

ICELAND

BIRDS, BOTANY, & GEOLOGY

66.47° N - 63.43° S

July 1-12, 2027



Wild **LATITUDES**
WORLDWIDE NATURE TOURS

ICELAND

BIRDS, BOTANY, & GEOLOGY

Greetings, Fellow Explorer!

You've probably heard that Iceland is a great place to visit for nature travelers. It's true! This small island nation in the North Atlantic is like nowhere else in the world. Iceland's combination of geologic wonders, abundant and ever-present bird life, and a subtle but fascinating flora make it a delightful country to explore.

Iceland emerged from the sea less than 20 million years ago as a great cluster of lava-spewing volcanic fissures. During the last Ice Age, the entire island was covered in thousands of feet of glacial ice. All life on the island today has descended from colonizing plants and animals that arrived after the Ice Age, which ended only 12,000 years ago.

The plants and wildlife of Iceland are an interesting mix of European and North American species, as well as species representing either boreal or arctic environments.

What this far-flung land lacks in bird species diversity, it makes up for in sheer avian spectacle. Birds are singing, nesting, and foraging seemingly everywhere you go in Iceland. Millions of puffins and other seabirds crowd seaside cliffs while shorebirds and waterbirds are practically underfoot in many fields and wetlands.

Naturalists who also love geology will get their fill of stunning volcanic landscapes, many of which have been sculpted over millennia by glaciers or the pounding sea.

This tour showcases the very best of Iceland's natural wonders. It's been a favorite Wild Latitudes destination for many years.

TRIP DETAILS

Start Date: July 1, 2027

Duration of Tour: 12 days

Duration of Extension: 6 days

Number of participants: Max of 14

Fee for Main Tour: \$6,495 per person

Fee for Extension: \$2,995 per person

Deposit: \$3,200 (+\$500 for Extension)

Single Supplement: \$1,700 (+\$990 for Extension)

Trip Leaders: Steve Backus & David Jaffe

Included:

- Double-occupancy lodging
- Ground transportation
- Breakfasts and lunches
- Excursions and park fees
- Guiding services

Not Included:

- Flights
- Dinners
- Alcoholic beverages
- Personal items
- Optional gratuities for guides

● EXTENSION TRIP: Eastern Iceland - Complete the Ring

DATES: Jul 12 - 17. Despite its small size, Iceland offers an astonishing variety of landscapes and wildlife. On this extension, we'll complete the world-famous Ring Road, making a full circumnavigation of the island. We'll travel through lava fields and dramatic fjords, crossing mountain passes in search of birds and stunning waterfalls. Visit Jökulsárlón, where icebergs drift through a glacial lagoon beneath Vatnajökull, Europe's largest glacier. We then ferry to the Westman Islands to experience a spectacular Atlantic Puffin colony before returning to Keflavík, coming full circle at last. Join us to discover even more of Iceland's wild beauty!



Steve Robertson and Ivan Phillipsen
Co-owners and Lead Guides at Wild Latitudes

info@wildlatitudes.com 503-714-3504

ICELAND

July 1 - 12, 2027



ITINERARY

Tentative and subject to change depending on weather, road, or other conditions.

Day 1 - July 1 - Arrival in Iceland

Welcome to Iceland, the realm of fire and ice! Trip Leaders **Steve Backus** and **David Jaffe** will meet the group at Keflavik Airport, 45 minutes west of Iceland's largest city, Reykjavik. We'll sit down for a light breakfast and then do some birding along the coast nearby. Right away, you'll be amazed at how many birds are active in the area and how bold they are, allowing for close looks.

We'll drive into **Reykjavik** to drop bags at our hotel, have a brief orientation meeting, then go out for lunch. Reykjavik is a vibrant, artsy city, with many great museums and shops. After checking in to our hotel near downtown, we'll have time to rest, wander the city, visit a museum, or do a little birding. For dinner, you can choose from the many restaurant options near our hotel.

Lodging: [Hotel Thingholt, Reykjavik](#)

Day 2 - July 2 - Sites on the Golden Circle

Today we'll visit several "must-see" sites on the **Golden Circle**, a famous tourist route east of Reykjavik. Although these sites can be crowded, they truly are worth seeing and provide a great introduction to the country. First, we'll visit Thingvellir, the site where Iceland's original parliament met over 1000 years ago. This is also a great place to witness the incredible geology of the Mid-Atlantic Ridge. Here is where great cracks in the ground (i.e. fissures) reveal the process of rifting between the North American and Eurasian tectonic plates. Thingvellir is also a good place to find plants and birds. **Harlequin Duck, Red-throated Loon, Arctic Tern, Eurasian Whimbrel, Redwing**, and more can be seen here easily.

Next we'll visit **Geysir**, the geological wonder that gave its name to all geysers. We'll have lunch at the cafe here, then watch the spectacle of the boiling eruption of water, which occurs every 10 minutes or so. Our last major stop for the day will be the massive, roaring waterfall **Gullfoss**. We return to Reykjavik, where we'll meet in our hotel to begin filling out our bird list, before heading out to dinner on our own.

Lodging: [Hotel Thingholt, Reykjavik](#)



Cottages on Flatey Island

Day 3 - July 3 - Snaefellsnes Peninsula and Flatey Island

Checking out of our hotel in Reykjavik, we now head north into wilder country. We'll hit several birding spots and geological sites on the beautiful **Snaefellsnes Peninsula**. Dramatic geological sites including the iconic **Kirkjufell** are definite stops on our visit. As we explore we'll search for **White-tailed Eagles** and **Arctic Foxes**. As the evening approaches we'll head to the beautiful port town of Stykkisholmur where we can scan the cliffs for seabirds before departing on our ferry in the early morning.

Lodging: [Hotel Fransiskus](#)

Day 4 - July 4 - Flatey and Heading into the Westfjords

After breakfast, we'll board the ferry and cruise north to **Flatey Island**. This tiny island is home to a small cluster of charming summer homes. And it's teeming with wonderful birds! We can wander the shore to look for **Atlantic Puffin**, **Snow Bunting**, the elusive **Red Phalarope**, and more. We'll board the ferry after lunch and continue north. We make land in the beautiful, remote **Westfjords** region. This is definitely off the beaten path for most visitors to Iceland! We'll take our time to explore as we work our way west to our remote lodge.

Lodging: [Hotel Latrabjarg](#)

Day 5 - July 5 - Látrabjarg Bird Cliffs

Not far from our lodge are the spectacular **Latrabjarg Bird Cliffs**, one of the largest seabird nesting cliffs in Europe. This is also the westernmost point of Europe. We'll head there after breakfast. Walking along the cliff edge we hope to get close-up views of nesting **Atlantic Puffin**, **Razorbill**, **Thick-billed Murre**, and **Northern Fulmar**. We'll offer a longer hike as an option. Returning to our lodge, we'll make a stop at the **Hnjótur Museum**. Here we can see an array of artifacts telling the story of the dramatic history of the Westfjords.

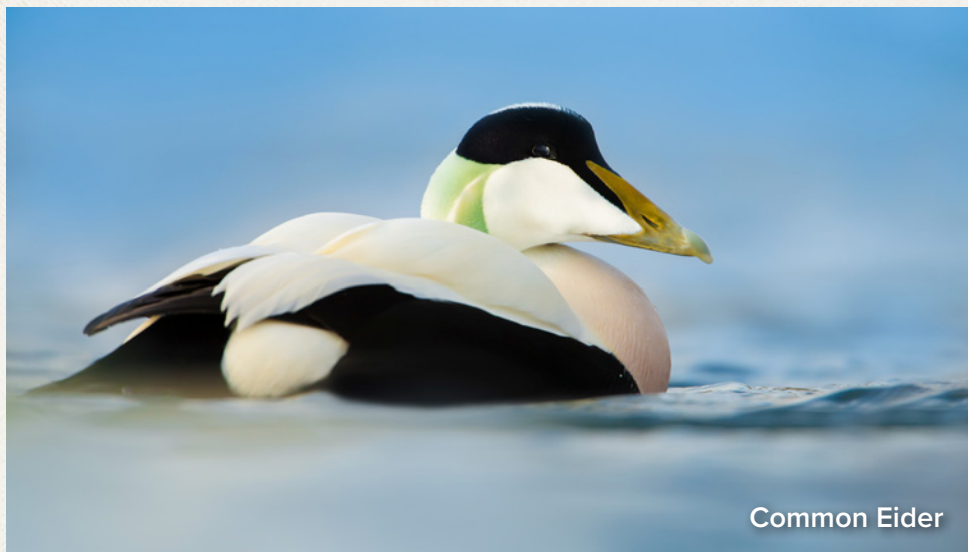
Lodging: [Hotel Latrabjarg](#)

Our Commitment to Conservation

On every Wild Latitudes tour, we aim to make a positive conservation impact wherever we travel. We utilize the services of local guides and, when possible, stay in environmentally-sensitive, locally-owned lodges. Through our partnership with the Rainforest Trust, a portion of all international tour fees goes to purchasing rainforest acreage, for its protection in perpetuity. On every trip, we also make a contribution to a local conservation effort that works to protect a native species or ecosystem.

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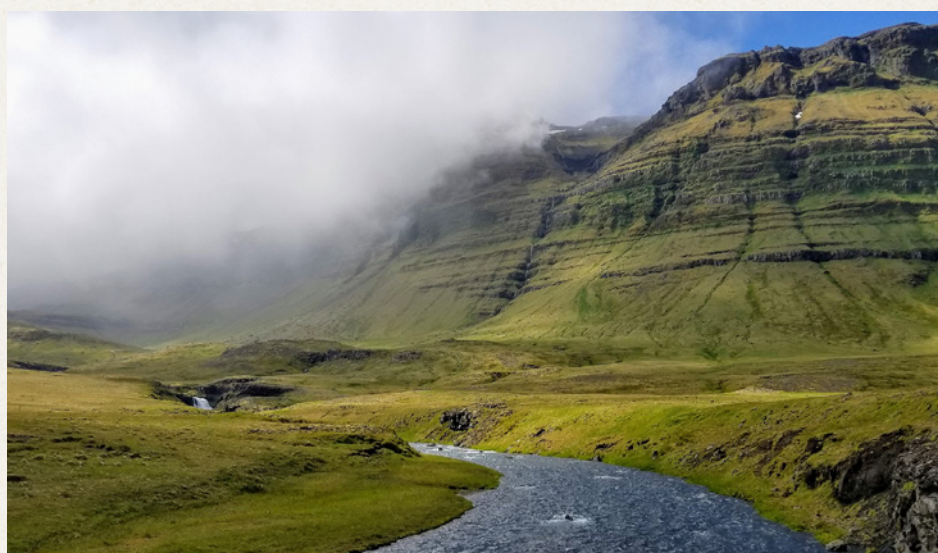
Common Eider



Arctic Tern



Rock Ptarmigan



Strokkur Geyser



Gyr Falcon

To register for this tour, email or call: info@wildlatitudes.com, 503-714-3504

Day 6 - July 6 - Exploring the Westfjords

Today we'll transit numerous awe-inspiring fjords and highlands. Each fjord was carved out by a massive glacier during the last Ice Age, over 10,000 years ago. We'll make stops along the way for photography, botanizing, and to look for **White-tailed Eagle**, **Common Eider**, **Whooper Swan**, and other interesting birds. We'll also visit the incomparable **Dynjandi waterfall**, making time to fully appreciate its beauty and power.

Lodging: [Hotel Isafjordur](#)

Day 7 - July 7 - Hornstrandir Nature Reserve

This will be a truly epic day: a hike in the **Hornstrandir Nature Reserve**. This is the wildest, most remote place we will visit on the tour. From the town of Isafjordur we'll take a 45 min boat cruise to the isolated reserve. Keep an eye out for **Humpback Whales**! Once on shore, we'll have opportunities to walk and explore the wildly scenic



Arctic Fox



landscape. Here is our best chance of seeing Iceland's only native land mammal: the **Arctic Fox**. The wildflowers are lovely here and we'll stop to photograph and identify them here and there. Hornstrandir is a truly magical place that will give you a once-in-a-lifetime experience. You can choose your own level of activity while at the reserve. There is a lonely farmhouse that we'll use as our basecamp. It has a restroom and other facilities. The staff will make us a delicious dinner there before we head back across the bay.

Lodging: [Heydalur Guesthouse](#)

Day 8 - July 8 - Local Birding and Relaxation

Today we have an opportunity to simply relax and enjoy the peaceful surroundings of the Westfjords. For those who are interested, we'll do some light birding close to our lodge. Other activities include dipping in a hot spring and horseback riding.

Lodging: [Heydalur Guesthouse](#)

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Atlantic Puffin



Great Skua



European Golden-Plover



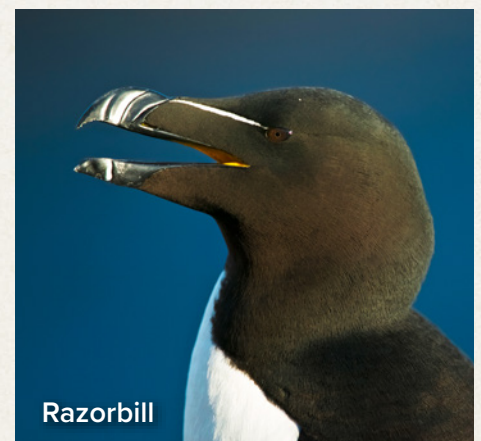
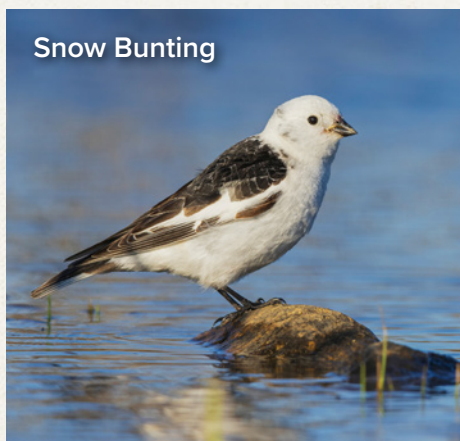
Hornstrandir Nature Reserve

To register for this tour, email or call: info@wildlatitudes.com, 503-714-3504

Day 9 - July 9 - Transit Day to Northern Iceland

We have a long drive today, as we move from the Westfjords to our hotel on the shores of **Lake Myvatn**. The landscapes along the way are wonderfully scenic. We'll make several stops to look for birds, to stretch our legs at an outdoor cultural site, and to take in the scenery. Rare **Pink-footed Geese** may be found on this route, so we'll be on the lookout for them. In the early evening, In the early evening we'll arrive at our hotel after a relaxing dinner en route.

Lodging: [Hotel Laxa](#)



Day 10 - July 10 - Birding Lake Mývatn

After breakfast we'll head out for a big day of birding around **Lake Myvatn**. This beautiful, shallow lake, situated in a significant geothermal area on the Mid-Atlantic Ridge, is one of the **top birding sites of the world**. The key attraction is the great number of duck species that breed here—more than anywhere else on the planet! We hope to find **Long-tailed Duck**, **Barrow's Goldeneye**, **Eurasian Wigeon**, **Tufted Duck**, and more. If we're lucky, we may also find **Rock Ptarmigan** and **Gyr Falcon** today, which is Iceland's National Bird. We'll return to our hotel in the early evening, where we'll catch up on our bird list before dinner. There will be an option after dinner to take a relaxing dip in the **Myvatn Nature Baths** (approx. \$50 entrance fee). Such geothermally-heated pools are an important part of Icelandic culture.

Lodging: [Hotel Laxa](#)

Day 11 - July 11 - Asbyrgi Canyon and Dettifoss Waterfall

This morning we head toward the town of Husavik and then north around the tip of the Tjörnes peninsula to look for birds like **Great Skua** and **Northern Gannet**. Then we'll have a picnic lunch and go for a nice walk at the fabulous **Asbyrgi geological site**. This

is a strange box canyon with lofty walls of basalt. Sheltered in the canyon is a beautiful birch woodland—or *kjarr*—representing Follaldafoss a forest ecosystem that was once much more widespread in Iceland. We'll also take a walk to see **Dettifoss**, Europe's largest waterfall. It is fed by the vast Vatnajökull Icecap in the island's central highlands. We'll get to experience other marvelous geological wonders of the Myvatn area as well. This area is an active volcanic system with recent lava flows, boiling mud pots, sulfur fumaroles, craters, and cinder cones. We'll arrive at our guesthouse by dinner time.

Lodging: [Hotel Laxa](#)

Day 12 - July 12 - Fly Home from Akureyri

We'll check out of our guesthouse and make the one hour drive to the city of **Akureyri** this morning. At the airport, we'll say our goodbyes to those heading home, while the rest of us continue onward on the **EXTENSION TRIP**. See next page...



Red-necked Phalarope

EXTENSION TRIP

Eastern Iceland: Complete the Ring

July 12 - 17, 2027



Skógafoss Waterfall

Day 1 - July 12 - Highlands and Hallormsstaður National Forest

Today we start an exciting new journey! On this 6-day extension trip we'll complete the world-famous Ring Road to circumnavigate the entire Island.

We'll bid the travelers heading home farewell, and then cross the expansive lava fields of Iceland's northeast. This stretch will be the best example we'll have of looking into the **Highlands of Iceland**, a stark and beautiful landscape.

We'll stop for lunch before heading to **Hallormsstaður National Forest**, the largest forest in Iceland at over 1800 acres. We'll enjoy a walk in this rare and beautiful habitat while on the lookout for forest birds such as **Goldcrest**, **Redpoll**, and **Eurasian Wren**. In addition, many forest plants such as **Stone Bramble** and **Common Harebell** line the hiking paths.

Our destination for the night, **Egilsstaðir**, is the largest town in eastern Iceland located on the shore of the beautiful **Lagarfjötur**. We'll take in the views in comfort before calling it a night.

Lodging: [Lake Hótel Egilsstaðir](#)

To register for this tour, email or call: info@wildlatitudes.com, 503-714-3504

Day 2 - July 13 - Iceland's Eastern Shore

Heading south, we'll traverse through the mountain pass at **Öxi**. This scenic route gives us a chance to look for the introduced **Reindeer** that roam Iceland's east and stop at beautiful waterfalls such as **Folaldafoss**. As always, while we're in higher elevations we'll look for **Icelandic Rock Ptarmigan** and **European Golden Plover**.

After lunch in **Djúpivogur**, we'll bird the nearby peninsula. Many familiar waterfowl such as **Tufted** and **Long-tailed Ducks** breed in these shallow ponds. Luckily there are blinds that offer us wonderful views of these sometimes skittish animals.

The eastern shore of Iceland is a network of breathtaking fjords littered with steep waterfalls. As we weave along this epic coast we'll stop at sites such as **Hvalnes Lighthouse** to search for birds and views before ending in the beautiful seaside town of **Höfn**.

Lodging: [Hofn Berjaya Iceland](#)



White-tailed Sea-Eagle



Barnacle Geese



Purple Saxifrage



Black Sand Beach near Vik

Day 3 - July 14 - Vatnajökull National Park

After some time appreciating the delightful Höfn we'll make our way west where the road is carved between the ocean and mountains. We'll spend the morning at the famed glacial lagoon of **Jökulsárlón** and **Diamond Beach**. In Iceland's largest glacial lagoon, icebergs drift by and line the beach like diamonds. In addition to the gorgeous ice, **Barnacle Geese** are often found here along with hunting **Harbor Seals**. The extensive black sand beaches, called **Sandurs**, host Iceland's largest breeding colony of **Great Skua**.

As we continue west we'll explore other regions of **Vatnajökull National Park**. From land we'll hike to the tongue of a glacier before visiting the visitor center and trails of **Skaftafell**. Here we can learn about and walk through more of Iceland's pristine natural landscapes. Continuing west through extensive lava fields, we'll end our day at the seaside village of **Vík** where spires and cliffs line the black sand beaches.

Lodging: [Hotel Kria](#)



Day 4 - July 15 - Southern Coast and Westman Islands

Dyrhólaey Lighthouse, slightly west of Vik, offers sweeping vistas and looks at one of the more iconic sea arches of Iceland. Here we'll watch **Northern Fulmars** come and go from the cliffs below while keeping an eye out for hunting **Merlins**. Our next stop is one of the most famous waterfalls of southern Iceland, **Skógafoss**, where we can walk to the base or top for beautiful views. Next we'll stop for a look at **Eyjafjallajökull**, the volcano that famously erupted in 2010 before heading to our ferry to the **Westman Islands**.

On the ferry ride we'll be on the lookout for **Manx Shearwaters** and **Northern Gannets**, gorgeous seabirds known in these waters. Our destination, the Westman Islands, are a truly charmed place. Though small, the quaint village and parks are amazingly scenic. Here we'll visit a large colony of **Atlantic Puffins**, offering up-close views of this iconic species. The eastern part of the island was taken by an eruption in 1973, museums and viewpoints will tell the story of this event.

Lodging: [Hotel Burfell](#)

Atlantic Puffin Colony in the Westman Islands



Day 5 - July 16 - Westmans and Floi Reserve

For the morning we'll explore the Westmans at a relaxed pace before taking our scenic ferry ride back to the main island. Heading west, we'll make several stops for waterfalls and lighthouses en route to **Flói Nature Reserve**, an important breeding site for many Icelandic birds such as **Red-throated Divers**. This is a great area to search for **Short-eared Owls** as they patrol the ponds and fields.

We'll continue onward to our final destination, the city of **Keflavik**, for our last night together where we'll complete our final bird list and share the highlights of our incredible trip.

Lodging: [Hotel Keflavik](#)

Day 6 - July 17 - Departures

Today we say *bless bless* and head to the airport. Depending on the timing of our flights, we might make some local stops for birding in the morning.



Red-throated Loons

YOUR GUIDES

STEVE BACKUS

Steve is an avid birder and naturalist hailing from North Carolina. Through his career and personal travels he has gotten to see incredible corners of our world and loves to share what he has experienced.

An infinitely curious person by nature, Steve is passionate to teach about how life interacts and connects. There's no aspect of the natural world that doesn't weave into this story, and his experiences spanning the arctic to antarctic are part of what he'll share with you.

As a mariner, waterbirds are of particular interest to Steve and his time as a ship's naturalist, a captain of wildlife cruises, a point counter at migration hot-spots, and guide on pelagic birding tours has deepened his appreciation of them. Though our feathered friends are his primary area of expertise, there's no aspect of the natural world that he doesn't enjoy teaching.



DAVID JAFFE

David Jaffe has been guiding and teaching since 1991. His childhood interest in nature eventually led him to Evergreen State College, WA where he earned a B.S. in Environmental Studies and Geology. After 13 years of 'life-experience' he returned to graduate school, earning a M.S. in Applied Ecology with The Field Naturalist Program from the University of Vermont.

David has trekked through the Himalaya in Nepal, looked into the eyes of masked boobies in the Galápagos, sought nudibranchs on the Great Barrier Reef, and walked the Ghats along the Ganges River in India. He has led backcountry trips in Denali National Park, learned from students in Kentucky, and gained great insights while hitchhiking home from work in Yosemite National Park. He has experience as a naturalist in many of the lower 48 states and Baja California. David worked as a divemaster in Australia, Costa Rica, and India. He assisted with the establishment of a marine protected area off the coast of Madagascar and researched and formally studied birds in Canada and South America. His understanding, love and enthusiasm about the natural world continues to grow.



IMPORTANT INFORMATION

THE PACE AND STYLE OF OUR TOURS

The primary goal of our trips is to experience and learn about the natural world, especially the region's birds and other wildlife, and of course, to have fun! As birding is often a primary focus of our tours, and birds are active in the morning, we will sometimes have early morning outings before breakfast. That said, our style of birding may not be ideal for hard-core "listers." We prefer to spend time observing the species we encounter, and learn a bit about their natural history, rather than rushing through the field to add the maximum number of species to our bird list. We also make diversions for interesting, non-avian wildlife, plants, geological wonders, and cultural activities. The pace of most of our trips is moderate, and we encourage anyone in good health to attend and enjoy the experience. Please contact us about if you need specific information on the types of physical activities on a tour and their physical requirements.

We strive to immerse participants in the local culture and to that end, wherever possible, we stay in locally owned and operated hotels that are designed and run in an environmentally sustainable way. Though some accommodations may be more basic than others, all are safe, clean and comfortable. We also utilize the services of local guides, visit local markets, and other culturally significant sites.

TOUR DATE AND TRIP LEADER CHANGES

Leaders and schedules are determined up to a year in advance of our tours. In the event that we have a change in a tour's dates or leaders, we reserve the right to do so, and will strive to inform participants as early in the process as possible. Additional leaders may be added to tours according to the group size, and will be specified in the tour itinerary. We also reserve the right to cancel any trip for which there are insufficient reservations.

HOW TO REGISTER FOR THE TOUR

When you're ready to sign up for the tour, please let us know by doing one of the following:

- Send us an email at info@wildlatitudes.com
- Call us at 503-714-3504

Then we'll send you the link to our online registration form. You can choose to pay your deposit by credit card or check. See 'Deposit Policy' below.

DEPOSIT POLICY

A deposit is due at the time of registration. ***A deposit is the only thing that guarantees your place on the trip.*** Registration can be made over the phone with a credit card: 503-714-3504. *Note:* there is an additional 3.0% fee for credit card payments. This is only what we are charged by the credit card company.

IMPORTANT INFORMATION

Checks are happily accepted and should be made out to *Wild Latitudes LLC*. Include the tour name on the memo line of the check and send to:

Wild Latitudes, PO Box 25115, Portland, OR 97298.

PAYMENT POLICY

Full payment is required **90 days** prior to the tour departure date for international tours or any tour involving flights; and **30 days** prior to the tour departure date for local (i.e. in the Portland, Oregon area), van-based tours.

CANCELLATION POLICY

In the event a participant needs to cancel a reservation for any tour, the following policies will apply:

- **90 days** or more prior to tour departure date, the deposit will be refunded, minus an administrative fee of \$100.
- **Less than 90 days** prior to tour departure date, no refunds will be given.

We *strongly* recommend that you purchase trip cancellation insurance to protect yourself from unforeseen circumstances.

If for any reason Wild Latitudes cancels a tour prior to the start of the tour, full refunds—minus the cost of any internal/in-country airline tickets purchased and/or any non-refundable deposits or expenses already made by Wild Latitudes—will be given to all participants. In the event that the tour is canceled while underway due to unforeseeable events such as but not limited to natural disaster, military activities, social uprising, or other extremely dangerous conditions not within the control of Wild Latitudes, no refund will be issued.
