



# FINLAND & ARCTIC NORWAY

22 MAY – 29 MAY /4 JUNE 2016

**LEADER:** HANNU JÄNNES

This year's Birdquest tour to Finland and Norway went pretty much to plan, although awful weather at the end of the tour probably cost us one or two species. As ever owls were high on everyone's wish list, and once again we succeeded in having really good sightings of all the target species, including an impressive female Great Grey Owl with two small chicks, a pair of splendid Ural Owls, a diminutive Eurasian Pygmy Owl in its nest box, a very cute Boreal (Tengmalm's) Owl, and three fierce looking Northern Hawk Owls in the north. The gamebirds, despite the fact that they have suffered poor breeding success for the last three years, proved very co-operative and we had great views of a rogue male Western Capercaillie, displaying Black Grouse, a pair of confiding Hazel Grouse, and good views of several Willow and Rock Ptarmigans. Other species worth a mention were a splendid pair of Citrine Wagtails, great views of adult summer White-billed Diver, White-backed, Lesser Spotted, Black, Grey-headed and Three-toed Woodpeckers, several King Eiders, including splendid adult male, several Eurasian Dotterels, displaying Terek Sandpiper, Broad-billed Sandpiper in song flight, the enigmatic and elusive Pine Grosbeak, a total of three Red-flanked Bluetails, including two adult males, Icterine, Blyth's Reed, Marsh and Greenish Warblers, Siberian Jay, Grey-headed Chickadee (aka Siberian Tit), and Little, Lapland, Oortolan and Snow Buntings. We also had several write-ins which included mega rarities with Eurasian Stone-curlew (19th for Finland), Gull-billed tern (third for Finland) and sixth or seventh Stejneger's Scoter (a potential split from White-winged Scoter) for Norway.



*We had great views of a pair of Ural Owl near Lahti (Lia Steen).*

On the down side was the total absence of Steller's Eiders in Norway, which lead us to miss this species for the first time on a Birdquest tour. Apparently the last wintering birds had left the Norwegian coast exceptionally early this year.

The tour began with mid-morning assembly at an airport hotel in Vantaa from where we took a short drive to a patch of forest where we had good sightings of breeding Black and Grey-headed Woodpeckers with nest holes only 30 meters apart. We then checked out the two virtuoso singers, Blyth's Reed and Marsh Warbler, near Järvenpää, before heading to Vanhankaupunginlahti, a large protected wetland area near downtown Helsinki. Here we enjoyed a good picnic lunch in lovely sunny weather, before visiting the reserve, where one of our first birds was a showy Lesser Spotted Woodpecker near its nest hole. Later we spent some time chasing a skulking Thrush Nightingale, had great views of a pair of Citrine Wagtails, a rare breeding bird in Finland, and saw two showy Icterine Warblers. We still had time left, so we headed for Laajasalo, twenty minutes' drive away, where we heard a singing River Warbler, which unfortunately just refused to show itself. We then headed 120kms north to Hauho, where we checked-in to our lovely guesthouse and enjoyed a good dinner. Afterwards we still had enough energy left to visit a nearby nest box where a Pygmy Owl and its small chicks gave us angry stares!

After great breakfast at Hauho, we headed further east to Lahti region, where we started the day by trying to locate Greenish Warbler and Red-breasted Flycatcher in a suitable hill side forest. We were out of luck though as the flycatcher was not present and the warbler, which was singing in an inaccessible place, failed to respond to our attempt to lure it out from the forest. So we decided to leave the area and head for a nest of a White-backed Woodpecker, where an almost full grown chick was peeking out of the nest begging for a



*A cute Boreal (Tengmalm's) Owl was one of the birding highlights in the Kuusamo area (Hannu Jännes).*

feed and during our visit it was fed twice by the parent. White-backed Woodpecker is still a rare bird in Finland with currently maybe 120-180 breeding pairs annually, having increased since the late 1980's, when the population size was estimated to be only 20-30 pairs. The increase is due to measures to protect suitable habitats, but also to irruptive birds from Russia, which boost the Finnish population from time to time. It is a species, which breeds very early in the year, and we often miss it entirely on the Birdquest tour as the chicks leave their nests before the tour starts. Our woodpecker session was interrupted by a phone call telling us that a Three-toed Woodpecker was showing in the same area where we had been birding earlier, and, to my amazement, the bird was still there, working on some fallen spruce trunks, when we got there half an hour later. At the woodpecker site we were met by Pekka, a local guide, who promised to join us for the Ural Owl quest, which was next on our birding agenda. However, first it was time for lunch in local café, where the Finnish alcohol regulations caused a headache for Peter, who finally enjoyed his daily dose of beer outside the premises! Our visit to the first Ural Owl territory draw a blank as the chicks had already left their nest, and we couldn't locate them, or their parents, despite an extensive search, but we did see a first-summer male Red-breasted Flycatcher, which was holding territory in the area. Fortunately Ural Owl is a rather common bird in Finland with ca3000 breeding pairs, and our visit to the next territory gave us magnificent views of two adult birds. As we still had plenty of time left, we decided to enjoy more owl magic and visited an artificial nest platform, where a female Great Grey Owl was tending her two small chicks. Later we drove back to Hauho very satisfied with two cool woodpeckers and two magnificent owls under the belt.

This morning we left Hauho and made a couple of stops in the Lahti area, where we revisited the Greenish Warbler, which was more co-operative and provided really great views, and we also made the compulsory visit to the local dump, where, amongst other things, a showy Blyth's Reed Warbler and Whinchat were seen. Much of the remainder of the day was spent driving to Oulu, with a longer break near Jyväskylä, where, after a picnic lunch, we had good views of the declining Ortolan Bunting. After reaching our accommodation and having dinner at Oulu we visited Oulu harbour. The weather was miserable, but our main target, the Terek Sandpiper, showed reasonably well, and even performed its display song for us. Terek Sandpiper, which has always been a rare breeder in Finland, has declined in recent years to the extent that there can't be more than few pairs left in the whole of the country.



*A magnificent Great Grey Owl near Lahti (Lia Steen).*

The following morning was pretty cold and windy for our visit to the famous Liminka Bay, where we spent some time scanning the huge wetland with its many species of ducks and waders. Best birds here were large numbers of non-breeding Whooper Swans, a couple of White-tailed Eagles, several Black-tailed Godwits, a very rare breeding bird in Finland, Little Gulls, and, most surprisingly, a distant Gull-billed Tern, a very rare visitor to Finland with only three individuals recorded. The bird is a returning individual, that has already spent six summers at Liminka Bay, but as there had been only a few sightings this summer, I really didn't expect to find it during our relatively brief visit. We also searched the fields for a Pallid Harrier, which had been around, and later spent some time with other birders in an area, where a Lesser Spotted Eagle, a rare bird in Finland, had been sighted earlier, but drew a blank. Later we drove to Kuusamo for a four night stay.

For our first day we headed out very early to the Ruka area, which this year was the birding hot spot of Kuusamo thanks to its 'crazy' male Capercaillie and several Red-flanked Bluetails. We were not the only birders in the area as there were six minibuses at the parking lot at 5am! The weather was rather cold and very windy, but it didn't stop us from getting great views, and excellent photos, of the male Capercaillie that was aggressively defending its hill top territory. However, the Bluetails were very distant, and although we could hear them singing, we couldn't locate them in the very windy forested hillside. On the way out of the forest we heard a Hazel Grouse calling, and, as it didn't seem interested in our playback attempts, we simply followed the bird into the forest. After quite a wait, careful playback and a stealthy walk, we eventually located a pair of these beautiful birds, which showed well as they climbed a birch. Back at the parking lot we found a singing Grey Wagtail, a scarce breeding bird (ca. 10-40 pairs annually) in Finland, and a write-in. Later in the day we visited the parking lot at the base of Konttainen, where we saw a family of confiding Siberian Jays, admired a Grey-headed Chickadee (Siberian Tit) at its nest hole, and scoped male Greater Scaup and many Smew and Velvet Scoters at a bird thronged lake. In the late afternoon we visited a field, where our target bird, Eurasian Stone-curlew, was trying to hide in a patch of bare dry ground. This, yet another top rarity in Finland with 18 previous records, had been in this field since early May, and here it also met its end around mid-July, when it was apparently killed by a bird of prey. Needless to say this top Finnish rarity was a write in!



*We had some amazing encounters with confiding male Willow Ptarmigans (Hannu Jännes).*

The next day the most memorable sightings were an amazing encounter with two confiding Willow Ptarmigan and a Boreal (Tengmalm's) Owl at its nest box. We also worked pretty hard for some target birds like Rustic Bunting, but failed to find any. On our third day in Kuusamo we were back at the Ruka area for our main target, the Red-flanked Bluetail. This time the conditions were much better and we managed to get great views of two adult males and one female. Also a visit to a roadside Black Grouse lek was a success. During our last morning in Kuusamo we checked more Rustic Bunting habitat, but this species, which has been in steady decline for number of years now, seemed to have been particularly scarce this year, and all the traditional sites we visited seemed to be uninhabited. A good surprise though was a flock of 24 Taiga Bean Geese feeding on a field nearby.



*A confiding Eurasian Dotterel in the high fjells near Ivalo (Hannu Jännes).*



*One of the Northern Hawk Owls near Kaamanen (Lia Steen).*

After breakfast it was time to say goodbye to Ian, pack our vehicle and head for Ivalo. In the afternoon we reached the fjells just south of Ivalo, where the fittest of us had a good walk in the beautiful fjell country where we located a total of three Eurasian Dotterels. As the rest of the group still needed the Dotterel, we visited another fjell top, this time by car, and saw a total of four Dotterels right next to the car park, including one inquisitive individual that came very close to our vehicle. We then drove to Ivalo and checked in to our very comfortable accommodation.



*Male Pine Grosbeak near the feeder at Kaamanen (Lia Steen).*



*Grey-headed Chickadee (or Siberian Tit) at Kaamanen (Hannu Jännes).*

The next morning began with a visit to a forested bog near Ivalo, where we soon connected with a Little Bunting, which gave everyone good scope views. Another Little Bunting was also heard only in the area. Next on the agenda was a wetland area in the far west close to the border of Norway for some wader action. It was the first time we visited the area on a Birdquest tour as it involves a detour, but I think that everyone agreed that it was a good move despite the extra drive. Two hour's birding here produced good views of displaying Broad-billed Sandpipers, great views of a pair of Long-tailed Jaeger, Temminck's Stints, Red-necked Phalaropes, Common Ringed Plovers, many Ruffs, a beautiful male Lapland Longspur that came to investigate us, a very confiding male Willow Ptarmigan, a distant Rough-legged Buzzard, many European Golden Plovers, displaying Common Snipe, a couple of Bar-tailed Godwits, Spotted Redshanks, and many Wood Sandpipers song fighting. However, the distant galloping horse display song of the Jack Snipe was heard only by some of the group. After our detour in 'wader country' it was time for us to hurry to Kaamanen, where we were able to enjoy good numbers of summer plumaged Bramblings and Greenfinches, one or two Grey-headed Chickadees (Siberian Tit) and, best of all, two Pine Grosbeaks, which showed amazingly well on the café's famous bird feeders. After delicious lunch of soup at the café we continued our journey to the next stake-out, where two adult Hawk Owls were tending their off-spring, and showed extremely well. In addition to this showy pair, we had good views of the male of another pair nearby. Then it was time to rush cross the border to Norway, and a drive to Vardö for a three nights stay.



*First-summer male Pine Grosbeak at the famous feeder in Kaamanen (Hannu Jännes).*



*When seen well male Bluethroat is a pretty amazing looking creature (Lia Steen).*

The best birds during an early morning birding session on Vardö Island was a Twite at the usual stake-out, Red-throated Pipit and a beautiful male Bluethroat singing its heart out. After a good breakfast with pickled herring, waffles and all, we spent the rest of the morning on the famous bird island of Hornøy, where we had excellent views, and great photo opportunities, of the breeding seabirds including Thick-billed and Common Murres, Black Guillemots, Razorbill, Atlantic Puffin, Eurasian Shag and Black-legged Kittiwake. Other interesting birds here included a tame Rock Pipit and several Red-throated Pipits. In the afternoon we headed for an inland wetland, with many lekking Ruffs, and also checked some of the bays at the seashore. Best birds of the afternoon included King Eiders, Tundra Bean Geese, Glaucous Gull, two Long-tailed Jaegers, 20 White-tailed Eagles and two Horned Larks.

Next day we did a full day excursion to the remote village of Hamningberg, which seems like “the end of the world”. The weather was pretty miserable with strong winds and low temperatures, but we still managed to see an adult White-billed Loon, which was our main target, a stunning male Arctic Redpoll and, to my surprise, our first and only Bohemian Waxwings. Other good birds included our first Sanderlings and Purple Sandpipers of the trip, and a stunning male Bluethroat.

Our last morning at Varanger began with a visit to a cliff, where a total of four Ring Ouzels and a White-throated Dipper were added on the list, before we continued our journey towards the town of Båtsfjord, which lies on the opposite side of the Varanger Peninsula. Just as we reached the high fjells in the middle of the Varanger peninsula, where we were planning to bird, we received a message that a Stejneger's Scoter that had been discovered few days earlier at Berlevåg harbour, had been relocated, and our plans were immediately changed. The scoter proved easy to locate and we had good views of it swimming in the harbour. This Eurasian form of the N American White-winged Scoter, is a potential split, and only the sixth or seventh record for Norway! It was now getting quite late and we really had to hurry to get to Batsfjord in time



*Calling male Ptarmigan on the high fjells of Varanger Peninsula (Lia Steen).*

for dinner, but we still made time to stop to check a large gull flock, and amongst them we discovered a Tundra Bean and two Pink-footed Geese, a rare sighting here at this time of the year. After an excellent dinner at our hotel, we decided to hit the high fjells of the Varanger peninsula to bird beneath the midnight sun. The partly snow covered landscape in the late evening sun was a breathtaking, and our main target birds, Rock Ptarmigan and Snow Bunting, showed extremely well. We even heard the delicate song of the bunting that seems so attuned to the desolate environment it inhabits, and one of the four Rock Ptarmigans we saw gave us a several great flight displays. We also checked several small lakes and bogs, and tried to find displaying Jack Snipe, but luck wasn't with us. Next morning, our last in Norway, the weather had changed radically. It was very cold, the temperature had dropped close to 0°C, the wind was very strong and there were regular rain showers, making birding a difficult and rather unpleasant experience. As we had already bagged most of the target species, we thought that it was best to start moving south towards Finland. Once in back Finland we spent lot of time checking roadside bogs for Jack Snipe, a mission that felt pretty hopeless in the miserable weather. We did revisit the pair of Hawk Owls and had a pleasant lunch break, with four Pine Grosbeaks for company, at the café in Kaamanen. There was also the incident of "forgotten jewellery and one happy taxi driver" which gave some additional excitement to an otherwise rather uneventful day.

Next morning in Ivalo we were up early looking for Jack Snipe and Rustic Bunting, but failed miserably with both as the weather, with gale force wind and low temperature seemed to be just too much even for the birds. After breakfast it was time to head for Ivalo airport and the flight back to Helsinki to connect with international departures. It should be mentioned that we were actually quite lucky to leave when we did, as the cold weather continued for the next week and just couple of days after our departure, there was a severe snow storm resulting in thick snow covering large areas of Northern Finland!

'BIRDS OF THE TRIP' WINNERS:

1st: Western Capercaillie

2nd: Rock Ptarmigan

3rd: Hazel Grouse

4th: Red-flanked Bluetail, White-winged (Stejneger's) Scoter

5th: Great Grey Owl



*One more image of Capercaillie, bird of the trip (Hannu Jännes).*



*Birdquest group scanning for rare ducks and waders in Kuusamo (Hannu Jännes).*

## SYSTEMATIC LIST OF SPECIES RECORDED DURING THE TOUR

The species names and taxonomy used in the report mostly follows Gill, F & D Donsker (Eds). **IOC World Bird Names**. This list is updated several times annually and is available at <http://www.worldbirdnames.org>.

Species which were heard but not seen are indicated by the symbol (H).

Species which were only recorded by the leader are indicated by the symbol (LO).

Species which were not personally recorded by the leader are indicated by the symbol (NL).

Species marked with the diamond symbol (◊) are either endemic to the country or local region or considered 'special' birds for some other reason (e.g. it is only seen on one or two Birdquest tours; it is difficult to see across all or most of its range; the local form is endemic or restricted-range and may in future be treated as a full species).

**Taiga Bean Goose** *Anser fabalis* Two flocks, 27 in total, in Kuusamo.

**Tundra Bean Goose** *Anser rossicus* Five in the Varanger area.

**Pink-footed Goose** *Anser brachyrhynchus* Two at Berlevåg in Norway.

**Greylag Goose** *Anser anser* Small numbers at Liminka and at Varangerfjord.

**Barnacle Goose** *Branta leucopsis* Two in Helsinki and a flock of six in Norway.

**Whooper Swan** *Cygnus cygnus* Common and widespread.

**Common Shelduck** *Tadorna tadorna* A total of ten in Norway.

**Eurasian Wigeon** *Anas penelope* Fairly common and widespread.

**Mallard** *Anas platyrhynchos* Fairly common and widespread.

**Northern Shoveler** *Anas clypeata*

**Northern Pintail** *Anas acuta*

**Eurasian Teal** *Anas crecca* Widespread in small numbers.

**Tufted Duck** *Aythya fuligula*

**Greater Scaup** *Aythya marila* One male in Kuusamo and two pairs in Norway.

**King Eider** ◊ *Somateria spectabilis* A total of seven of this species which lingers in Norway during summer.

**Common Eider** *Somateria mollissima* Common in Norway.



*A pair of Long-tailed Duck in Norway (Hannu Jännes).*

- Common Scoter** *Melanitta nigra* Some sizeable flocks in Norway.  
**Velvet Scoter** *Melanitta fusca* Small numbers in Kuusamo and in Norway.  
**White-winged Scoter** *Melanitta deglandi* Ssp *stejnegeri*, a potential split, at Berlevåg.  
**Long-tailed Duck (Oldsquaw)** *Clangula hyemalis* Hundreds in Norway.  
**Common Goldeneye** *Bucephala clangula* Rather common and widespread.  
**Smew** ◇ *Mergellus albellus*  
**Red-breasted Merganser** *Mergus serrator*  
**Common Merganser (Goosander)** *Mergus merganser*  
**Hazel Grouse** ◇ *Bonasa bonasia* Great views of a pair in Kuusamo. Also heard in the south.  
**Western Capercaillie** *Tetrao urogallus* Great views of a 'rogue' male in Kuusamo.  
**Black Grouse** ◇ *Tetrao tetrix* Views of a few lekking birds in Kuusamo.  
**Rock Ptarmigan** *Lagopus mutus* A total of five with some great views in Norway.  
**Willow Ptarmigan (W Grouse)** *Lagopus lagopus* Small numbers were noted on six days.  
**Common Pheasant** *Phasianus colchicus* Two in the south of Finland.  
**Red-throated Loon (R-t Diver)** *Gavia stellata* Common in Norway.  
**Black-throated Loon (B-t Diver)** *Gavia arctica* Scattered records of ones and twos.  
**Yellow-billed Loon (White-b D)** ◇ *Gavia adamsii* An adult bird in Norway.



*Eurasian Stone-curlew, a major rarity in Finland (Lia Steen).*



Red-necked Phalarope (Lia Steen).

- Red-necked Grebe** *Podiceps grisegena* Small numbers at Hauho and Kuusamo.
- Great Crested Grebe** *Podiceps cristatus* Two in the south.
- Eurasian Bittern** *Botaurus stellaris* (H) Two were heard in Finland.
- Grey Heron** *Ardea cinerea* One in the Helsinki area.
- Northern Gannet** *Morus bassanus* Small numbers in Norway.
- European Shag** *Phalacrocorax aristotelis* Common in Norway.
- Great Cormorant** *Phalacrocorax carbo* Common in Norway.
- Western Osprey** *Pandion haliaetus* Two in the south of Finland and one in Ivalo.
- European Honey Buzzard** *Pernis apivorus* Singleton in Kuusamo.
- White-tailed Eagle** *Haliaeetus albicilla* Amazingly common in coastal Norway.
- Rough-legged Buzzard (R-I Hawk)** *Buteo lagopus* Small numbers in the north.
- Common Pheasant** *Phasianus colchicus*
- Eurasian Coot (Common C)** *Fulica atra* (H)
- Common Crane** *Grus grus* Small numbers were noted.
- Eurasian Stone-curlew** *Burhinus oediconemus* One in Kuusamo. 19th record for Finland.
- Eurasian Oystercatcher** *Haematopus ostralegus* Common in Norway.
- Northern Lapwing** *Vanellus vanellus*
- European Golden Plover** *Pluvialis apricaria* Small numbers in northern Finland and Norway.
- Common Ringed Plover (Great R P)** *Charadrius hiaticula* Common in the north.
- Little Ringed Plover** *Charadrius dubius* Two in southern Finland.
- Eurasian Dotterel** *Charadrius morinellus* Seven in the fjells near Ivalo.
- Eurasian Woodcock** *Scolopax rusticola* Two were seen.
- Jack Snipe** *Lymnocyptes minimus* (H) One was heard in the bogs near Karigasniemi.
- Common Snipe** *Gallinago gallinago* Widespread.
- Black-tailed Godwit** *Limosa limosa* One at Liminka Bay near Oulu.
- Bar-tailed Godwit** *Limosa lapponica* Fairly common on the Varanger coast. Also two in Finland.
- Whimbrel** *Numenius phaeopus* Small numbers in the north.
- Eurasian Curlew** *Numenius arquata*
- Spotted Redshank** *Tringa erythropus* Small numbers in the north.



Great Black-backed Gull (Hannu Jännes).

- Common Redshank** *Tringa totanus* Rather common in Norway.  
**Common Greenshank** *Tringa nebularia* Small numbers were noted.  
**Green Sandpiper** *Tringa ochropus* A few in the Kuusamo area.  
**Wood Sandpiper** *Tringa glareola* Widespread and common in the north.  
**Common Sandpiper** *Actitis hypoleucos* Widespread small numbers.  
**Ruddy Turnstone** *Arenaria interpres* Small numbers were seen in Norway.  
**Red knot** *Calidris canutus* Six in Norway.  
**Sanderling** *Calidris alba* A total of seven in Norway.  
**Temminck's Stint** *Calidris temminckii* Small numbers in Finland and Norway.  
**Purple Sandpiper** *Calidris maritima* A handful of birds in coastal northern Norway.  
**Dunlin** *Calidris alpina* Common in the north.  
**Broad-billed Sandpiper** *Limicola falcinellus* Three in display flight near Karigasniemi.  
**Ruff** *Philomachus pugnax* Rather common in the north.  
**Red-necked Phalarope** *Phalaropus lobatus* Small numbers in northern Finland and Norway.  
**Black-legged Kittiwake** *Rissa tridactyla* Very abundant in Norway.  
**Black-headed Gull (Common B-h G)** *Chroicocephalus ridibundus*  
**Little Gull** *Hydrocoloeus minutus* Common in Kuusamo, and at a wetland in Varanger.  
**Mew Gull (Common G)** *Larus canus*  
**Great Black-backed Gull** *Larus marinus*  
**Glaucous Gull** *Larus hyperboreus* A total of four in Norway.  
**European Herring Gull**  $\diamond$  *Larus argentatus*  
**Lesser Black-backed Gull (Baltic G)** *Larus fuscus* Small numbers in Helsinki, Lahti and Kuusamo.  
**Gull-billed Tern** *Gelochelidon nilotica* One at Liminka Bay. Third individual ever recorded in Finland!  
**Caspian Tern** *Sterna caspia* One at Liminka Bay.  
**Common Tern** *Sterna hirundo*  
**Arctic Tern** *Sterna paradisaea*  
**Parasitic Jaeger (Arctic Skua)** *Stercorarius parasiticus* Common in Norway.  
**Long-tailed Jaeger (L-t Skua)** *Stercorarius longicaudus* A total of eight in Norway.



*Black-legged Kittiwake at Hornøya island (Hannu Jännes).*

- Thick-billed Murre (Brünnich's Guillemot) ♦ *Uria lomvia*** Small numbers at Varangerfjord.  
**Common Murre (C Guillemot) *Uria aalge*** Very abundant in Norway.  
**Razorbill ♦ *Alca torda*** Abundant in Norway.  
**Black Guillemot ♦ *Cepphus grille*** Small numbers in Norway.  
**Atlantic Puffin ♦ *Fratercula arctica*** Rather common at Varanger including great views at Hornøya island.



*Atlantic Puffin at Hornøya island (Lia Steen).*



Razorbill (Hannu Jännes).

Rock Dove (introduced) (Feral Pigeon) *Columba livia*

Common Wood Pigeon *Columba palumbus*

Common Cuckoo (Eurasian C) *Cuculus canorus* Widespread in small numbers.

Ural Owl *Strix uralensis* Great views of two adults at nest near Lahti.

Great Grey Owl ◇ *Strix nebulosa* Fabulous views of a female and two chicks at nest.

Northern Hawk Owl ◇ *Surnia ulula* Great views of a total of three near Kaamanen.

Eurasian Pygmy Owl ◇ *Glaucidium passerinum* Female in a nestbox with five chicks at Hauho.

Boreal Owl (Tengmalm's O) ◇ *Aegolius funereus* Great views of one in Kuusamo.

Short-eared Owl *Asio flammeus* (H)(LO) One was heard by the leader only in the north.

Common Swift *Apus apus*

Lesser Spotted Woodpecker *Dendrocopos minor* One at nest in Helsinki.

White-backed Woodpecker *Dendrocopos leucotos* A nearly full grown chick with an adult bird at nest.

Great Spotted Woodpecker *Dendrocopos major* Fairly common in the south.

Eurasian Three-toed Woodpecker *Picoides tridactylus* A female in Lahti.

Black Woodpecker *Dryocopus martius* A total of five including great views of two adults and a juvenile at nest.

Grey-headed Woodpecker *Picus canus* Good views of one at nest near the airport.

Common Kestrel *Falco tinnunculus* Few were noted.

Eurasian Hobby *Falco subbuteo* Few were noted.

Peregrine (P Falcon) *Falco peregrinus* Two in Norway.

Siberian Jay ◇ *Perisoreus infaustus* A total of seven, with excellent views, in Kuusamo.

Eurasian Jay *Garrulus glandarius*

Eurasian Magpie *Pica pica*

Western Jackdaw (Eurasian J) *Corvus monedula*

Rook *Corvus frugilegus* Noted in the Oulu region.

Hooded Crow *Corvus cornix*

Northern Raven (Common R) *Corvus corax*

Bohemian Waxwing ◇ *Bombycilla garrulous* A flock of three at Varanger.



Young Black Woodpecker with adult female on the background and female Lesser Spotted Woodpecker (Lia Steen).

**Willow Tit *Poecile montanus*** A few were noted.

**Grey-headed Chickadee (Siberian Tit)  $\diamond$  *Poecile cinctus*** Two in Kuusamo and two at the feeder in Kaamanen..

**Eurasian Blue Tit *Cyanistes caeruleus*** Common in Finland, especially in the south of the country.

**Great Tit *Parus major***

**Eurasian Skylark *Alauda arvensis***

**Horned Lark (Shore L) *Eremophila alpestris*** A total of five in Norway.

**Sand Martin (Bank Swallow) *Riparia riparia*** A few were noted.

**Barn Swallow *Hirundo rustica***

**Common House Martin (Northern H M) *Delichon urbica***

**Long-tailed Tit *Aegithalos caudatus* (H)** Heard only in the Lahti area whilst watching Ural Owls.

**Willow Warbler *Phylloscopus trochilus*** Common and widespread throughout.

**Common Chiffchaff *Phylloscopus collybita*** A handful of birds in the south and in Kuusamo.

**Wood Warbler *Phylloscopus sibilatrix*** Rather common in the south.

**Greenish Warbler *Phylloscopus trochiloides*** Good views of one in Lahti. Another one was heard in Kuusamo.

**Sedge Warbler *Acrocephalus schoenobaenus***

**Blyth's Reed Warbler *Acrocephalus dumetorum*** Two in the south with some great views.

**Marsh Warbler *Acrocephalus palustris*** One in the south.

**Icterine Warbler *Hippolais icterina*** Two in Helsinki on our first day.

**River Warbler  $\diamond$  *Locustella fluviatilis* (H)** One was heard in Helsinki on our first day.

**Eurasian Blackcap *Sylvia atricapilla*** Handful of birds in the south.

**Garden Warbler *Sylvia borin* (H)** Handful of birds were heard in the south.

**Lesser Whitethroat *Sylvia curruca*** FA few in the south.

**Common Whitethroat *Sylvia communis*** Rather common in south.

**Goldcrest *Regulus regulus*** Handful of birds in the south of Finland.

**Eurasian Wren (Winter W) *Troglodytes troglodytes* (H)**

**Eurasian Treecreeper (Common T) *Certhia familiaris*** One near Lahti and another one in Kuusamo.

**Common Starling *Sturnus vulgaris***

**Ring Ouzel *Turdus torquatus*** Four at Varanger.

**Common Blackbird (Eurasian B) *Turdus merula*** Common in the south of Finland.

**Fieldfare *Turdus pilaris*** Common and widespread.



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Siberian Jay in Kuusamo (Lia Steen).

- Song Thrush** *Turdus philomelos* Noted in the south.
- Redwing** *Turdus iliacus* Common and widespread.
- Mistle Thrush** *Turdus viscivorus* Small numbers in the south and in Kuusamo.
- Spotted Flycatcher** *Muscicapa striata*
- European Robin** *Erithacus rubecula*
- Bluethroat** *Luscinia svecica* Great views in the north.
- Thrush Nightingale** *Luscinia luscinia* One was seen and another one heard in Helsinki.
- Red-flanked Bluetail** *Tarsiger cyanurus* A total of three, two males and one female, in Kuusamo.
- European Pied Flycatcher** *Ficedula hypoleuca* Widespread in small numbers.
- Red-breasted Flycatcher** *Ficedula parva* One first summer male in Lahti, and another one was heard there.
- Common Redstart** *Phoenicurus phoenicurus*
- Whinchat** *Saxicola rubetra*
- Northern Wheatear** *Oenanthe oenanthe*
- White-throated Dipper** *Cinclus cinclus* One in Varanger.
- House Sparrow** *Passer domesticus* Widespread in Finland and Norway.
- Eurasian Tree Sparrow** *Passer montanus* Small numbers were noted in the south.
- Dunnock (Hedge Accentor)** *Prunella modularis* (H) A handful of birds were heard.
- Western Yellow Wagtail (Grey-headed W)** *Motacilla [flava] thunbergi* Small numbers were noted.
- Citrine Wagtail** *Motacilla citreola* A pair in Helsinki on our first day.
- Grey Wagtail** *Motacilla cinerea* One male in Kuusamo. A rare breeding bird, with 10-40 pairs, in Finland.
- White Wagtail** *Motacilla [alba] alba* Common and widespread.
- Meadow Pipit** *Anthus pratensis* Common in the north.
- Tree Pipit** *Anthus trivialis* Good views in Kuusamo.
- Red-throated Pipit** *Anthus cervinus* Fairly common in Norway.
- Eurasian Rock Pipit** *Anthus petrosus* One in Norway.



Arctic Redpoll in Varanger (Lia Steen).

- Common Chaffinch** *Fringilla coelebs* Common from Helsinki to Kuusamo in Finland.
- Brambling** *Fringilla montifringilla* Rather common from Kuusamo all the way to Norway.
- Pine Grosbeak** ♦ *Pinicola enucleator* ♦ Up to four at the famous feeder at Kaamanen.
- Eurasian Bullfinch (Common B)** *Pyrrhula pyrrhula*
- Common Rosefinch (Scarlet R)** *Carpodacus erythrinus* A scattered few were noted.
- European Greenfinch** *Chloris chloris*
- Twite** *Linaria flavirostris* Four in total in Norway.
- Common Linnet** *Linaria cannabina* Two at the dump in Lahti.
- Common Redpoll** *Acanthis flammea* Surprisingly scarce this year. Only one was identified!
- Arctic Redpoll (Hoary R)** ♦ *Acanthis hornemanni* A stunning male along the Hamningberg road in Varanger.
- Red Crossbill/Parrot Crossbill** *Loxia curvirostra/pytyopsittacus* Three in Kuusamo.
- European Goldfinch** *Carduelis carduelis* A few in the south.
- Eurasian Siskin** *Spinus spinus* Rather common in the south and in Kuusamo.
- Yellowhammer** *Emberiza citrinella* Widespread in small numbers in Finland.
- Ortolan Bunting** *Emberiza hortulana* One male and another heard only bird en route to Oulu.
- Little Bunting** *Emberiza pusilla* Good scope views of one near Ivalo.
- Common Reed Bunting** *Emberiza schoeniclus*
- Lapland Longspur (L Bunting)** *Calcarius lapponicus* Great views in the north.
- Snow Bunting** *Plectrophenax nivalis* A few were noted in Norway.



*A first-summer Moose in northern Finland (Hannu Jännes).*

## MAMMALS

**Arctic Hare (Mountain H)** *Lepus timidus* Fairly common in the north, especially around Kuusamo.

**European Hare (Brown H)** *Lepus europaeus* Rather common in the south.

**Eurasian Red Squirrel (Red S)** *Sciurus vulgaris* Widespread in small numbers.

**Root Vole (Tundra V)** *Microtus oeconomus* One in N Finland.

**Muskrat** *Ondatra zibethicus* A few the Kuusamo area.

**Red Fox** *Vulpes vulpes* Three were noted.

**Harbour Seal (Common Seal)** *Phoca vitulina* Two individuals engaged in a serious fight in Norway.

**Grey Seal** *Halichoerus grypus* A few in Norway.

**Stoat (Ermine)** *Mustela erminea* One in Kuusamo.

**American Mink (introduced)** *Neovison vison* One in Norway.

**Harbour Porpoise (Common Porpoise)** *Phocoena phocoena* (NL) Two in Norway.

**Northern Minke Whale** *Balaenoptera acutirostrata* Two individuals sighted in Norway.

**Moose (Elk)** *Alces alces* One on the way to Kuusamo, and another one near Karigasniemi.

**Caribou (Reindeer) (domesticated)** *Rangifer tarandus* Far too common in the north.

## REPTILES

**Common European Adder (C E Viper)** *Vipera berus* One in the Lahti area.