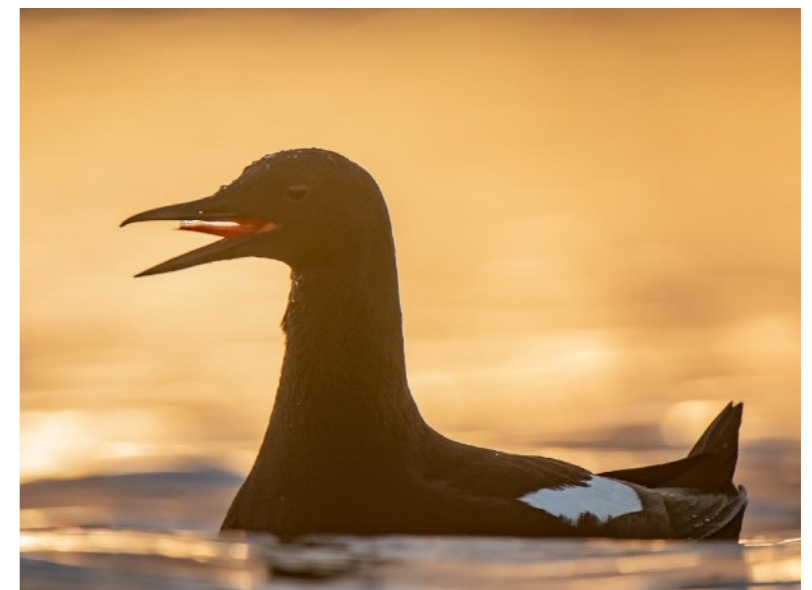
Accommodation: Bordanoost (Unst)



Thursday (Day 6)

Today we head to the island of Yell. We will spend the morning walking along the coast photographing a variety of birds like dunlin, ringed plover and oystercatchers, leading us to a black guillemot and tern colony, where we will spend most of the morning. Following on from here we will head to a beach to photograph arctic skuas and terns. During this time you should get the opportunity to see and photograph the interaction between these species. If time allows we will check an otter site to end the day.

Accommodation: Bordanoost (Unst)



The Itinerary

Friday (Day 6)

We will spend time on Unst hoping to see and photograph the charismatic Red necked Phalarope. With their nesting numbers increasing in Shetland over recent years, Unst is becoming a great place to see them.

Whilst checking several areas for phalarope we will also concentrate on Great Skuas. There will be a few different opportunities from a bathing site (where 100's congregate), to a moorland headland with sea cliff backdrop. At both sites behavioural interactions, flight and portraits will be offered. We will also target breeding waders and perhaps some time photographing eiders, terns, seals and breeding shorebirds. Finishing off with a visit to the Keen of Hamar, which has a variety of rare plants including the Edmondston's Chickweed, which grows nowhere else in the world.

Over dinner in the evening we reminisce as we enjoy highlights of the week, the favourite locations and the images and experiences we have enjoyed.

Accommodation: Bordanoost (Unst)

Saturday (Day 7)

Departures after breakfast - airport transfers included.



The Wildlife

Special target birds in our itinerary will include arctic and great skuas (better known locally as Allan's and bonxie's), puffin, gannet, black-guillemot (or tystie as we call them) many species of breeding waders including curlew, golden and ringed plover (many with chicks). We may be lucky enough to find the rare red-necked phalaropes as they feed on a freshwater loch. Weather permitting; we shall make boat trips out to the gannet colonies at Noss where we have innovated exciting opportunities to photograph gannets at their very best!

Time will be allocated to each of these species so that photographers can enjoy time to work on one species at a time, maximizing potential for producing exciting and creative images.

Purpose Built Bird Hides

These are one of many ways we demonstrate how hard we work for photographers and the images they create. Brydon has created a niche in the islands by innovating and building hides for several of Shetland's most iconic breeding birds, some of which feature in this itinerary but may vary from season to season.

Otters

Otters are very much a specialty of ours and the experience and images our guests enjoy is simply unrivalled. This exhilarating opportunity to learn about and enjoy the opportunity to photograph wild otters is very often the highlight in an already action packed, unique and rewarding itinerary. With our field experience and local knowledge we have an excellent chance of delivering this "holy grail" to our clients.

Landscapes

Landscape photographers will have the opportunity to capture inspiring and dramatic images. Using the very best of the magical 'mid simmers dim' light, often throughout the night, We will offer opportunities to stay out late or get in early starts for guests keen on landscape photography.

Fitness

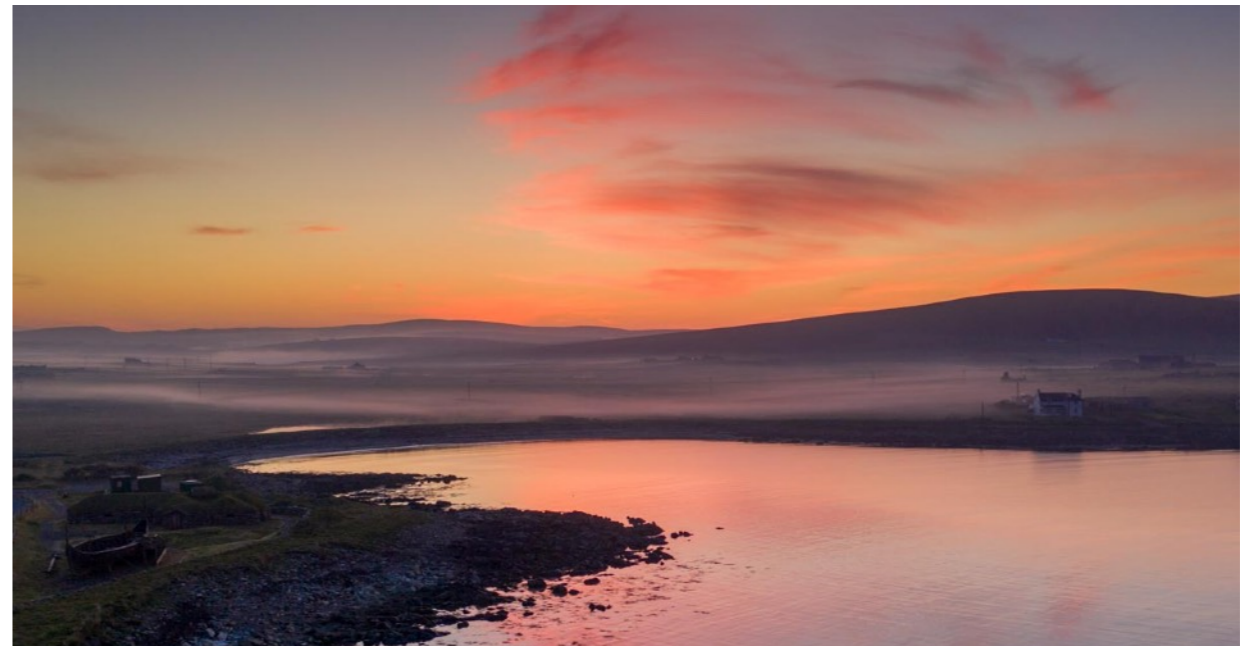
Moderate fitness and agility level is required for this trip – some parts of the itinerary involve a fair amount of walking, perhaps up to five miles a day. Note especially on Otter tracking days the terrain and pace can be challenging however there is always the offer to help with carrying gear – something that we regularly do for guests when working on otters.

Your Accommodation & Food- Bordanoost

There are three high quality en-suite double rooms with twin beds; quality furnishings and luxury touches such as Egyptian cotton bedding. All bedrooms are ensuite and have views over either the meadows and cliffs or beach and gardens. The bathrooms have large shower rooms or a bath with shower. On the ground floor there is a cosy guest's sitting room with a log burning fire for chillier nights. Breakfast is taken in the glazed and heated sun room or kitchen.



Food is always an important part of our trips but so is flexibility. So now our evening meals are produced by two locals, who can change meal times at a drop of a hat. So if we are out photographing and need more time then they will delay it for us. Or if we need an early dinner, so we can make the most of a nice evening then they will. This has given us a lot more freedom from the local hotels set timings, giving an even more bespoke and unique experience. The food is locally sourced where possible and can cater for any allergies, just need to let us know.



TOTAL COST: £2,595



ANY QUERIES LET US KNOW. LOOK FORWARD TO HEARING FROM YOU.

Contact Details:

info@shetlandnature.net

