

Finland - Spring on the Arctic Circle

Naturetrek Tour Report

6th – 10th June 2026



Pygmy Owl



Great Grey Owl



Ural Owl



Terek Sandpiper

Tour report by Ab Steenvoordeen



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Tour participants: Ab Steenvoordeen (leader) with six Naturetrek clients

Day 1

Saturday 6th June

After arrival, check-in and dinner at the hotel, we went for an evening drive between Oulu and Muhos. Driving through the fields on small gravel roads, we found our first great species for the trip. A hunting Long-eared Owl showed very well, while a group of Common Cranes walked in the background. We picked up a female Hen Harrier, and soon after a stunning male Pallid Harrier passed by, giving a very good show. A bit later in the evening, the first displaying Woodcocks were seen and heard. Our second species of owl was discovered near the roadside: a Short-eared Owl, and was followed by several more. We ended this first taste of Finnish birds around midnight, with a singing River Warbler.

Day 2

Sunday 7th June

The second and first full day in Finland was an important one: it was owl day! Because of the early spring in Finland this year, we knew we might have a challenge on our hands, as the birds had started their nesting season earlier than usual. Before breakfast we made a little drive around the dirt roads in the area, then spent the whole morning trying to find some of the owl species around Muhos.

We started with the smallest one, Eurasian Pygmy Owl. We found a female next to a nestbox with some calling chicks: we had superb views and great photo opportunities. The next species was the Great Grey Owl: we knew of a bird using an artificial nesting site, hidden deep in the forest. We were very lucky, as this stunning bird was still there and gave us exactly what we had come for! Feeling very good after these two sightings, we were *almost* convinced that the last one would be cooperative too: Ural Owl. And yes, there it was, also using an artificial nesting platform. All three of our target owl species had been seen, before the morning was even over.

With a little time to spare, we drove to a patch of mixed wet forest, known as a good spot for woodpeckers. We managed to find a female Three-toed Woodpecker peeking out of its breeding hole: this is always a difficult bird to find when they are not calling. It was time for lunch.

In the afternoon, we visited the famous bird tower at Liminka Bay, where we had displaying Ruffs, Garganey, Spotted Redshank in full summer plumage, Bar-tailed Godwits and Caspian Terns. Driving the gravel roads through the fields around Liminka and Lumijoki brought us (among other things) many Whinchats and even a Common Nightingale, which is a rare bird in the area.

Day 3

Monday 8th June

Before breakfast we had a short walk from the hotel to a nearby bird tower. In the fields were a pair of Grey Partridges and some Little Ringed Plovers. After breakfast, we headed out towards Kuusamo, taking gravel roads to Tyrnävä and Muhos. In the fields we had several Short-eared Owls, and two pairs of Ortolan Bunting.

Near Muhos, while observing a Slavonian Grebe in full summer plumage, we suddenly picked up a singing Blyth's Reed Warbler. With a little effort, everybody managed to get a good look at it: a great bird. Right after arrival in

Kuusamo, we picked up some Black-throated Divers and Velvet Scoters on a lake, and visited other areas with Red-necked Grebes and Little Gull colonies.

Day 4

Tuesday 9th June

Kuusamo is known for his grouse and taiga forest species. To get the best out of our visit, we decided to start early, before breakfast, with a morning drive. Despite the wind, a few Black Grouses were still active at a lek site, and we flushed a pair of Hazel Grouse. Luckily for us, the weather improved a lot during the morning, and birds started to sing. Unfortunately, the Red-flanked Bluetails at Kontainen had already stopped singing, but we had a Greenish Warbler and Siberian Jays.

During the day we found a pair of nesting Dippers, a singing Arctic Warbler, Little Bunting, Rustic Buntings, a pair of Siberian Tits feeding the chicks in a nestbox, and several Waxwings. Kuusamo is a good area for Taiga Bean Geese, and several pairs breed nearby. It took some effort and we had to endure a lot of mosquitos, but we found them! Close to that area there was also a lake with several breeding pairs of Velvet Scoters. It had been a great day in the taiga forest around Kuusamo and Ruka.

Day 5

Wednesday 10th June

It was the last day already: time flies when you are birding. Because we had missed the bluetails yesterday, we decided to give it another try. The morning was perfect, and sure enough, from the parking place we could hear the Red-flanked Bluetail singing. Shortly, we had the singing male nicely in the telescope. After breakfast, it was time to drive slowly back to Oulu, but not before we had a try for Terek Sandpiper. We had tried before on the first day, but it was either too busy, or too windy. But today we struck gold: we found an adult on a fence in the Oulu industrial area. It was a very good species with which to end the trip!

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Species lists

Birds

Common name	Scientific name	June 2026				
		6	7	8	9	10
Barnacle Goose	<i>Branta leucopsis</i>		✓			
Greylag Goose	<i>Anser anser</i>	✓	✓	✓		
Taiga Bean Goose	<i>Anser fabalis</i>				✓	
Mute Swan	<i>Cygnus olor</i>		✓			
Whooper Swan	<i>Cygnus cygnus</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Garganey	<i>Spatula querquedula</i>		✓			
Northern Shoveler	<i>Spatula clypeata</i>		✓			
Gadwall	<i>Mareca strepera</i>			✓		
Eurasian Wigeon	<i>Mareca penelope</i>		✓	✓	✓	✓
Mallard	<i>Anas platyrhynchos</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓	
Eurasian Teal	<i>Anas crecca</i>		✓	✓	✓	✓
Tufted Duck	<i>Aythya fuligula</i>		✓	✓	✓	✓
Velvet Scoter	<i>Melanitta fusca</i>			✓	✓	
Common Goldeneye	<i>Bucephala clangula</i>		✓	✓	✓	✓
Smew	<i>Mergellus albellus</i>				✓	
Goosander	<i>Mergus merganser</i>			✓	✓	
Red-breasted Merganser	<i>Mergus serrator</i>		✓	✓		
Hazel Grouse	<i>Tetrastes bonasia</i>				✓	
Black Grouse	<i>Lyrurus tetrix</i>				✓	
Grey Partridge	<i>Perdix perdix</i>			✓		
Common Pheasant	<i>Phasianus colchicus</i>			✓		
Common Swift	<i>Apus apus</i>	✓	✓	✓		✓
Common Cuckoo	<i>Cuculus canorus</i>		✓		✓	✓
Stock Dove	<i>Columba oenas</i>		✓			
Common Wood Pigeon	<i>Columba palumbus</i>		✓	✓	✓	✓
Eurasian Collared Dove	<i>Streptopelia decaocto</i>		✓			
Common Crane	<i>Grus grus</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Red-necked Grebe	<i>Podiceps grisegena</i>			✓	✓	
Great Crested Grebe	<i>Podiceps cristatus</i>		✓	✓		
Slavonian Grebe	<i>Podiceps auritus</i>			✓		
Eurasian Oystercatcher	<i>Haematopus ostralegus</i>		✓	✓		✓
Little Ringed Plover	<i>Charadrius dubius</i>			✓		
Northern Lapwing	<i>Vanellus vanellus</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Eurasian Whimbrel	<i>Numenius phaeopus</i>				✓	
Eurasian Curlew	<i>Numenius arquata</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Black-tailed Godwit	<i>Limosa limosa</i>		✓			
Eurasian Woodcock	<i>Scolopax rusticola</i>	✓	✓			✓
Common Snipe	<i>Gallinago gallinago</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Terek Sandpiper	<i>Xenus cinereus</i>					✓
Common Sandpiper	<i>Actitis hypoleucos</i>		✓		✓	
Wood Sandpiper	<i>Tringa glareola</i>		✓	✓	✓	✓
Common Redshank	<i>Tringa totanus</i>		✓	✓		
Spotted Redshank	<i>Tringa erythropus</i>		✓		✓	
Common Greenshank	<i>Tringa nebularia</i>		✓	✓	✓	✓
Ruff	<i>Calidris pugnax</i>		✓	✓		
Dunlin	<i>Calidris alpina</i>		✓			
Caspian Tern	<i>Hydroprogne caspia</i>		✓			

Common name	Scientific name	June 2026				
		6	7	8	9	10
Arctic Tern	<i>Sterna paradisaea</i>		✓	✓		✓
Common Tern	<i>Sterna hirundo</i>		✓	✓	✓	
Little Gull	<i>Hydrocoloeus minutus</i>		✓	✓	✓	
Black-headed Gull	<i>Chroicocephalus ridibundus</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Common Gull	<i>Larus canus</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
European Herring Gull	<i>Larus argentatus</i>		✓	✓	✓	✓
Black-throated Diver	<i>Gavia arctica</i>		✓	✓	✓	✓
Great Cormorant	<i>Phalacrocorax carbo</i>		✓			
Great Egret	<i>Ardea alba</i>		✓			
Eurasian Goshawk	<i>Astur gentilis</i>			✓	✓	✓
Pallid Harrier	<i>Circus macrourus</i>	✓				
Hen Harrier	<i>Circus cyaneus</i>	✓	✓	✓		
Western Marsh Harrier	<i>Circus aeruginosus</i>		✓			
Eurasian Pygmy Owl	<i>Glaucidium passerinum</i>		✓			
Long-eared Owl	<i>Asio otus</i>	✓				
Short-eared Owl	<i>Asio flammeus</i>	✓	✓	✓		
Ural Owl	<i>Strix uralensis</i>		✓			
Great Grey Owl	<i>Strix nebulosa</i>		✓			
Eurasian Three-toed Woodpecker	<i>Picoides tridactylus</i>		✓			
Great Spotted Woodpecker	<i>Dendrocopos major</i>		✓	✓	✓	✓
Common Kestrel	<i>Falco tinnunculus</i>	✓	✓			
Siberian Jay	<i>Perisoreus infaustus</i>				✓	
Eurasian Magpie	<i>Pica pica</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Western Jackdaw	<i>Coloeus monedula</i>	✓	✓	✓		✓
Rook	<i>Corvus frugilegus</i>		✓			
Hooded Crow	<i>Corvus corone cornix</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Northern Raven	<i>Corvus corax</i>			✓	✓	✓
Bohemian Waxwing	<i>Bombycilla garrulus</i>				✓	✓
Coal Tit	<i>Parus ater</i>		✓			
Grey-headed Chickadee (Siberian Tit)	<i>Poecile cinctus</i>				✓	
Willow Tit	<i>Poecile montanus</i>			✓	✓	
Eurasian Blue Tit	<i>Cyanistes caeruleus</i>		✓	✓		
Great Tit	<i>Parus major</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Eurasian Skylark	<i>Alauda arvensis</i>	✓	✓	✓		
Sand Martin	<i>Riparia riparia</i>		✓	✓		
Barn Swallow	<i>Hirundo rustica</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Western House Martin	<i>Delichon urbicum</i>		✓	✓	✓	✓
Wood Warbler	<i>Phylloscopus sibilatrix</i>				✓	✓
Willow Warbler	<i>Phylloscopus trochilus</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Common Chiffchaff	<i>Phylloscopus collybita</i>		✓		✓	✓
Greenish Warbler	<i>Phylloscopus trochiloides</i>				✓	
Arctic Warbler	<i>Phylloscopus borealis</i>				✓	
Sedge Warbler	<i>Acrocephalus schoenobaenus</i>		✓	✓		
Blyth's Reed Warbler	<i>Acrocephalus dumetorum</i>			✓		
River Warbler	<i>Locustella fluviatilis</i>	✓				
Garden Warbler	<i>Sylvia borin</i>	✓	✓	✓		
Lesser Whitethroat	<i>Curruca curruca</i>		✓		✓	
Common Whitethroat	<i>Curruca communis</i>		✓	✓		
Goldcrest	<i>Regulus regulus</i>				✓	✓
Eurasian Wren	<i>Troglodytes troglodytes</i>		✓		✓	
Song Thrush	<i>Turdus philomelos</i>	✓	✓		✓	✓

Common name	Scientific name	June 2026				
		6	7	8	9	10
Mistle Thrush	<i>Turdus viscivorus</i>				✓	
Redwing	<i>Turdus iliacus</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Common Blackbird	<i>Turdus merula</i>		✓			
Fieldfare	<i>Turdus pilaris</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Spotted Flycatcher	<i>Muscicapa striata</i>				✓	✓
European Robin	<i>Erithacus rubecula</i>	✓				
Common Nightingale	<i>Luscinia megarhynchos</i>		✓			
European Pied Flycatcher	<i>Ficedula hypoleuca</i>		✓	✓	✓	✓
Red-flanked Bluetail	<i>Tarsiger cyanurus</i>					✓
Common Redstart	<i>Phoenicurus phoenicurus</i>			✓	✓	
Whinchat	<i>Saxicola rubetra</i>		✓	✓	✓	✓
Northern Wheatear	<i>Oenanthe oenanthe</i>					✓
White-throated Dipper	<i>Cinclus cinclus</i>				✓	
Eurasian Tree Sparrow	<i>Passer montanus</i>	✓	✓	✓		✓
House Sparrow	<i>Passer domesticus</i>		✓	✓	✓	✓
Western Yellow Wagtail	<i>Motacilla flava</i>		✓		✓	
White Wagtail	<i>Motacilla alba</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Meadow Pipit	<i>Anthus pratensis</i>			✓		
Tree Pipit	<i>Anthus trivialis</i>		✓	✓		✓
Eurasian Chaffinch	<i>Fringilla coelebs</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Brambling	<i>Fringilla montifringilla</i>		✓		✓	✓
Eurasian Bullfinch	<i>Pyrrhula pyrrhula</i>		✓		✓	
Common Rosefinch	<i>Carpodacus erythrinus</i>		✓	✓	✓	✓
European Greenfinch	<i>Chloris chloris</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Common Linnet	<i>Linaria cannabina</i>		✓	✓		
Redpoll	<i>Acanthis flammea</i>				✓	✓
Red Crossbill	<i>Loxia curvirostra</i>				✓	✓
European Goldfinch	<i>Carduelis carduelis</i>	✓	✓		✓	✓
Eurasian Siskin	<i>Spinus spinus</i>		✓	✓	✓	✓
Yellowhammer	<i>Emberiza citrinella</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Ortolan Bunting	<i>Emberiza hortulana</i>			✓		
Little Bunting	<i>Emberiza pusilla</i>				✓	
Rustic Bunting	<i>Emberiza rustica</i>				✓	
Common Reed Bunting	<i>Emberiza schoeniclus</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓

Mammals

Common name	Scientific name	June 2026				
		6	7	8	9	10
European Rabbit	<i>Oryctolagus cuniculus</i>		✓			
European Hare	<i>Lepus europaeus</i>	✓	✓	✓		
Mountain Hare	<i>Lepus timidus</i>				✓	✓
Eurasian Red Squirrel	<i>Sciurus vulgaris</i>		✓		✓	✓