

New Zealand to Japan

West Pacific Odyssey

2024

Thursday 21st March - Thursday 18th April (29 days)



Short-tailed Albatross – by getting close to the island of Torishima (the main breeding island for this threatened species), we stand an excellent chance of some great views of multiple individuals © Chris Collins

Widely regarded as one of the 'ultimate' birding voyages in the world, this amazing trip travels over 6,000 miles from New Zealand to Japan on the comfortable expedition ship *Heritage Adventurer*.

The "WPO" has been specially designed to maximise on the birding opportunities and WildWings Leader Chris Collins was heavily involved in setting up this exciting tour in collaboration with colleagues at Heritage Expeditions in New Zealand.

The list of potential species is truly exceptional, and this wildlife-focussed cruise undoubtedly encounters more poorly known seabirds than any other voyage on the planet, from New Zealand Storm Petrel in the Hauraki Gulf (New Zealand) to Beck's Petrel and Heinroth's Shearwater off New Ireland through to its conclusion in Japan where we look for Short-tailed Albatross and Japanese Murrelet.

The trip is, however, not just about seabirds, as we also visit some amazing islands including New Caledonia where the extraordinary Kagu can be found and the Solomon Islands where typically 30 or more endemic species are seen.

The voyage is also spectacular for cetaceans with species such as Dwarf and Pygmy Sperm Whales (as well as the much larger Sperm Whale), False Killer Whale, Melon-headed Whale, Fraser's Dolphin, as well as a myriad of other species being possible.

Early enquiries are recommended as this exciting trip sometimes books up several years in advance.

Highlights

- cruise from New Zealand to Japan on a comfortable expedition ship exploring islands such as Norfolk and New Caledonia and the Solomon Islands
- look for some of the least known and rarest seabirds on the planet including New Zealand Storm Petrel, New Caledonia Storm Petrel (only redescribed in 2022), Bryan's Shearwater, Short-tailed Albatross, Beck's Petrel and Heinroth's Shearwater
- land on Norfolk Island (Australian island) with its convict history and home to four endemic birds including Norfolk Robin and Norfolk Island Parakeet
- look for the extraordinary Kagu on New Caledonia at the Riviere Bleue Provincial Park
- chances for the other 17 extant New Caledonian endemics including New Caledonia Goshawk, Crow Honeyeater (critically endangered), New Caledonian Myzomela and New Caledonian Crow
- visit five islands in the Solomon Islands with good chances for more than thirty Solomons endemics
- explore the island archipelago of Chuuk, Micronesia where Micronesian endemics such Caroline Islands Ground Dove, Caroline Reed Warbler and Chuuk Monarch can be found
- look for the critically endangered and only recently described Bryan's Shearwater off Chichi-jima in the Bonin Islands of Japan
- cruise offshore from the remote Japanese island of Torishima for Short-tailed Albatross
- explore Hachijō-jima in the Izu Islands of Japan for the endemic Izu Thrush, Ijima's Leaf-warbler and Owston's Tit



Kagu © Chris Collins

What's Included?

- All on board ship accommodation
- Meals
- Expedition shore excursions
- WildWings/Limosa checklist of birds and mammals.

Outline Itinerary

- Day 1:** Embark Heritage Adventurer in Auckland, New Zealand
- Day 2:** Great Barrier Island and seabirds in the Hauraki Gulf, New Zealand
- Day 3:** Bay of Islands, New Zealand
- Day 4:** At sea
- Day 5:** Norfolk Island
- Day 6:** At sea
- Day 7-8:** New Caledonia
- Days 9-10:** At sea
- Day 11:** Santa Ana, Solomon Islands
- Day 12:** Makira, Solomon Islands
- Day 13:** Honiara, Guadalcanal, Solomon Islands
- Day 14:** Tetepare, Solomon Islands
- Day 15:** Kolombangara, Solomon Islands
- Day 16:** Off the coast of Bougainville
- Day 17:** Off the coast of New Ireland
- Days 18-19:** At sea
- Days 20-21:** Chuuk, Micronesia
- Days 22-25:** At sea
- Day 26:** Chichi-jima, Bonin Islands, Japan
- Day 27:** Torishima, Japan
- Day 28:** Hachijō-jima, Izu Islands, Japan
- Day 29:** Disembark Yokohama, Japan

Tour Overview

Known to many birders simply as the “WPO”, this incredible trip sails from New Zealand to Japan and over the course of a month offers an opportunity to see a truly mouth-watering selection of seabirds, island endemics and cetaceans.

The expedition starts by visiting New Zealand’s famed Hauraki Gulf where we hope to find the critically endangered New Zealand Storm Petrel, as well other species such as Black Petrel, White-faced Storm Petrel, and some of the southern albatrosses.

Continuing northwards, we plan to land on Norfolk Island where there are excellent chances of finding all the extant endemics (Norfolk Island Parakeet, Norfolk Gerygone, Norfolk Robin, and Slender-billed White-eye) before one of the major highlights of the entire trip, a visit to the Rivière Bleue Regional Park on New Caledonia. This is one of the best places on this 300-mile-long island to look for the unique Kagu and we also hope to find a good percentage of New Caledonia’s other endemic birds including White-bellied Goshawk, Cloven-feathered Dove, New Caledonia Imperial Pigeon, New Caledonian Whistler, and Crow Honeyeater.



New Caledonian Friarbird © Chris Collins

As we sail on towards the Solomon Islands, one of our main seabird targets will be the ‘New Caledonian Storm Petrel’, a mysterious species which was first seen on the WPO in 2008. It now seems almost certain that this is a long-lost species which was collected many years ago and then written off as an aberrant individual, something it most definitely is not!!!

Other seabirds we could find on this transit include specialities such as Polynesian Storm Petrel, Tahiti, Providence, Magnificent Petrel and Vanuatu Petrel, as well as more widespread species including Red-footed Booby and Red-tailed Tropicbird.

We then plan to have five days of landings in the Solomon Islands which should allow us to find upwards of thirty species which are endemic to the Solomons and nearby islands. These could include Solomons Sea-Eagle, Roviana Rail, White-headed Fruit-Dove, Chestnut-bellied Imperial-Pigeon, Ducorps’s Cockatoo, Yellow-bibbed Lory, Finsch’s Pygmy-Parrot, Buff-headed Coucal, Ultramarine Kingfisher, Solomon Islands Cuckoo-Shrike, White-winged Fantail, Kolombangara, White-collared and White-capped Monarchs, Solomon Islands White-eye, Midget and Mottled Flowerpeckers, Makira Honeyeater, Sooty, Red-capped and Cardinal Myzomelas and Brown-winged and San Cristobal Starlings.

Our next major targets are two very special seabirds, Beck’s Petrel and Heinroth’s Shearwater, which we will look for off Bougainville and New Ireland. These highly localised species are extremely poorly

known with the breeding grounds yet to be located but we stand a good chance of seeing them both. The deep water off these islands is also excellent for cetaceans and on previous visits our sightings have included Pygmy Killer Whale, Melon-headed Whale, False Killer Whale, Spinner Dolphin, Rough-toothed Dolphin, Sperm Whale and both Pygmy and Dwarf Sperm Whales.



Dwarf Sperm Whale © Chris Collins

Crossing the Equator, our next landing will be in Micronesia on the island of Chuuk where our priority will be finding the endemics and regional specialities. We hope to find Caroline Islands Ground-Dove, Purple-crowned Fruit-Dove, Islands Swiftlet, Oceanic Flycatcher, Micronesian Myzomela and Micronesian Starling. There may also be an opportunity to visit Tol South which is one of the few places in the world where the highly localised Truk Monarch can be found.



Matsudaira's Storm Petrel © Chris Collins

Heading north once again, the emphasis moves back to speciality seabirds, and we will hope to find Short-tailed, Black-footed and Laysan Albatrosses, Matsudaira's and Tristram's Storm Petrels, plus the critically endangered Bryan's Shearwater, over the course of the next week or so as the ship heads onwards towards Japan.

Our final landing will be on Hachijo-jima where we will look for several species which are endemic to the Izu Islands including Izu Thrush, Ijima's Leaf-warbler, and Owston's Tit. We will also hope to find Japanese Wood Pigeon, Japanese Pygmy Woodpecker, Japanese (Izu) Robin, with the final speciality seabird of this incredible voyage hopefully being the tricky Japanese Murrelet.

Daily Itinerary

Day 1: AUCKLAND, NEW ZEALAND

Board the ship and sail late afternoon with the first seabirds of the trip likely to include Australasian Gannet, Fluttering Shearwater and Silver Gull.

Day 2: GREAT BARRIER ISLAND AND HAURAKI GULF

We plan to spend the morning exploring the beautiful Great Barrier Island. This island is largely forest covered and there will be opportunities to explore ashore or join a Zodiac cruise. Our seabirding will then start in the afternoon in the Hauraki Gulf where we will look for the critically endangered New Zealand Storm Petrel as well as Little Penguin, Buller's, Fluttering and Little Shearwaters and Grey-faced and Black Petrels.

Day 3: BAY OF ISLANDS, NEW ZEALAND

We will awake in the protected and historic waters of the Bay of Islands and after breakfast there will be an opportunity to head ashore where we hope to find local endemics such as North Island Saddleback, Bellbird and North Island Robin. We then bid our farewell to New Zealand and set our course northwards.

Day 4: AT SEA

On the transit to Norfolk Island, potential species could include Gould's, Black-winged, Kermadec, White-necked and Grey-faced Petrels, plus Wedge-tailed and Short-tailed Shearwaters.

Day 5: NORFOLK ISLAND

This Australian Island (once an infamous penal colony in the days when convicts were transported from the UK to Australia) is home to four endemics - Norfolk Island Parakeet, Norfolk Gerygone, Norfolk Robin and Slender-billed White-eye. Once ashore, we plan to visit the island's remnant forest where there are good chance of seeing all of these plus the highly distinctive form of Golden Whistler.

As we head north in the late afternoon, we will look for the endemic subspecies of Little Shearwater as well as White-bellied Storm Petrel.

Day 6: AT SEA

As the ship heads towards New Caledonia, there are several underwater seamounts close to our route and these can be productive for seabirds including Tahiti, Collared, White-necked,



Norfolk Robin © Chris Collins

Providence and Kermadec Petrels. In 2008, we recorded the first Australian record of Polynesian Storm Petrel in this area.

Day 7: NEW CALEDONIA - AT SEA AND MOUNT KOGHI

We plan to start the morning at sea looking for an intriguing storm petrel, the 'New Caledonia Storm Petrel', which was first seen on the WPO expedition in 2008 and has been found on a number of occasions since then. Although seemingly a close relative of the New Zealand Storm Petrel, it is unquestionably different, and it is now considered that this is the same as a long-lost species collected in Samoa more than 200 years ago.

The ship will then proceed to the wharf at Noumea, the capital of New Caledonia, and we will make an afternoon visit to the forested slopes of Mount Koghi where there are chances for both New Caledonian Crow and New Caledonian Grassbird, birds we are highly unlikely to see the following day at at Parc de la Rivière Bleue. Other possibilities include White bellied (New Caledonian) Goshawk, South Melanesian Cuckooshrike, Streaked Fantail, Southern Shrikebill and Yellow-bellied Robin.

Day 8: NEW CALEDONIA - PARC DE LA RIVIERE BLEUE

We plan to leave the ship well before dawn for a visit to the Parc de la Rivière Bleue Regional Park where our main priority will be more of the island's endemics including the incredible Kagu and critically endangered Crow Honeyeater. Other species we might find include White bellied (New Caledonian) Goshawk, Horned and New Caledonian Parakeets, New Caledonian Imperial Pigeon, Southern Melanesian and New Caledonian Cuckooshrikes, Yellow-bellied Robin and Red-throated Parrotfinch.

Kagu is one of the main target birds on our visit to the Parc de la Riviere Bleue © Chris Collins



Days 9 to 10: AT SEA

As the ship heads for the Solomon Island, new seabirds could include Polynesian Storm Petrel, Tropical Shearwater, Providence Petrel, Vanuatu Petrel, Collared Petrel and Tahiti Petrel.

There are also chances for some interesting cetaceans on this transit and in 2019 we had some of the first at sea sightings of the recently described Deraniyagala's Beaked Whale.

Day 11: SANTA ANA, SOLOMON ISLANDS

Santa Ana is one of the most easterly of the main islands in the Solomons archipelago and has a very distinctive avifauna. We can expect to find birds such as Silver-capped Fruit-dove (whose main

stronghold is on remote Rennell Island) along with several endemic species from nearby Makira. Santa Ana is also home to an endemic and highly distinctive subspecies of Rufous Fantail.

Day 12: MAKIRA, SOLOMON ISLANDS

We plan to land at the western end of Makira Island where there are excellent chances of seeing a fantastic range of endemics. These could include White-headed Fruit-dove, Chestnut-bellied Imperial-pigeon, Makira Honeyeater (San Cristobal Melidectes), San Cristobal Starling, Makira Flycatcher, Makira Cicadabird, White-collared Monarch, Sooty Myzomela and Mottled Flowerpecker. Other species could include Red-knobbed and Island Imperial-pigeon, Brahminy Kite, Pied Goshawk and Pacific Baza.

Before departing we will visit the local community on nearby Anuta Island who are our hosts, and their friendly welcome is a truly special experience.

Day 13: HONIARA, GUADALCANAL, SOLOMON ISLANDS



We will anchor off Honiara, the capital city of the Solomon Islands, and depart before dawn for the forested slopes behind the town. The birding here is exceptional and the specialities could include Ultramarine Kingfisher, Solomons Cuckooshrike, Chestnut-bellied Monarch, Steel-blue Flycatcher, Midget Flowerpecker, Brown-winged Starling and Black-headed Myzomela. Depending on the number of fruiting trees, there could also be a good variety of parrots and pigeons, including Yellow-bibbed Lory, Ducorps' Cockatoo and Red-knobbed Imperial-pigeon.

Blyth's Hornbill is seen reasonably regularly not far from Honiara © Chris Collins

Day 14: TETEPARE, SOLOMON ISLANDS

Tetepare is a community run reserve located in the New Georgia Islands. There are a few new Solomon endemics to look for here including the highly localised Dark-eyed White-eye. Other possibilities include Melanesian Scrubfowl, Claret-breasted Fruit-dove, Island Imperial-pigeon, Buff-headed Coucal, Crimson-rumped Myzomela, Cockerell's Fantail and Kolombangara Monarch. If we are extremely fortunate, both Nicobar Pigeon and Solomons Nightjar are both present.

Day 15: KOLOMBANGARA, SOLOMON ISLANDS

Kolombangara will be the last island we plan to visit in the Solomon Islands and there are yet more endemics and localised species to look for. We have chances to find both Kolombangara and White-capped Monarchs and there is also the possibility of the elusive and highly localised Roviana Rail.

Fruiting trees here can also be excellent for Duchess and Meek's Lorikeets and should we have failed to see it so far, there will be more opportunities for Sanford's Sea-Eagle.

By mid-afternoon we will be back at the ship and will be on the lookout for the very poorly known Heinroth's Shearwater which we have seen on several occasions in these waters.

Day 16: SHIP CRUISING OFF THE WEST COAST OF BOUGAINVILLE

As we cruise up the western side of Bougainville Island, this will be another opportunity to look for Heinroth's Shearwater. The waters here can also be good for cetaceans with possibilities including Sperm Whale, False Killer Whale, and Fraser's Dolphin.

Day 17: SHIP CRUISING OFF THE EAST COAST OF NEW IRELAND

At dawn we plan to be off the south-eastern coast of New Ireland, where our main target is the critically endangered Beck's Petrel. This species was only rediscovered in 2007 after the original specimens were collected in 1928/29.

This area will be our final opportunity to look for Heinroth's Shearwater, however, there is also a dark *pseudobulweria* petrel which has been seen here on a number of occasions which appears to be an undescribed species.

Due to a deeply shelving trench between New Ireland and Bougainville, this is a fantastic area for cetaceans with the possibilities including Melon-headed Whale, Dwarf and Pygmy Sperm Whales and Orca.

Days 18 to 19: AT SEA

Over the next couple of days the ship will cross the Equator as we head for Micronesia and whilst the seawatching can be quiet, there will still be birds to look for and the possibilities could include Bulwer's Petrel, Tropical Shearwater, White-tailed Tropicbird and Sooty Tern.

Days 20 to 21: CHUUK, MICRONESIA



Caroline Reed Warbler © Chris Collins

Our main birding will be on Weno Island in the Chuuk archipelago, and we hope to find most of the speciality birds including Purple-capped Fruit-dove, Oceanic Flycatcher, Caroline Reed Warbler, Islands (Caroline Islands) Swiftlet, Caroline Islands White-eye, Micronesian Myzomela and Micronesian Starling. There may also be an optional excursion to Tol South to look for the endemic Teardrop (or Great Truk) White-eye and Chuuk Monarch.

Days 22 to 25: AT SEA

As the ship continues towards Japan, we will start to encounter the seabirds associated with this region and new species could include Matsudaira's Storm Petrel and Bonin Petrel, as well as Bannerman's and Christmas Shearwaters, with chances for Humpback Whale closer to Chichi-jima.

Day 26: CHICH-JIMA, BONIN ISLANDS, JAPAN

After clearing into Japan at the largest of the Bonin Islands, Chichi-jima, we may have time to go ashore to look for Japanese Bush Warbler, Blue Rock Thrush, Brown-eared Bulbul, and Japanese White-eye. Our main priority, however, will be to be off the eastern coast by mid-late afternoon as there is a small islet which is the only known breeding site for the critically endangered Bryan's Shearwater. It is thought the world population of this recently described shearwater could be as low as 70 individuals and we will have to search through the Bannerman's Shearwaters in the hope of finding this smallest member of the shearwater family.

Day 27: TORISHIMA, JAPAN

Landings are not permitted but we plan to cruise offshore in the hope of finding what is surely one of the most beautiful seabirds in the world, the gorgeous Short-tailed Albatross. This species was thought to have been driven to extinction in the early part of the 20th Century due to feather trade but has slowly begun to recover and it is now thought to number about 2,500 birds.

We will hopefully also find Black-footed Albatross and there are also chances of Laysan Albatross and Streaked Shearwater.



It takes quite a few years for a Short-tailed Albatross to attain full adult plumage and we are likely to see some younger birds as well as full adults © Chris Collins

Day 28: HACHIJO-JIMA, IZU ISLANDS, JAPAN

This island is in the Izu Islands archipelago and is home to the endemic Izu Thrush, Ijima's Leaf-warbler, and Owston's Tit. We will also look for Japanese Wood Pigeon, Japanese Pygmy Woodpecker, Japanese (Izu) Robin and once back on the ship will be on the lookout for our last speciality seabird of the expedition, the rarest of the world's alcid's, Japanese Murrelet.

Day 29: YOKOHAMA, JAPAN

After completing Japanese arrival formalities, this amazing trip concludes at the port of Yokohama.

Trip Information**THE SHIP**

Heritage Expeditions have been running the "WPO" since 2007. Previously these expeditions ran on a converted Russian research vessel, the *Spirit of Enderby* (or to give it its Russian name *Professor Khromov*), however, as from mid-2022 Heritage Expeditions will instead be operating *Heritage Adventurer*, and all future West Pacific Odyssey voyages will be on this vessel. This purpose-built expedition ship (which was previously known as *Hanseatic* and *Resolute*) offers extremely comfortable cabins and passenger facilities.

Originally designed to accommodate 184 guests, *Heritage Adventurer* will carry a maximum of 140 expeditioners ensuring spacious, stylish, and comfortable voyages. There will be a fleet of 14 zodiacs to ensure all guests are able to maximise on their expedition adventure.

CABINS OPTIONS AND PRICES - 2024**Main Deck Triple - £8,950 including landing fees**

Main Deck Triple Cabins on Deck 3 are a spacious 22m² and feature two porthole windows, two single beds and one Pullman bed which folds down from the wall, comfortable lounge, writing desk, private ensuite with shower, ample storage, and a flat screen entertainment system.

Superior Triple - £10,000 including landing fees

Superior Triple Cabins on Deck 5 are a spacious 22m² and feature large panoramic windows, two single beds and one Pullman bed which folds down from the wall, comfortable lounge, writing desk, private ensuite with shower, ample storage, and a flat screen entertainment system.

Deck 4 Superior - £10,600 including landing fees

Superior Cabins on Deck 4 are a spacious 22m² and feature large panoramic windows, king or two single beds, comfortable lounge, writing desk, private ensuite with shower, ample storage, and a flat screen entertainment system.

Deck 5 Superior - £11,450 including landing fees

Superior Cabins on Deck 5 are a spacious 22m2 and feature large panoramic windows, king or two single beds, comfortable lounge, writing desk, private ensuite with shower, ample storage, and a flat screen entertainment system.

Main Deck Single - £12,850 including landing fees

Main Deck Single Cabins on Deck 3 are a spacious 22m2 and feature two porthole windows, king bed, comfortable lounge, writing desk, private ensuite with shower, ample storage, and a flat screen entertainment system.

Superior Single - £13,950 including landing fees

Superior Single Cabins on Deck 5 are a spacious 22m2 and feature large panoramic windows, king bed, comfortable lounge, writing desk, private ensuite with shower, ample storage, and a flat screen entertainment system.

Worsley Suite - £16,450 including landing fees

Located on Deck 6, Worsley Suites are a spacious 22m2 and feature large panoramic windows, king or two single beds, comfortable chaise-style lounge suite, writing desk, private ensuite with shower, ample storage and a flat screen entertainment system.

Heritage Suite - £22,900 including landing fees

Located on Deck 6, Heritage Suites are an expansive 44m2 and feature large double panoramic windows, king bed, large living area with a sofa, coffee table and chairs and grand marble bathroom with a double basin, bathtub and shower, large writing desk, floor to ceiling cabinetry for storage and a flat screen entertainment system.

Please note:

- *all itineraries are subject to weather, local conditions and final approval by the relevant authorities.*
- *for all expedition cruises, WildWings is acting as agent for the ship operator and you will need to sign up to their terms and conditions.*

Birds c.190-240 species

Mammals c.14-22 species

Meals All main meals are included in the tour price, commencing with dinner following embarkation on Day 1 and concluding with breakfast on Day 29.

Walking Generally reasonably easy walking although it can be tiring given the high temperatures and humidity on some of the islands we visit. On some islands we have no choice but to walk uphill but this is done at a slow pace.

The walking on the optional trip to Tol South is extremely tough and only for those who are fit and agile and who are willing to “do what it takes” to see the specialities on this rarely visited island.

Sturdy walkingshoes or boots with corrugated soles for grip are recommended.

Weather: Cool to very hot and humid as we start in temperate/autumnal New Zealand, cross the Equator and both Tropics and end in Japan where Spring will be arriving. Expect occasional heavy rain throughout the trip.

Photos Some wonderful photographic opportunities on this tour.

Tour Extensions

Should you wish to extend your visit to New Zealand before or Japan after our tour, this is easy to do. Internal flights are nowhere near as expensive as they once were and although WildWings does not offer 'tailormade' arrangements, WildWings Managing Director Chris Collins has spent many months exploring New Zealand and is happy to share his knowledge with you, so please don't hesitate to call us.

Tour Cost

2024 (29 days):

Expedition cruise cost from £8,950

Deposit from £2,250

Cost includes

All on board ship accommodation, meals and expedition shore excursions. WildWings/Limosa checklist of birds and mammals.

Cost excludes

International/Domestic flights, insurance, visas, drinks, airport meals, snacks and other personal expenses. Customary gratuities at the end of the voyage.

Financial Security

WildWings (which is a division of Birds and Wildlife Limited) has financial failure insurance provided by Travel Vault which fully protects you should Birds and Wildlife Limited cease trading.

All passenger bookings are fully insured including the initial deposit and balance payments. The policy also includes repatriation, arising from the cancellation or curtailment of your travel arrangements in the unlikely event of the insolvency of Birds and Wildlife Limited.

For full details please see <https://wildwings.co.uk/about/financial-protection/>

How to book

Check availability on our website or with our office. We are happy to hold a provisional reservation for up to 7 days. After this, we require a booking form and deposit to confirm your place on a tour.

Book online, by phone or by post

You can book and pay the deposit simply and securely via our website using the “Book this Tour” button on the relevant tour page. Telephone bookings must be confirmed in writing by completion of a booking form (available to download from our website) and emailed or posted to us.

Please be sure to read our booking conditions and general information prior to booking. Links to this can be found from the footer on every page of our website.

When to book

Early booking is advised as all our tours have small group sizes and so they can fill very quickly; indeed, occasionally this can happen before we have even uploaded details to the website.

The number of single rooms is sometimes limited, and these are often taken quickly so we encourage you to plan ahead if you would like one.

When a trip becomes a ‘guaranteed departure’ early on, this also means that everyone can book flights which is advantageous for all.

Last-minute bookings

We inevitably receive a few unexpected cancellations over the course of a season, so it is always worth enquiring about availability on any tour – even at short notice.

Payments

- **Deposit:** the amount of booking deposit per person is shown alongside every tour. We accept deposit payments by electronic bank transfer (please ask for our bank details), UK debit/credit cards and cheques (made payable to *Birds and Wildlife Ltd* and drawn on a UK bank in GB£ sterling)

- **Balance:** full payment of the tour balance is due no later than 12 weeks prior to departure or 20 weeks in the case of certain tours and cruises. We will send you an invoice before the balance is due. We accept payments of balances by electronic bank transfer or cheque.
- **Payment by overseas customers:** These must be in GB£ Sterling and made by electronic bank transfer (please ask for our bank details).
- We do not accept cheques on US banks in US\$ or cheques in Euros or Eurocheque. For customers living outside of the UK and the European Economic Area, we can accept balance payments by Visa and MasterCard credit cards but with an additional charge of 3% to help offset credit card company charges.

Late booking payments: for us to guarantee hotel rooms etc, full payment is required at the time of booking (ie bookings made within 12 weeks of departure).

Passports and Visas

For UK passport holders your passport must be valid for at least 6 months beyond the last day of the tour.

Current entry requirements for UK citizens travelling abroad can be found at:

<https://www.gov.uk/foreign-travel-advice>

Health and Vaccinations

For full and up to date information on vaccines visit <https://travelhealthpro.org.uk/countries> and select your destination country.

General information on travel vaccinations and a travel health checklist is also available on the NHS 'Fit for Travel' website. You may then wish to contact your health adviser or pharmacy for advice on other preventive measures and managing any pre-existing medical conditions while you are abroad.

Your safety and travel advice

An unavoidable aspect of travelling abroad is the risk it may pose to your safety and security. The best advice on current risks is provided by the Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office (FCDO).

To assess and protect against any risks in your chosen destination, we strongly advise that you refer to the relevant FCDO travel advice both prior to booking and regularly before you travel. This information can be found at <https://www.gov.uk/foreign-travel-advice>.

"Travel aware" is a travel safety campaign run by the FCDO and another useful resource and details can be found at <https://travelaware.campaign.gov.uk>.

Travel Insurance

Good travel insurance is essential before setting off on any overseas trip. In common with all responsible tour operators, it is a condition of booking that all clients are fully and adequately insured before travelling with us.

Be aware that some destinations may require you to produce proof of comprehensive travel insurance (eg a valid insurance certificate) at Immigration on arrival in the country, so you should carry your documentation with you.

Your travel insurance should cover against cancellation, curtailment, missed departure, delay, personal accident, death, loss of baggage and valuables (see note below), personal liability and legal expenses.

Most importantly, your insurance must cover you fully in respect of medical care and repatriation should you become too ill to continue with the tour, including the cost of emergency evacuation by helicopter or air ambulance should this be necessary.

Note that passenger liability insurance covering the transportation that we hire, particularly in less developed countries, may be inadequate; it is, therefore important that your insurance cover includes sufficient provision for your dependents in the event of an accident.

We recommend that you obtain travel insurance as soon as possible after booking your holiday to ensure you are fully protected in the event of unexpected cancellation prior to departure. You must inform your insurers of any pre-existing medical conditions (including those of persons not necessarily travelling but upon whom your holiday may depend) that may require treatment during a period of overseas travel or might cause you to cancel the trip.

Once you have arranged your insurance, please be sure to send us the following essential details: name and contact details of your insurance provider, your policy number, expiry date and your insurers 24hr emergency assistance number.

Important things to note about insurance

Travel insurance does not normally provide sufficient cover for valuable optical equipment, which is often best protected under your own household insurance policy. If in doubt, ask your insurers for advice prior to travel.

Most travel insurance policies limit the amount of cover, typically up to a maximum tour cost of £5000 per person. If the tour you are booking exceeds this amount, additional cover can usually be provided upon payment of an additional premium. We recommend all travellers check their individual policy limit to ensure the full cost of their holiday is covered.

Arranging your insurance

Due to UK government legislation, we are not allowed to offer or recommend travel related insurance. Premiums can vary widely according to your age, needs, health, choice of destination and

other factors, while many people nowadays have annual travel insurance cover.

General Information

www.wildwings.co.uk

Our website gives easy access to detailed tour itineraries (tour info packs), trip reports, trip photos and the latest WildWings News.

Special diets & other requests

We pass on all such requests to the hotels and other suppliers, and do our best to ensure (but, of course, cannot guarantee) that your needs will be met. Please be sure to tell us about these (in as much detail as possible) at the time of booking, to allow good time to make the necessary arrangements.

Smoking and vaping

Almost all our clients prefer a smoke-free environment. For the enjoyment and comfort of all, we ask that smokers refrain from smoking in proximity to the group and respect our no smoking policy in the vehicle, at mealtimes and when watching wildlife.

Any questions?

If you have any questions, please email us at tours@wildwings.co.uk or call the office and we will do our best to assist you.

Our office is open 09:00-17:00 Monday to Friday. In the event we are unable to take your call, please leave a message on our answerphone (24 hrs) and we will contact you as soon as we can.

Thank you for your interest in our tours. We do hope that you will be able to join us.