Isles of Scilly
10-16 October 2026



Red-Eyed Vireo

Experience the magic of migration in the Isles of Scilly this autumn, where rare birds, remote beauty and the thrill of discovery await. This tour offers an immersive week of birding on one of Britain's most legendary birding archipelagos, timed perfectly for peak rarity season. With real-time updates from the BirdGuides sightings team and an adaptable itinerary, we'll be perfectly placed to respond to every exciting development – whether it be sought-after Nearctic visitors such as Red-eyed Vireo, Rose-breasted Grosbeak and Wilson's Snipe or eastern delights including Dusky Warbler and Red-flanked Bluetail. We'll explore the rich mosaic of habitats on St Mary's and make targeted trips to the off-islands, all while soaking in the rugged coastal scenery and vibrant birding atmosphere that make Scilly in autumn a truly unforgettable experience.

Itinerary

Join BirdGuides on an exciting seven-day journey to the Isle of Scilly to experience spectacular autumn migration and stunning coastal landscapes. With a flexible itinerary that adapts to weather and real-time rarity alerts, this tour offers the perfect chance to connect with scarce migrants and enjoy one of the UK's most exciting birding destinations.

Accommodation will be at the comfortable Bell Rock Hotel for 6 nights.

Day 1: Arrival and seabirds
Location: *Scillonian III* crossing and St Mary's
Activities: Our adventure begins with the crossing to the Isles of Scilly aboard the iconic *Scillonian III*, which departs from Penzance Harbour in Cornwall. The ferry sails in the morning – the exact time will be confirmed when the timetable is released in early 2026. The three-hour journey offers superb seawatching opportunities and we should have a good chance of seeing scarce seabirds including Cory's and Great Shearwaters, skuas, storm petrels and other pelagic species, all while enjoying scenic coastal views. Alternatively, those opting to fly will arrive directly on St Mary's. Once on the island, we'll enjoy some initial birding before heading to our accommodation and gathering for our first evening meal together.

Days 2-6: Exploring the Isles of Scilly
Location: St Mary's and off-islands
Activities: With five full days of exploration ahead, we'll spend our time seeking out rare and scarce migrants across the islands, using real-time updates from the BirdGuides team to ensure we're always in the right place at the right time.

St Mary's provides a range of habitats – from the windswept headland of Peninnis and the wooded paths of Lower Moors and Holy Vale to the sheltered bay of Porth Hellick and the famous gardens of The Garrison. These areas are just some of the hot-spots for coming across migrant birds from all points of the compass.

October is peak season for Nearctic vagrants and we'll keep our fingers crossed for appearances from megas such as Wilson's Snipe, *Catharus* thrushes or perhaps a dazzling warbler from across the Atlantic. Eastern vagrants such as Red-flanked Bluetail, Dusky Warbler and Little Bunting are also potentially on the cards.

We will aim to visit at least two of the off-islands – such as Tresco, St Agnes or Bryher – each with its own unique character and reputation for attracting rarities. Plans will remain flexible to prioritise breaking news and maximise our chances of a memorable find.

Day 7: St Mary's & Departure
Location: St Mary's
Activities: We will enjoy a final morning of birding the hot-spots of St Mary's before boarding the afternoon *Scillonian III* sailing back to Penzance. From the boat, there will be further opportunities to see various seabirds up close, perhaps including the likes of Grey Phalarope and various shearwaters. The sailing time will be confirmed once the timetable has been published in early 2026.

Pricing

Our Isle of Scilly birding tour offers exceptional value, with the price covering comfortable accommodation, ground transportation, entrance fees to all scheduled sites and reserves, and the expertise of experienced birding guides.

Priced at £2,250 per person, a single supplement is an additional £275.

A non-refundable deposit of 20% of the total trip price, per person, is required to secure the booking. The final balance is due 60 days before the tour start date.

Included in the price:

- Accommodation throughout the tour at Bell Rock Hotel
- All evening meals from Day 1 to Day 6, and also breakfast from Day 2 through to Day 7
- Ground transportation during the tour (minibus)
- Return ferry from Penzance to St. Mary's
- Interisland Ferries
- Services of an experienced birding guide
- Entrance fees to all scheduled sites and reserves

Not included:

- International flights to and from the UK, including flights to St Mary's if you wish to fly rather than take the ferry
- Visa fees, if applicable
- Travel insurance
- Beverages and lunch
- Optional activities not specified in the itinerary

Trip Information

Tour leader

This tour is run exclusively for BirdGuides Travel by WildSpace. Your tour leader will be Neil Glenn.

Group size

10 plus tour leader.

Recommended items

Essential items include a good pair of binoculars, comfortable walking shoes, weather-appropriate clothing and personal medication. You may also wish to bring walking poles.

Is this tour for me?

Due to rugged terrain, this tour is unsuitable for people with reduced mobility. BirdGuides Travel tours are also unsuitable for persons under the age of 16 years old. Please talk to us before booking your trip should you require further information.

Minimum participants

This tour requires a minimum of seven confirmed participants. If we do not have the minimum required number of participants, we reserve the right to cancel this tour. We will notify you not less than 30 days before the start of the tour should this be necessary.

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