

# Sweden in Spring

Naturetrek Tour Report

9 - 12 May 2019



Great Grey Owl



Eurasian Elk



Black-throated Diver



Wren and Red-backed Shrike

Report and photos compiled by Greg Mabbett



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Tour participants: Daniel Green and Greg Mabbett (Leaders) with 12 Naturetrek clients.

## Day 1

Thursday 9th May

After an early start from London we landed at Stockholm and got straight out birding on our way to our hotel at Svartådalén. We went to a nearby reservoir for a much-needed tea or coffee and had lunch here. Marsh Harrier, Pintail, Shoveler, Gadwall, Common Tern, two Common Cranes, Yellow Wagtail, Ruff, Wood Sandpiper, Redshank and Slavonian Grebe were all seen in what was an action-packed start.

Moving to another wetland we saw Great Spotted Woodpecker, Whooper Swans, White-fronted Goose, Spotted Redshank, Stock Dove and loads of Green-veined White butterflies.

We headed for the hotel now but on our way stopped at a feeding station and enjoyed five stunning Hawfinch coming to the seed with Nuthatch and Yellowhammer also seen.

We checked into our rooms and enjoyed dinner before heading out in search of owls. We had no luck initially with Ural Owl but after passing through a couple of glades Greg spotted a Great Grey Owl and we went on to have superb views of this special bird for around 45 minutes flying from perch to perch. What a bird! We also enjoyed Woodcock, Tree Pipit and heard a Cuckoo. On the drive back to the hotel we found Roe and Red Deer, a Wild Boar and one Moose. Quite a first day!

## Day 2

Friday 10th May

A pre-breakfast walk for those up early produced Grey Wagtail, Common Sandpiper, Goldfinch and Bullfinch and a smart Pied Flycatcher, with Hare also seen.

After breakfast we headed to the pine forest enjoying flocks of Crossbill, more Tree Pipit and Lesser Whitethroat. We found Capercaillie droppings here but sadly no bird could be found. Crested Tit and Willow Tit were seen along with Green Hairstreak and Holly Blue butterflies.

We continued and next stopped at an area around some stone pillars with Wryneck in mind. Some Siskin were seen before a cracking male Red-backed Shrike was found. Amazingly the Red-backed Shrike was joined by a Wryneck on the very same branch! The two of them sat next to each other making for excellent views! As we were watching them a fabulous Black Woodpecker gave a few close fly-bys.

We made our way to a lunch site on the edge of a teeming lake. Here we enjoyed Osprey, Little Gulls, Redstart, Arctic and Black Terns and heard the booming of Bitterns with many other common species.

We made our way to the Ural Owl ringing site and went on to catch an unringed adult Ural Owl and young birds in the box - amazing to see so close up! As we were watching the owls, yet more flocks of Crossbill were flying over. We had a coffee break and before getting back to the hotel, stopped at Daniel's house with his feeding station buzzing with House and Tree Sparrow, Greenfinch, Siskin, Hawfinch and Chaffinch.

We had a break back at the hotel now before dinner and the checklist and went out for a short walk to see some juvenile Tawny Owls that Greg had found earlier in the day which gave us excellent views.

We then headed out at dusk to a small nearby wetland where we enjoyed Reed Bunting, Whinchat, Whooper Swans and an array of other water birds. The highlight here was multiple views of European Beavers!

## Day 3

Saturday 11th May

We had an early start today with a packed breakfast and headed to an area to try and see Pygmy Owl. At the first area there was no luck but moving on we didn't have to wait long until this tiny little owl flew in to give excellent views for everyone. We also saw Bullfinch, Willow and Coal Tit here.

We then left this area and drove to a picnic site to have breakfast and there were cracking birds all around us. A pair of Black-throated Divers were showing very well indeed with Goldeneye also on the water. We enjoyed a smart Hen Harrier with Pied Flycatcher seen again and the superb habitat around us also yielded Sparrowhawk, Crossbill, Wood Warbler and a pair of Wryneck which were heard initially and then showed really well. Again, Green Hairstreak butterflies were enjoyed here too. The great birds just kept coming here and we enjoyed a pair of White-tailed Eagle and an Osprey which flew right over our heads at one point with Cranes seen in flight.

We drove on for a bit now with so many birds seen and we had only just had breakfast! Passing through some super open glades and forest edge we found another Great Grey Owl perched across a small field and watched this magnificent bird hunting for an hour or so, at one point seen to catch what looked like a water vole. It flew from perch to perch giving amazing views and looking spectacular as it filled our scopes. This bird alone is worth coming to Sweden for!

We then made our way to our lunch spot and here a quite aggressive Goldcrest flew in and hit Nigel on the head! More Pied Flycatcher and Crossbill were seen here and a Nuthatch was watched going in and out of its nest hole. We went on a walk after lunch where more Wood Warbler views were enjoyed and a smart Camberwell Beauty was found. We then watched a Ural Owl on its nest before driving to a Black Woodpecker nest site. A pair soon came in and gave really excellent views.

We made our way back to the hotel now and after dinner headed out to a quarry, stopping on the way at a lovely wetland where we noted Teal, Curlew, Marsh Harrier, Woodcock, Wheatear and Whinchat. Reaching the quarry, we stood and watched over this open area and as light was fading an Eagle Owl was calling and flew in to perch on a pile of stone in a very open spot! What a bird! A day starting with Pygmy and finishing with Eagle Owl with Great-Grey and Ural in between!

Satisfied with another bird filled day we headed to the hotel for some well-earned sleep.

## Day 4

Sunday 12th May

Before breakfast we went for a drive, seeing a Moose on the way to the first stop where we saw Redwing and had a singing Icterine Warbler which gave some brief views. We carried on to a Capercaillie spot and this time we were in luck as we found a single male bird which was on show for around 30 minutes on and off. Super

birds! After a successful outing we headed back to the hotel, but not before seeing a lovely family of Moose with a mother and two yearlings seen.

After breakfast we were back out again and went for a walk in a park where another singing Icterine Warbler showed well at times, with Spotted Flycatcher and two Redwing and Greenfinch also seen. We drove on and tried for Thrush Nightingale. At the first area we had loads of Willow Warblers, singing Reed Warbler and we then moved along the road a little, with Snipe drumming overhead, before hearing a Thrush Nightingale very close to us. These birds can be notoriously difficult to actually see but we did manage some views on and off through the vegetation. We also saw some “northern” Long-tailed Tits here. We had a coffee stop now looking over another marshland area with Whinchat, Black Tern, Marsh Harrier and a good number of other water birds, with House Martins and Swallows zipping around and Swift and Golden Plover being new for the trip. A Bittern was heard booming in the reeds, Lesser Whitethroat was singing nearby and we scoped a White-tailed Eagle nest here.

We then drove to the final stop of the trip, a platform looking over a beautiful lake and marshland area where we enjoyed lunch. We enjoyed Red-necked Grebes carrying nest material, Slavonian Grebes on their nest with Spotted Redshank and Ruff feeding in the shallows, and with Marsh Tit and Swifts also noted here too. A stunning adult White-tailed Eagle cruised the length of the lake causing pandemonium with all the gulls and ducks. Four of these were Garganey which flew past us and this scene provided a fitting finale to a fantastic few days birding.

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## Species Lists

### Birds

Black-throated Diver, *Gavia arctica*  
 Slavonian Grebe, *Podiceps auritus*  
 Great Bittern, *Botaurus stellaris*  
 Mute Swan, *Cygnus olor*  
 Greylag Goose, *Anser anser*  
 Northern Shoveler, *Spatula clypeata*  
 Gadwall, *Mareca strepera*  
 Northern Pintail, *Anas acuta*  
 Tufted Duck, *Aythya fulicula*  
 Eurasian Sparrowhawk, *Accipiter nisus*  
 Western Marsh Harrier, *Circus aeruginosus*  
 White-tailed Eagle, *Haliaeetus albicilla*  
 Common Kestrel, *Falco tinnunculus*  
 Common Pheasant, *Phasianus colchicus*  
 Common Coot, *Fulica atra*  
 Golden Plover, *Pluvialis apricaria*  
 Dunlin, *Calidris alpina*  
 Eurasian Curlew, *Numenius arquata*  
 Common Greenshank, *Tringa nebularia*  
 Wood Sandpiper, *Tringa glareola*  
 Common Snipe, *Gallinago gallinago*  
 Little Gull, *Hydrocoloeus minutus*  
 Common Gull, *Larus canus*  
 Lesser Black-backed Gull, *Larus fuscus*  
 Arctic Tern, *Sterna paradisaea*  
 Common Woodpigeon, *Columba palumbus*  
 Feral Pigeon, *Columba livia*  
 Common Cuckoo, *Cuculus canorus*  
 Tawny Owl, *Strix aluco*  
 Great Grey Owl, *Strix nebulosa*  
 Common Swift, *Apus apus*  
 Black Woodpecker, *Dryocopus martius*  
 Great Spotted Woodpecker, *Dendrocopos major*  
 Barn Swallow, *Hirundo rustica*  
 Sand Martin, *Riparia riparia*  
 Meadow Pipit, *Anthus pratensis*  
 Western Yellow Wagtail, *Motacilla flava thunbergii*  
 Eurasian Wren, *Troglodytes troglodytes*  
 European Robin, *Erithacus rubecula*  
 Common Redstart, *Phoenicurus phoenicurus*  
 Northern Wheatear, *Oenanthe oenanthe*  
 Fieldfare, *Turdus pilaris*  
 Redwing, *Turdus iliacus*  
 Sedge Warbler, *Acrocephalus schoenobaenus*  
 Icterine Warbler, *Hippolais icterina*  
 Lesser Whitethroat, *Sylvia curruca*  
 Wood Warbler, *Phylloscopus sibilatrix*  
 Great Crested Grebe, *Podiceps cristatus*  
 Great Cormorant, *Phalacrocorax carbo*  
 Grey Heron, *Ardea cinerea*  
 Whooper Swan, *Cygnus cygnus*  
 Canada Goose, *Branta canadensis*  
 Garganey, *Spatula querquedula*  
 Mallard, *Anas platyrhynchos*  
 Common Pochard, *Aythya ferina*  
 Common Goldeneye, *Bucephala clangula*  
 Hen Harrier, *Circus cyaneus*  
 Common Buzzard, *Buteo buteo*  
 Western Osprey, *Pandion haliaetus*  
 Western Capercaillie, *Tetrao urogallus*  
 Common Moorhen, *Gallinula chloropus*  
 Common Crane, *Grus grus*  
 Northern Lapwing, *Vanellus vanellus*  
 Ruff, *Calidris pugnax*  
 Spotted Redshank, *Tringa erythropus*  
 Green Sandpiper, *Tringa ochropus*  
 Common Sandpiper, *Actitis hypoleucos*  
 Woodcock, *Scolopax rusticola*  
 Black-headed Gull, *Chroicocephalus ridibundus*  
 Herring Gull, *Larus argentatus*  
 Common Tern, *Sterna hirundo*  
 Black Tern, *Chilidonias niger*  
 Stock Dove, *Columba oenas*  
 Eurasian Collared Dove, *Streptopelia decaocto*  
 Eurasian Eagle Owl, *Bubo bubo*  
 Ural Owl, *Strix uralensis*  
 Pygmy Owl, *Glaucidium passerinum*  
 Eurasian Wryneck, *Jynx torquilla*  
 Green Woodpecker, *Picus viridis*  
 Eurasian Skylark, *Alauda arvensis*  
 Common House Martin, *Delichon urbica*  
 Tree Pipit, *Anthus trivialis*  
 White Wagtail, *Motacilla alba alba*  
 Grey Wagtail, *Motacilla cinerea*  
 Dunnock, *Prunella modularis*  
 Thrush Nightingale, *Luscinia luscinia*  
 Whinchat, *Saxicola rubetra*  
 Common Blackbird, *Turdus merula*  
 Song Thrush, *Turdus philomelos*  
 Mistle Thrush, *Turdus viscivorus*  
 Reed Warbler, *Acrocephalus scirpaceus*  
 Eurasian Blackcap, *Sylvia atricapilla*  
 Common Whitethroat, *Sylvia communis*  
 Common Chiffchaff, *Phylloscopus collybita*

Willow Warbler, *Phylloscopus trochilus*  
 Spotted Flycatcher, *Muscicapa striata*  
 Coal Tit, *Parus ater*  
 Marsh Tit, *Poecile palustris*  
 Blue Tit, *Cyanistes caeruleus*  
 Long-tailed Tit, *Aegithalos caudatus*  
 Eurasian Nuthatch, *Sitta europaea*  
 Common Starling, *Sturnus vulgaris*  
 Eurasian Magpie, *Pica pica*  
 Northern Raven, *Corvus corax*  
 Rook, *Corvus frugilegus*  
 House Sparrow, *Passer domesticus*  
 Hawfinch, *Coccothraustes coccothraustes*  
 Common Greenfinch, *Chloris chloris*  
 Common Linnet, *Linaria cannabina*  
 Red Crossbill, *Loxia curvirostra*  
 Common Reed Bunting, *Emberiza schoeniclus*

Goldcrest, *Regulus regulus*  
 Pied Flycatcher, *Ficedula hypoleuca*  
 European Crested Tit, *Lophophanes cristatus*  
 Willow Tit, *Poecile montanus*  
 Great Tit, *Parus major*  
 Common Treecreeper, *Certhia familiaris*  
 Red-backed Shrike, *Lanius collurio*  
 Eurasian Jay, *Garrulus glandarius*  
 Western Jackdaw, *Coloeus monedula*  
 Hooded Crow, *Corvus cornix*  
 Tree Sparrow, *Passer montanus*  
 Common Chaffinch, *Fringilla coelebs*  
 Eurasian Siskin, *Spinus spinus*  
 Goldfinch, *Carduelis carduelis*  
 Eurasian Bullfinch, *Pyrrhula pyrrhula*  
 Yellowhammer, *Emberiza citrinella*

## Mammals

European Hare, *Lepus europaeus*  
 Red Fox, *Vulpes vulpes*  
 Eurasian Elk, *Alces alces*  
 Red Deer, *Cervus elaphus*

European Beaver, *Castor fiber*  
 Wild Boar, *Sus scrofa*  
 European Roe Deer, *Capreolus capreolus*



Great Grey Owl