

Sweden's Mammals

Naturetrek Tour Report

24th – 28th May 2023



Tour report and images by Simon Green



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Tour participants: Simon Green (leader) with two Naturetrek clients

Day 1

Wednesday 24th May

A Journey Begins.

I had the pleasure of guiding our small group during five days in Central Sweden in late May. We met with everyone at Arlanda for pick-up and drove straight out to the countryside. Our first stop was at the legendary Odendisa runestone in Fläckebo, where we delighted in our sandwich lunch while immersing ourselves in the history of the area and birding at the same time. We had at least 15 Great Crested Grebes on eggs close to the outlook amongst Black-headed Gulls and a few Little Gulls, as a Marsh Harrier was feasting on eggs from a nearby gulls' nest.

We then made our way to the magnificent Färna Manor, our haven for the upcoming days. As we checked in, the charm and beauty of the manor embraced us, setting the stage for an unforgettable experience. Our evening commenced with dinner made out of local produce at Färna Manor, where we indulged in exquisite flavours and toasted to the adventures ahead. Eager to connect with nature, we embarked on a forest walk in the Utterdalen Nature Reserve, learning about edible plants and enjoying the beauty of the surroundings before heading back to the manor.

Day 2

Thursday 25th May

The day began with breakfast at Färna Manor, preparing us for an action-packed day ahead. We gathered to meet for canoeing and bird watching in the scenic Färna region. We navigated the pristine waters, observing birds such as Goldeneye and Goosander as we paddled down streams.

After the paddle we refuelled with a delicious lunch at Färna. The afternoon offered us some free time, allowing for some relaxation in the surroundings of Färna. Our guests even indulged in a wild swim in the nearby lake. But the day's highlight awaited us—the Moose tour. It began with us driving out to a calm lake surrounded by conifer trees to enjoy a dinner by an idyllic campsite. After a pleasant time with good local food, we took off to “the living room of the Moose”. By foot we looked for tracks and signs while the guests learned about one of Sweden's largest inhabitants and the largest deer species on the planet. As the sun began its descent, we embarked on an adventure that surpassed all expectations. With awe-struck gazes, we observed the majestic Moose in its natural habitat. We had five Moose grazing calmly in the same field. A female with a one year old male calf, one older bull and two adult females. They did not mind our presence and continued to eat even though we stood outside our minibus looking through the spotting scope. Our evening concluded with a sense of wonder in our hearts as we drove back to the hotel for a restful night at Färna Manor.

Day 3

Friday 26th May

A delectable breakfast at Färna Manor fuelled our spirits as we prepared to embark on a day of serenity and indulgence. The Färna Manor Spa awaited us, offering a haven of relaxation and well-being. It was a time to unwind, pamper ourselves, and rejuvenate our souls amidst the tranquil surroundings.

Following a blissful morning, the guests gathered for a picnic lunch at one of my favourite lunch spots nearby to enjoy some delectable treats. Energized and eager for more, we embarked on a forest walk in the Fermansbo Old Growth Forest to look for woodpeckers. Plenty of signs from Black Woodpecker and Three-toed Woodpecker but no sightings of the birds themselves. Roughly 10 years ago there was a huge wildfire here and afterwards came the bark beetles, turning the environment into a perfect habitat for insect loving woodpeckers.

We returned to Färna for a small break before embarking on the Beaver tour. Having our SIB (meaning soft inflatable boat) packed and ready to go. We left the mainland and travelled upstream to a small island which the locals refer to as Beaver Island. Here we had sightings of a Common Sandpiper and also two Black-throated Divers flying by. After a nice meal cooked over open fire it was time for us to head further north by boat in search of the European Beaver.

Our eyes were fixed on the shoreline, waiting for a glimpse of these remarkable creatures in their natural habitat. As dusk settled, we were rewarded with unforgettable sightings and on two different occasions had Beavers just next to the boat. As night time arrived our hearts were full of fascination as we headed back to the mainland once more.

Day 4

Saturday 27th May

Greeted by the warm rays of the sun, we began our day with a delightful breakfast at Färna Manor, fuelling our spirits for the adventures that awaited us. Today was a big day. The time had come to introduce the group to the highly anticipated Wolf excursion, an adventure that would push the boundaries of our experiences. We gathered for a Swedish fika, a cherished cultural tradition involving coffee and pastries, creating an atmosphere of camaraderie and excitement.

Departing from Färna Manor, we embarked on a journey to the heart of the Wolf territory. Here we found plenty of tracks from the Wolves, strong indications that they were present and that they could have pups in the area. We even managed to capture one of the adults in the territory on our trap camera. With all the data gathered we went to our campsite for the day to plan, eat and learn more about the Wolves. With new knowledge and food in our stomachs we set out to a secret location in the aims of hearing the Wolves howl.

As darkness crept in we immersed ourselves in the wilderness on top of a small hill next to a small gravel road in the middle of the forest. A location where I have seen Wolves before and heard them several times. As time went by the only thing we could hear was the strong winds passing the treetops making it nearly impossible for any howling Wolves to let themselves be known. After a couple of hours in the middle of nature we decided it was time to head back to Färna. And cherish what would be for the most of the group, the final night in Sweden.

Day 5

Sunday 28th May

Alas, the time had come to bid adjö to Färna Manor, a place that had become the home for our guests over the past days. After a final breakfast, we checked out with hearts brimming with memories and gratitude for the experiences we shared.

Our journey continued as we left Färna behind, embarking on a drive to Viby. Here, we indulged in a lunch at café

Pelle & Marie, savouring the Swedish flavours one last time and concluding the tour before driving to Arlanda Airport. Thus, returning to where our journey began and bidding farewell.

May the memories we created together serve as a constant reminder of the beauty of nature and the endless possibilities that await us in our future adventures. Until we meet again.



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Species lists

Mammals

Mammals	Scientific name
Eurasian Badger	<i>Meles meles</i>
Elk	<i>Alces alces</i>
European Roe Deer	<i>Capreolus capreolus</i>
Mountain Hare	<i>Lepus timidus</i>
Eurasian Beaver	<i>Castor fiber</i>

Birds

Common name	Scientific name
Canada Goose - I	<i>Branta canadensis</i>
Greylag Goose	<i>Anser anser</i>
Whooper Swan	<i>Cygnus cygnus</i>
Common Goldeneye	<i>Bucephala clangula</i>
Goosander	<i>Mergus merganser</i>
European Nightjar	<i>Caprimulgus europaeus</i>
Common Swift	<i>Apus apus</i>
Common Cuckoo	<i>Cuculus canorus</i>
Common Wood Pigeon	<i>Columba palumbus</i>
Common Crane	<i>Grus grus</i>
Northern Lapwing	<i>Vanellus vanellus</i>
Eurasian Woodcock	<i>Scolopax rusticola</i>
Common Sandpiper	<i>Actitis hypoleucos</i>
Black-headed Gull	<i>Chroicocephalus ridibundus</i>
Little Gull	<i>Hydrocoloeus minutus</i>
Common Gull	<i>Larus canus</i>
Black-throated Diver	<i>Gavia arctica</i>
Grey Heron	<i>Ardea cinerea</i>
Western Marsh Harrier	<i>Circus aeruginosus</i>
Common Buzzard	<i>Buteo buteo</i>
Ural Owl	<i>Strix uralensis</i>
Great Spotted Woodpecker	<i>Dendrocopos major</i>
Black Woodpecker	<i>Dryocopus martius</i>
European Green Woodpecker	<i>Picus viridis</i>
Eurasian Hobby	<i>Falco subbuteo</i>
Eurasian Jay	<i>Garrulus glandarius</i>
Eurasian Magpie	<i>Pica pica</i>
Western Jackdaw	<i>Coloeus monedula</i>
Hooded Crow	<i>Corvus cornix</i>

Common name	Scientific name
Northern Raven	<i>Corvus corax</i>
European Crested Tit	<i>Lophophanes cristatus</i>
Eurasian Blue Tit	<i>Cyanistes caeruleus</i>
Great Tit	<i>Parus major</i>
Barn Swallow	<i>Hirundo rustica</i>
Common House Martin	<i>Delichon urbicum</i>
Eurasian Wren	<i>Troglodytes troglodytes</i>
Eurasian Nuthatch	<i>Sitta europaea</i>
Common Starling	<i>Sturnus vulgaris</i>
Common Blackbird	<i>Turdus merula</i>
Fieldfare	<i>Turdus pilaris</i>
Spotted Flycatcher	<i>Muscicapa striata</i>
European Robin	<i>Erithacus rubecula</i>
House Sparrow	<i>Passer domesticus</i>
Common Chaffinch	<i>Fringilla coelebs</i>

