



Siberian Jay is one of the key birds on this tour (Hannu Jännés).

FINLAND & ARCTIC NORWAY

19 MAY – 1 JUNE 2018

LEADER: HANNU JÄNNES

This year's Birdquest tour to Finland and Norway was once again a great success. Not only did we find the great majority of target birds, we were able to enjoy them in the stunning landscapes of the "Land of the midnight sun" with its almost endless boreal forests, countless lakes, wet bogs, mighty rivers, partly snow covered fells and the rugged coast of the Arctic Ocean that teems with birdlife. As always owls were high on everyone's wish list, and once again we succeeded in having really good sightings of all the target species with an impressive female Great Grey Owl, a splendid Ural Owl, two close encounters with diminutive Eurasian Pygmy Owls, a very cute Boreal (Tengmalm's) Owl family at the nest, and a family party of fierce looking Northern Hawk Owls. We had an unexpected bonus owl in the form of a magnificent Snowy Owl on the fells of northern Norway. It is unfortunately a very rare sighting in Fennoscandia nowadays. The gamebirds, despite suffering poor breeding success for many years now, proved co-operative and we had great views of Western Capercaillie, displaying Black Grouse, confiding Hazel Grouse and good views of Willow and Rock Ptarmigans. Other species worth a mention were a splendid adult male Pallid Harrier, nowadays a rare but regular breeding bird in Finland, great views of four adult summer p White-billed Divers, White-backed, Lesser Spotted, Black, Grey-headed and Three-toed Woodpeckers, King Eider, an admittedly brief Gyrfalcon, several Eurasian Dotterel, Broad-billed Sandpiper and Jack Snipe in song flight, the



Eurasian Dotterel on the high fells of northern Finland (Hannu Jännes).

enigmatic and elusive Pine Grosbeak, a singing adult male Red-flanked Bluetail, Icterine, Blyth's Reed and Greenish Warblers, Siberian Jay, Grey-headed Chickadee (aka Siberian Tit), and Little, Rustic, Lapland, Ortolan and Snow Buntings. There was also the memorable visit to the bird island of Hornöya in Norway, which, with all the breeding seabirds, is a remarkable experience. As a new feature on this tour some of us spent one evening in a bear hide in Kuusamo enjoying magnificent views of a total of four Brown Bears.



Male Eurasian Pygmy Owl near the nest in southern Finland (Hannu Jännes).



We had great views of a gorgeous Ural Owl near Lahti (Hannu Jännes).

The tour began with mid-morning assembly at an airport hotel in Vantaa from where we took a short drive to a bushy hill, a former rubbish dump, where we had good sightings of singing Icterine and Blyth's Reed Warblers and a very confiding Thrush Nightingale. Next stop, after a seated lunch, was at a pond, where a short walk produced a Slavonian Grebe, Gadwall and Common Moorhen, which is actually a rare bird in Finland. We then headed 100kms north to the Lahti area, where we checked-in to our idyllic accommodation near a ski-slope with great view over a big lake and surrounding forests. A short walk around the environs of our accommodation produced good views of a Wryneck. Later we headed to restaurant in a nearby village, where we enjoyed dinner, before heading back to our accommodation for well deserved rest.

Early the next morning we hit the road again and drove 70 kms west to Hauho, where our local guide took us to one of his many Pygmy Owl nest boxes and we were shown a female, with her fierce eyes staring up at us, sitting on her nest. We then admired the male that provided brilliant close-up views in nearby trees. It was then interesting to hear our guide telling us about his Pygmy Owl research project. Another target bird of the morning was a White-backed Woodpecker, a rare bird in Finland, which happened to be breeding nearby. A short wait near the nest hole produced decent views of the rather shy female. Other birds seen during the morning included Whooper Swans, Common Cranes, Black-throated Loons (or Divers) and Crested Tit. Back in our hotel we had a late breakfast before heading off for the next owl, a pair of Ural that had been holding a territory nearby. It was uncertain whether the owls were still around as we hadn't heard of any positive sightings from their territory for a few days, but as we approached it we quickly located one of the pair sitting in a spruce, and had great views of this beautiful bird. After our owling session we walked in the forest and had great views of a singing first-summer male Red-breasted Flycatcher. In the afternoon we visited a good patch of deciduous forest, with plenty of dead wood, which produces ideal conditions for breeding woodpeckers. During the walk we had really great views of a drumming male White-backed Woodpecker. Later we came across a second individual, which was quite a surprise as White-backed Woodpecker is a rare bird in Finland with currently maybe 120-180 breeding pairs annually. This is an increase 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. We also saw Lesser Spotted and Grey-headed Woodpeckers in this lovely, productive area.



One of the three White-backed Woodpeckers we saw (Hannu Jännes).

Next morning started with a Hazel Grouse chase in a nearby forest area where our local contact had had several calling birds the previous week, but as often happens with this species in southern Finland, they all had gone mute and inactive towards the end of May. After a good breakfast at our accommodation in perfect sunny weather with two Blyth's Reed Warblers and a Wryneck singing in the background, we commenced the long journey north to Oulu, taking a long break at a good patch of forest near Jyväskylä, where we spent some time searching for a Three-toed Woodpecker, but only managed to find a singing Greenish Warbler and Red-breasted Flycatcher. After check-in and a quick dinner in our Oulu hotel, we headed out again to meet with a local guide, who had a number of important target species lined up for us. One of the first birds we saw was an adult male Pallid Harrier that showed well as it hunted over the fields looking for food for a mate that was sitting at a nest nearby. Pallid Harrier, a former rarity in Finland, has rapidly become a regular, although still rare breeding bird in Finland. Next we had a quick check of a Pygmy Owl nest with female and chicks, and then we were shown a female Tengmalm's Owl and its cute offspring, which were ringed (banded) by our guide. Last on the agenda was a visit to an artificial nest platform, of which there are many in these forests, which was occupied by a pair of Great Grey Owls, and we enjoyed great views of this magnificent owl, before it was time to head back to Oulu and our hotel, where we arrived well after midnight.

The next day we visited the famous Liminka Bay area, where our first target was a breeding pair of Hawk Owls. We enjoyed great views of an adult bird bringing food for its chicks and had a peek at the large chicks that were about to leave their nest, that was right next to a busy village road. Then we visited a singing Ortolan Bunting, that gave good views, and spend 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 Ruffs. Later we drove to Kuusamo stopping en route at a huge clear fell area with small patches of forest, where we located another breeding Hawk Owl and also the nest hole of a Black Woodpecker. It was unfortunate that the woodpecker proved very shy, and we didn't have time to wait for its return to the nest.



This cute Boreal (a.k.a. Tengmalm's) Owl was sighted near Tornio (Hannu Jännes).

On the first morning in Kuusamo the conditions, after a long spell of very warm, sunny and calm weather, turned cold and windy, and our first outing was pretty bird less, as there were hardly any birds singing. To be honest we pretty much failed to see any of our target birds for the morning, and the few birds we saw, offered mostly brief and unsatisfactory views. The only exception was a pair of confiding Siberian Jays missed only by the leader. After breakfast, we were out again with new targets, and the rest of the day, spent in various parts of Kuusamo proved rather more successful. One of our first targets was a pair of Hazel Grouse, which, after a longish wait, gave most of the group reasonable views. We also visited a Capercaillie nest, which was empty apart from the two eggs. It remained unclear whether the nest had been abandoned in the early stages of the egg laying period or the egg laying was still going on. Capercaillie and other precocial birds don't start incubation until they have laid all their eggs, meaning the female only visits the nest when it is time to lay a new egg. We also spent time at a compact wetland area, where we had a great encounter with two singing Rustic Buntings and a small flock of showy Bohemian Waxwings.



Brown Bears in eastern Kuusamo (David and Margaret Merrill).



Hawk Owl near Oulu (Hannu Jännes).

In the evening David and Margaret visited a bear hide in eastern Kuusamo, where their four-hour bear sit in a comfortable hide with a local guide produced excellent close-up encounters with four different Brown Bears including a mother with two cubs. Also seen were a number of White-tailed Eagles and Northern Ravens. This bear hide visit, a new feature on our Birdquest tour, was so successful and easy to arrange, that we will definitely repeat it on our future tours to Finland.

We were out again early the next morning looking for a rogue male Capercaillie, that had been holding territory near houses in the middle of a tiny village. As there had been conflict between too eager bird photographers and local villagers earlier in the season, we had to keep very low profile, stay in the vehicle and drive slowly around and hope that the crazy Capercaillie would pop-up and show himself to us. I managed to drive down a wrong sideroad, which led us to finding a drumming male Three-toed Woodpecker, which showed brilliantly! Then, as the day was still young, we decided to have another go for a breeding pair of Black Woodpecker, which showed very well after a longish wait. The woodpecker chase also produced views of Siberian Jays and, more importantly, a stunning pair of tame Hazel Grouse! In the afternoon we checked the Kuusamo rubbish dump, which proved rather unproductive, and Oivanki wetland where we had another encounter with a Rustic Bunting and we found a Siberian Tit. In the evening we walked up a Spruce covered hillside, where after a longish chase, we obtained decent scope views of an adult male Red-flanked Bluetail singing from a tree top. On our last morning in Kuusamo, we headed out very early as we still had some gamebirds to see, and soon located our main target, Capercaillie, on the roadside. However, this female was so close to our vehicle that it was not visible from the passenger seats of the car, and it soon took off and disappeared in the forest. Luckily the second female we found was a lot more confiding and sat in a tree for a good time and was seen well by all. We then visited a site where a male Capercaillie had been holding territory and soon Andrew noticed it strutting amongst the bushes in full display mode giving the jumps and all. We admired the bird for some time before heading back to our hotel for well-deserved breakfast and check-out. Later we drove the 350 kilometres to Ivalo stopping en route at a bog with confiding Little Buntings and at a fell where our search of Eurasian Dotterels came to nothing!



Kuusamo is a great place to see Capercaillie (Hannu Jännes).

The next morning saw us at a wetland area in the far west close to the border of Norway for some wader action. It was rather cold and extremely windy, and some of the bird watching was actually done from the shelter of an empty barn. Despite the nasty weather, we worked the area for several hours and had a decent collection of birds including displaying Broad-billed Sandpiper, great views of Long-tailed Jaegers (or skuas), Temminck's Stints, Dunlins, Red-necked Phalaropes, Common Ringed Plovers, many Ruffs, a Lapland Longspur (or Bunting), many European Golden Plovers, displaying Common Snipe, many Bar-tailed Godwits, Spotted Redshank and Wood Sandpipers song flying. After the morning in 'wader country' we hurried to Kaamanen and Neljän Tuulen Tupa, where we were able to enjoy good numbers of summer plumaged Bramblings, Greenfinches and Common Redpolls and a few Arctic Redpolls and, best of all, four Pine Grosbeaks, which showed amazingly well, on the café's famous bird feeders.



We had great views of elegant Long-tailed Skuas at a bog in northern Finland.



Pine Grosbeak, a first-summer male, at the famous bird feeder in Kaamanen.

Next morning, before heading north towards Norway, we had a pre-breakfast visit to a bog near Ivalo, where we were entertained by Common Cranes and Black Grouse. Then it was time for a short revisit to Neljän Tuulen Tupa, before birding a fell top near Utsjoki finding two splendid Eurasian Dotterels and a Lapland Bunting whilst enjoying great views over the Teno river valley. A picnic lunch was enjoyed at a parking lot behind a café at the bottom of Varanger fjord, and then we followed the shore of the fjord all the way to Vardö, our base for the next three nights. Obviously we had many stops en route including the idyllic Nesseby church with good numbers of waders, Ekkerøy peninsula with its sandy beaches, a gorgeous flock of 500 roosting Red Knots in full breeding plumage, tens of Purple Sandpipers, Pink-footed and Tundra Bean Geese, our first Willow Ptarmigan, two Great Skuas, and good numbers of White-tailed Eagles (30), Rough-legged Buzzards (20) and Short-eared Owls (6).

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 with 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, Northern Gannet and Northern Fulmar. It was quite worrying to see a large number (we counted 18!) of immature White-tailed Eagles hanging around the seabird colony, constantly chasing away the thousands of adult birds making the eggs and nestlings easy prey for the number of Northern Ravens that were patrolling the cliffs. It is not difficult to predict that the rapidly growing population of White-tailed Eagles will cause big problems for breeding seabirds on the island. In the afternoon we visited a stake-out for Twite, had great views of a Red-throated Pipit and found two Glaucous Gulls whilst just enjoying relaxed birding along the shores of the fjord. In the evening we still had energy to look for Gyrfalcon inland, but only managed brief views of an unidentified large Falcon in flight.

Next day we had a full day excursion to the remote village of Hamningberg, which has an “end of the world” feel. The weather was not the best with some rain, low temperature and generally poor visibility, but luckily the sea was pretty calm giving a good opportunity to scan for anything interesting. During the day we managed to find a total of FOUR different White-billed Divers, all in breeding plumage, two giving very good views, a first-summer female King Eider (the only one on this trip!), stunning male Bluethroats, a few Arctic Redpolls, White-throated Dipper, a Horned Lark, two Pomarine Jaegers (or skuas), a flock of 12 beautiful Sanderlings in breeding plumage, two Eurasian Dotterels, and, as a complete surprise, Great Crested Grebe.



Black-legged Kittiwakes were positively common in costal Norway (Hannu Jännes).



Razorbill on the bird island of Hornøy in Norway (Hannu Jännes).



European Shag at nest (Hannu Jännes).

Our last morning at Varangerfjord was spent on Vardö Island, where a visit to a small wetland enabled great views of waders including displaying Ruffs, a near adult Iceland Gull and a single Pied Avocet, a very rare bird so far north and a write-in. The rest of the day was spent driving to Båtsfjord on the other side of the Varanger Peninsula. On the way we had birding stops, which produced, among other things, a total of three Peregrine Falcons. En route we also dipped on a Snowy Owl, which was seen right on the side of the main road just five minutes before our arrival! After a good dinner at our cosy hotel in Båtsfjord, we were back in the mostly snow covered high fells of the Varanger Peninsula looking for some of the last target species needed, and, of course, to relocate the enigmatic Snowy Owl. Finding the owl turned out to be a piece of cake, as we spotted it sitting on a top of a high hill as soon we arrived at the site of the original sighting. We all had very decent scope views of the bird before it decided to take off, fly across the road and disappear in the distance. Later we learned that there was a small influx of these magnificent birds in northern Norway and northern Finland. The Snowy Owl is nowadays a very rare, less than annual, breeding bird in the whole of Fennoscandia, and this was only my second observation of the species here in almost yearly visits during the last twenty years or so. Further up the fells we soon located a Snow Bunting, a splendid black-and-white male, a very distant Rock Ptarmigan, and a brief fly-by Gyrfalcon carrying prey.

On our last morning in Norway we visited another part of the fell country, where the highlight was a confiding pair of Rock Ptarmigans, a species we still needed to see well. It was also time to say good bye to Margaret and David, who were going to board their ship later in the afternoon and sail down the Norwegian coast.



Great Black-backed Gull at nest in Norway (Hannu Jännes).

Later during the day, on the way back to Finland, the weather got pretty cold and windy, but we still managed to find two new birds, Greater Scaup and Ring Ouzel, and back in Finland our search of bog country rewarded us with our first sightings of displaying Jack Snipe and a couple of singing Broad-billed Sandpipers.

Next morning in Ivalo it was time to thank everybody for good company during our adventure in the 'Land of the Midnight Sun' and head for the airport and the flight back to Helsinki to connect with international departures.

'BIRDS OF THE TRIP' WINNERS:

1st: Snowy Owl

2nd: Hawk Owl

3rd: Great Grey Owl

4th: Western Capercaillie

5th Ural Owl and Pygmy Owl



Purple Sandpiper (Hannu Jännes).

SYSTEMATIC LIST OF SPECIES RECORDED DURING THE TOUR

The species names and taxonomy used in the bird list follows Gill, F & D Donsker (Eds). **2018. IOC World Bird List (v 8.1)**. This list is updated several times annually and is available at <http://www.worldbirdnames.org>. The species names and taxonomy used in the mammal list follow the mammal list on the iGoTerra website (www.igoterra.com). This list largely follows IUCN (International Union for Conservation of Nature) taxonomy with just a few modifications. All of our checklists are powered by our partner iGoTerra (<http://www.igoterra.com>) who provide web and mobile applications for bird and wildlife enthusiasts and businesses.

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).

Canada Goose *Branta canadensis* Two in the south.

Barnacle Goose *Branta leucopsis* Around twenty in the south and one in Norway.

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

Taiga Bean Goose *Anser fabalis* Three in Kuusamo.

Pink-footed Goose *Anser brachyrhynchus* A total of five in Norway.

Tundra Bean Goose *Anser rossicus* A total of 26 in Norway.

Mute Swan *Cygnus olor* Three in the Helsinki area.

Whooper Swan *Cygnus cygnus* Common and widespread.

Common Shelduck *Tadorna tadorna* Two in Norway.

Northern Shoveler *Spatula clypeata*

Gadwall *Mareca strepera* Two near Helsinki.

Eurasian Wigeon *Mareca penelope* Fairly common and widespread.



Male Willow Grouse (Hannu Jännes).

- Mallard** *Anas platyrhynchos* Fairly common and widespread.
- Northern Pintail** *Anas acuta* Small numbers in the north.
- Eurasian Teal** *Anas crecca* Widespread, mostly in small numbers.
- Common Pochard** *Aythya ferina* Six near Helsinki.
- Tufted Duck** *Aythya fuligula*
- Greater Scaup** *Aythya marila* Two in Norway.
- King Eider** ♦ *Somateria spectabilis* Only one, a first-summer female, in Norway.
- Common Eider** *Somateria mollissima* Common in Norway.
- Velvet Scoter** *Melanitta fusca* Small numbers in Norway.
- Common Scoter** *Melanitta nigra* A handful of birds in Kuusamo and some sizeable flocks in Norway.
- Long-tailed Duck (Oldsquaw)** *Clangula hyemalis* Hundreds in Norway.
- Common Goldeneye** *Bucephala clangula* Rather common and widespread.
- Smew** ♦ *Mergellus albellus* Small numbers in northern Finland.
- Red-breasted Merganser** *Mergus serrator*
- Common Merganser (Goosander)** *Mergus merganser*
- Hazel Grouse** ♦ *Tetrastes bonasia* Two pairs were seen in Kuusamo.
- Western Capercaillie** *Tetrao urogallus* A male and two females in Kuusamo.
- Black Grouse** ♦ *Lyrurus tetrix* A total of six in Finland.
- Rock Ptarmigan** *Lagopus muta* A total of three with great views in Norway.
- Willow Ptarmigan (W Grouse)** *Lagopus lagopus* A total of three in the north.
- Red-throated Loon (R-t Diver)** *Gavia stellata* Rather common in Norway and a few in Finland.
- Black-throated Loon (B-t Diver)** *Gavia arctica* Scattered records of small numbers.
- Yellow-billed Loon (White-b D)** ♦ *Gavia adamsii* A total of four adults in full summer plumage in Norway.
- Northern Fulmar** *Fulmarus glacialis* A total of eight at sea in the Varanger area.
- Red-necked Grebe** *Podiceps grisegena* Small numbers at Kuusamo.
- Horned Grebe** *Podiceps auritus* Three near Helsinki.
- Great Crested Grebe** *Podiceps cristatus* Three in the south and one in the Varanger.
- Eurasian Bittern** *Botaurus stellaris* (H) One was heard in the south of 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.



A pair of Long-tailed Ducks (Hannu Jännes).

- Western Osprey** *Pandion haliaetus* Three in Finland.
European Honey Buzzard *Pernis apivorus* Singleton in the Lahti area.
Eurasian Sparrowhawk *Accipiter nisus* One in Finland.
Western Marsh Harrier *Circus aeruginosus* A total of four in Finland.
Pallid Harrier *Circus macrourus* One adult male in Tornio.
White-tailed Eagle *Haliaeetus albicilla* Amazingly common in coastal Norway. Also noted in Finland.
Rough-legged Buzzard (R-I Hawk) *Buteo lagopus* Rather common in the north.
Common Buzzard *Buteo buteo* One near Lahti.
Common Moorhen *Gallinula chloropus* One near Helsinki.
Eurasian Coot (Common C) *Fulica atra* Six near Helsinki.
Common Crane *Grus grus* Small numbers were noted.
Eurasian Oystercatcher *Haematopus ostralegus* Common in Norway and one near Oulu.
Pied Avocet *Avocetta recurvirostra* One in Vardö in Norway. A rarity there.
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.
Eurasian Dotterel *Charadrius morinellus* A total of six were seen even in the fells in the north.



A flock of Red Knots on their way to High Arctic, where they breed (Hannu Jännes).



Bar-tailed Godwit on breeding grounds in northern Finland (Hannu Jännes).

- Whimbrel** *Numenius phaeopus* Small numbers in the north.
- Eurasian Curlew** *Numenius arquata*
- Bar-tailed Godwit** *Limosa lapponica* Fairly common on the Varanger coast. Also 20 in Finland.
- Black-tailed Godwit** *Limosa limosa* Three at Liminka Bay near Oulu.
- Ruddy Turnstone** *Arenaria interpres* Small numbers were seen in Norway.
- Red Knot** *Calidris canutus* Splendid looking flocks of 500 and 100 birds in full breeding plumage in Norway.
- Ruff** *Calidris pugnax* Fairly common in the north.
- Broad-billed Sandpiper** *Limicola falcinellus* Three in total display fighting in northern Finland.
- Temminck's Stint** *Calidris temminckii* Small numbers in northern Finland and Norway.
- Sanderling** *Calidris alba* A total of 13 in Norway.
- Dunlin** *Calidris alpina* Small numbers in the north.
- Purple Sandpiper** *Calidris maritima* Up to 60 birds a day in coastal northern Norway.
- Eurasian Woodcock** *Scolopax rusticola* Small numbers were seen.
- Jack Snipe** *Lymnocyptes minimus* One displaying bird was seen in northern Finland.
- Common Snipe** *Gallinago gallinago* Widespread.
- Red-necked Phalarope** *Phalaropus lobatus* Small numbers in northern Finland and Norway.
- Common Sandpiper** *Actitis hypoleucos* Widespread small numbers.
- Green Sandpiper** *Tringa ochropus* A few in the south.
- Common Redshank** *Tringa totanus* Noted in the Oulu area and in Norway.
- Wood Sandpiper** *Tringa glareola* Widespread and common in the north.
- Spotted Redshank** *Tringa erythropus* Only a few individuals in the north.
- Common Greenshank** *Tringa nebularia* Only couple of birds were noted.
- Black-legged Kittiwake** *Rissa tridactyla* Very abundant in Norway.
- Black-headed Gull (Common B-h G)** *Chroicocephalus ridibundus* Widespread.
- Little Gull** *Hydrocoloeus minutus* Noted on six days in Finland.
- Mew Gull (Common G)** *Larus canus*
- Great Black-backed Gull** *Larus marinus*
- Glaucous Gull** *Larus hyperboreus* A total of five in Norway.
- Iceland Gull** *Larus glaucooides* One in Vardö in Norway.
- European Herring Gull** \diamond *Larus argentatus*
- Lesser Black-backed Gull (Baltic G)** *Larus fuscus* A few birds in Kuusamo.
- Common Tern** *Sterna hirundo*
- Arctic Tern** *Sterna paradisaea*



Common Murre (a.k.a. Common Guillemot) in northern Norway).

- Great Skua** *Stercorarius skua* Two in the Varanger area.
- Pomarine Jaeger (P Skua)** *Stercorarius pomarinus*
- Parasitic Jaeger (Arctic Skua)** *Stercorarius parasiticus* Common in Norway.
- Long-tailed Jaeger (L-t Skua)** *Stercorarius longicaudus* Rather good year with a total of 26 in the north.
- 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 on Hornøy island.
- Rock Dove (introduced) (Feral Pigeon)** *Columba livia*
- Stock Dove** *Columba oenas* One in the Helsinki area.
- Common Wood Pigeon** *Columba palumbus*
- Common Cuckoo (Eurasian C)** *Cuculus canorus* A total of eight in Finland.
- Snowy Owl** *Bubo scandiacus* One in the high of Norway. MEGA!
- Ural Owl** *Strix uralensis* Great views of one adult at nest near Lahti.
- Great Grey Owl** ♦ *Strix nebulosa* Fabulous views of a female at nest in Tornio.
- Northern Hawk Owl** ♦ *Surnia ulula* Great views of two adults and three fledglings at Liminka Bay.
- Eurasian Pygmy Owl** ♦ *Glaucidium passerinum* We had two great encounters with this cute little owl.
- Boreal Owl (Tengmalm's O)** ♦ *Aegolius funereus* Great views of one female and four chicks near Tornio.
- Short-eared Owl** *Asio flammeus* One in Finland and a total of 11 in Norway.
- Common Swift** *Apus apus*
- Eurasian Three-toed Woodpecker** *Picoides tridactylus* A superb male in Kuusamo.
- Lesser Spotted Woodpecker** *Dryobates minor* One in Lahti. .
- White-backed Woodpecker** *Dendrocopos leucotos* A female at nest Hauho and two males in Lahti.
- Great Spotted Woodpecker** *Dendrocopos major* Fairly common in the south.
- Black Woodpecker** *Dryocopus martius* A total of five including great views of two adults at nest in Kuusamo.



We had nice views of Grey-headed Chickadee (Siberian Tit) in Kuusamo (Hannu Jännes).

- Grey-headed Woodpecker *Picus canus*** One in Lahti.
Common Kestrel *Falco tinnunculus* A few were noted.
Eurasian Hobby *Falco subbuteo* One seen.
Gyr Falcon ♦ ***Falco rusticolus*** One in the high fells of Norway.
Peregrine (P Falcon) *Falco peregrinus* Three in Norway.
Siberian Jay ♦ ***Perisoreus infaustus*** A total of five, with excellent views, in Kuusamo.
Eurasian Jay *Garrulus glandarius* A few in the south of Finland.
Eurasian Magpie *Pica pica*
Spotted Nutcracker *Nucifraga caryocatactes* (NL) One was seen by Renee near Lahti.
Western Jackdaw (Eurasian J) *Coloeus monedula*
Rook *Corvus frugilegus* Noted in the Oulu region.
Hooded Crow *Corvus cornix*
Northern Raven (Common R) *Corvus corax*
Bohemian Waxwing ♦ ***Bombycilla garrulus*** A total of seven with some excellent views in Finland.
European Crested Tit *Lophophanes cristatus* One in the Hauho area.
Willow Tit *Poecile montanus* Noted in Kuusamo.
Grey-headed Chickadee (Siberian Tit) ♦ ***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 two in Norway.
Sand Martin (Bank Swallow) *Riparia riparia* A few were noted.
Barn Swallow *Hirundo rustica*
Common House Martin (Northern H M) *Delichon urbicum*
Willow Warbler *Phylloscopus trochilus* Common and widespread throughout.
Common Chiffchaff *Phylloscopus collybita* (H) 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 near Jyväskylä.
Sedge Warbler *Acrocephalus schoenobaenus*



Male Common Redpoll in Kaamanen (Hannu Jännes).

- Blyth's Reed Warbler** *Acrocephalus dumetorum* Three in the south with good views.
- Eurasian Reed Warbler** *Acrocephalus scirpaceus* (H) One was heard near Helsinki.
- Icterine Warbler** *Hippolais icterina* One in Helsinki on our first day.
- Eurasian Blackcap** *Sylvia atricapilla* (H) Handful of birds in the south.
- Garden Warbler** *Sylvia borin* Handful of birds in the south.
- Lesser Whitethroat** *Sylvia curruca* A few in the south.
- Common Whitethroat** *Sylvia communis* Handful of birds in the south.
- Goldcrest** *Regulus regulus* Handful of birds in the south of Finland.
- Eurasian Wren (Winter W)** *Troglodytes troglodytes* A few in the south.
- Eurasian Treecreeper (Common T)** *Certhia familiaris* (H) One in Hauho.
- Common Starling** *Sturnus vulgaris*
- Ring Ouzel** *Turdus torquatus* One singing male at Varanger.
- Common Blackbird (Eurasian B)** *Turdus merula* Common in the south of Finland.
- Fieldfare** *Turdus pilaris* Common and widespread.
- 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 several others were heard in the south.
- Red-flanked Bluetail** *Tarsiger cyanurus* One adult male was seen and another one was heard in Kuusamo.
- European Pied Flycatcher** *Ficedula hypoleuca* Widespread in small numbers.
- Red-breasted Flycatcher** *Ficedula parva* Two birds were seen and a third one was heard in southern Finland.
- 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 and one was in Varanger.
- Dunnock (Hedge Accentor)** *Prunella modularis* A handful of birds were noted in the south.
- Western Yellow Wagtail (Blue-headed W)** *Motacilla [flava] flava* Small numbers were noted.
- Western Yellow Wagtail (Grey-headed W)** *Motacilla [flava] thunbergi* Small numbers were noted.



We had up to four Pine Grosbeaks, including a gorgeous male, at the famous feeder at Kaamanen (Hannu Jännes).

- White Wagtail** *Motacilla [alba] alba* Common and widespread.
- Meadow Pipit** *Anthus pratensis* Common in the north.
- Tree Pipit** *Anthus trivialis* Fairly common in the south.
- Red-throated Pipit** *Anthus cervinus* Fairly common in Norway.
- Eurasian Rock Pipit** *Anthus petrosus* Two in Norway.
- Common Chaffinch** *Fringilla coelebs* Common from Helsinki to Kuusamo in Finland.
- Brambling** *Fringilla montifringilla* Rather common from Oulu 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* Ten or so in the south of Finland.
- European Greenfinch** *Chloris chloris*
- Twite** *Linaria flavirostris* Three in total in Norway.
- Common Redpoll** *Acanthis flammea* Rather common in the north this year.
- Arctic Redpoll** ◇ *Acanthis [hornemanni] exilipes* A total of seven in the north.
- Parrot Crossbill** ◇ *Loxia pytyopsittacus* One male was seen briefly in Kuusamo.
- Red Crossbill** *Loxia curvirostra* A few were identified in the south of Finland.
- European Goldfinch** *Carduelis carduelis* Rather common in the south.
- Eurasian Siskin** *Spinus spinus* Rather common in the south and in Kuusamo.
- Lapland Longspur (L Bunting)** *Calcarius lapponicus* Great views in the north.
- Snow Bunting** *Plectrophenax nivalis* One splendid male in Norway.
- Yellowhammer** *Emberiza citrinella* Widespread in small numbers in Finland.
- Ortolan Bunting** *Emberiza hortulana* Two males at Liminka Bay.
- Little Bunting** *Emberiza pusilla* Great views of two singing males near Sodankylä.
- Rustic Bunting** *Emberiza rustica* Good views of two males in Kuusamo.
- Common Reed Bunting** *Emberiza schoeniclus* Widespread.



We had nice views of Eurasian Elk near Inari (Hannu Jännes).

MAMMALS

European Hare (Brown H) *Lepus europaeus* A few in the south.

Mountain Hare (Arctic H) *Lepus timidus* Fairly common, noted almost daily.

Muskrat *Ondatra zibethicus* One in the Kuusamo area.

Eurasian Red Squirrel (Red S) *Sciurus vulgaris* A few were noted.

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

Brown Bear *Ursus arctos* Four for David and Margaret from a bear hide in Kuusamo.

Grey Seal *Halichoerus grypus* A few in Norway.

Harbour Porpoise (Common Porpoise) *Phocoena phocoena* Four in Norway.

Fin Whale *Balaenoptera physalus* Two individuals sighted in Norway.

Eurasian Elk *Alces alces* Four on the way to our wader bog near Karigasniemi.

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