

Preparation for Scilly Pelagics

What to Wear

British weather is unpredictable. June–August generally is fairly settled and mild, but can be cool, wet and windy. September and October generally are unsettled, but can be warm and becalmed.

Whichever is the case, conditions at sea compared to those on land are accentuated; cool becomes cold, whilst hot and sunny becomes roasting. The sun is particularly strong off Scilly with unpolluted air, so it is important to avoid becoming irradiated on a sunny day at sea with sun rays also reflecting off the sea surface. Many trips run in the evening when it becomes cool, even when conditions are fair. On some trips we may experience sea spray. Therefore, it is important that you come prepared. Make sure that you have warm clothing and waterproofs, including suitable footwear. Layering is a good idea so that you can adjust to the conditions as they change over the course of a trip. Make sure that your footwear is comfortable since you may stand for long periods. Ideally footwear should have grip on the soles to prevent slipping if the deck gets wet. Pack a cap or hat, sunscreen, and sunglasses.

Optics

Binoculars are essential. Telescopes are not permitted because they consume too much space and in any case are useless given the motion at sea. Cameras are encouraged. Good stills can be achieved with a telephoto lens 300-400 mm in focal length. Shutter speeds of 1/1000 second or higher are necessary for truly sharp photos of seabirds in motion. An ISO rating of 200 or more on your digital camera may be necessary. Even if you do not have a professional lens it may still be possible to get some photos of the seabirds and other marine life that we encounter. Good video can be achieved with even modest priced cameras but you will need 10x–12x zoom for reasonable sized images. Too much magnification is counter-productive yielding shaky images since everything is in motion, including you. If the subject comes close to the vessel, then resist trying to get images too large in the frame. On the television at home your footage will look shaky and ugly. Bring a dark filter for pale birds in sunlight.

Food and Drink

Bring along plenty to drink, especially for full day pelagic trips. Also bring sufficient quantities of food, enough for the duration of the trip. Remember that you will be on a moving vessel with other passengers so for example mixing salads and sauces and pouring champagne into tall glasses is not a good idea. Please note that it will be too late to purchase food in town after evening pelagic trips.

Facilities

Our vessel for all trips is *MV Sapphire*. There is plenty of seating space and a toilet. The deck is uncovered.

Smoking

Permitted though we ask smokers to respect non-smokers by smoking away and downwind from other passengers.

Seasickness

If you think that you might be susceptible to seasickness, then we recommend that you err on the side of caution and take your preferred remedy well before you get on board. Consult your pharmacist for professional advice. Experienced pelagic goers often recommend a good night's sleep the night before the trip, a good breakfast or lunch depending on the start time of the trip, frequent snacking throughout the trip, and most of all a positive attitude.

Staying on the Isles of Scilly

Travel and Accommodation

We suggest that you book your accommodation as early as possible, especially for July and August as these are the main months for tourism in Scilly. At this time of year some flights become fully booked. Most days there is availability on RMS *Scillonian III* at late notice, but in August the ferry can be sold out.

The links below will assist you in your travel and accommodation arrangements.

Travel with the Steamship Company on *RMS Scillonian III* from Penzance or Skybus from St Just (near Land's End), Newquay, Exeter <https://www.islesofscilly-travel.co.uk>

Choose between hotel, bed and breakfast, self-catering, or camping
<https://www.visitislesofscilly.com/accommodation>

Travel on the Islands

Shuttles await all arrivals at the Airport to take you to your accommodation. Taxis are reasonably priced and will pick you up at the Airport or Quay, or run you to the Quay for your pelagic trip.

DJ Taxis – 07717121101

Toot's Taxis – 07570624669

We strongly recommend that you book your accommodation on St Mary's since all pelagic trips leave from St Mary's Quay. If you are staying off St Mary's then you will have to make special arrangements with inter-island boat services to get to and return from St Mary's, and this may be costly. You can contact the various boat services through the following telephone numbers.

St Agnes Boat Services – 01720 422704; email john@stagnesboating.co.uk

Tresco Boat Services – 01720 423373; or visit www.tresco.co.uk

St Mary's Boatmen's Association – 01720 423999; email enquiries@scillyboating.co.uk

General Information

Useful websites <https://www.visitislesofscilly.com> and www.simplyscilly.co.uk

Isles of Scilly Bird Group

Visit the website <https://www.scilly-birding.co.uk>