

Sweden's Upland Birds

Naturetrek Tour Report

3 - 10 June 2016



Red-necked Phalarope on Flatruet high plateau



Eurasian Pygmy Owl



Eurasian Dotterel



Four Spotted Chaser

Report and images by John Willsher



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Summary

This trip to central Sweden began with a mid-afternoon arrival at Vasteras in sunshine and 27°C. We were soon out of this small airport and almost immediately in the Black River Valley where we searched the forests and red-barn-dotted farmlands for Owls and Woodpeckers. No time was wasted, and an after dinner foray on our first evening produced Pygmy and Ural Owls, Black and Great Spotted Woodpeckers all accompanied by the sound of Thrush Nightingale, roding Woodcock and Cuckoo.

This set the trend, with the good weather continuing as we spent a further day in the valley watching Cranes with young, Whooper Swans on nests, White-tailed Eagles, and finally watching Ural Owl chicks being ringed before we finally headed northwards. Next day in Fulufjallet National Park, a walk through the boreal forest brought us to the highest waterfall in Sweden and a nesting Gyrfalcon. In the north, we saw lekking Great Snipe and on the Flatruet Plateau we watched nesting Dotterel, Golden Plovers, singing Lapland Buntings, confiding Red-necked Phalaropes and a distant Golden Eagle plus, of course, numerous Reindeer. There were nesting Slavonian Grebes, Little Gull, and a spectacular Bluethroat displayed its colours. We watched Siberian Jays, climbed a mountain (a small one but one with some interesting arctic flora), saw Rock Ptarmigan, Ring Ouzel and Golden Eagle.

It was still sunny for the start of our return south but much cooler, with a dusting of snow overnight. Highlights on the way included more close views of Dotterel, breeding Taiga Bean Geese, Osprey, Waffles, singing Corncrake, Eagle Owl and another evening spectacular with playful Beavers and a superb singing Blyth's Reed Warbler. Our last morning was just as busy, with many birds including Common Rosefinch, Wryneck and five summer-plumage Spotted Redshanks.

Day 1

Friday 3rd June

Västerås-Lake Mälaren-Forsby-Hotel Sätra Brunn

Today was hot and sunny, but stormy later. Having left the busy Stansted Airport in cool cloudy conditions, we arrived on time at Vasteras airport to bright sunshine and a temperature of 27°C. We were soon through this small airport and meeting our Swedish guide Daniel Green. A short journey in the car and minibus then brought us to the edge of Lake Mälaren, the third largest in Sweden. A snack and cold drinks were very welcome as we watched our first Common Terns, and saw our first Beaver Lodge. We had a short walk to try to see a singing Thrush Nightingale, but soon hurried back to the vehicles as a storm was brewing.

After a quick stop at the edge of town and our first lawn-feeding Fieldfares, we travelled northwards through Skultuna and the Black River valley, a landscape of farms and forest. We stopped to admire a hunting male Marsh Harrier then at a house where Hawfinches regularly visit the feeder; a bird was seen but, unfortunately, only as it flew away from a neighbouring tree. We arrived at our hotel at Sätra Brunn in time for an early dinner, because the day was not over yet! Sätra Brunn, a Spa since the 1700's, is surrounded by varied mature woodland, including Oak, in which we had already heard Pied Flycatchers singing.

We set off, after a splendid meal of Arctic Char, back south to an area of forest and rough pasture: a favoured spot, in most years, of voles and their arch enemy, a pair of Great Grey Owls. Unfortunately for us, although the owls had been seen a few days before our visit, it seems low vole numbers had led to a failed breeding this year and the owls had chosen this week to leave. We did however see a Black Woodpecker and three roding Woodcock. Switching our target to another owl species, Daniel took us into a nearby conifer forest and, after a short search, we were watching a Pygmy Owl perched on the top of a Spruce tree; it was late, but still light enough to get a good view in the 'scope. Satisfied, we headed back to our hotel for a well earned sleep, arriving just after midnight after being slightly delayed by a Ural Owl on a roadside post.

Day 2

Saturday 4th June

Hälleskogsbrännan-Färna Ekopark-The Black River Valley-Tällberg

The weather today was sunny, up to 20°C. A 7am start meant we could be in the forest of Hälleskogsbrännan relatively early in the day (sunrise was about 3.40am) to try to find ourselves a Three-toed Woodpecker. This forest, unfortunately burnt in 2014 in what was Sweden's largest forest fire of recent times, has millions of dead trees. Part is now a reserve that over the last two years has proved very attractive for the aforementioned species. We had our carefully prepared picnic breakfast in a prime location. There were Tree Pipits, a Red-backed Shrike, Whinchat singing, a Black Woodpecker and several Red Crossbills which flew over, but no Three-toed Woodpecker. We moved to another spot walking up a grassy track with flowering Chickweed Wintergreen and Violets at its edges. Willow Warblers sang from the already regenerating forest, and Pearl-bordered Fritillary, Green Hairstreak and Small Copper butterflies were sunning themselves on the track. There were Four-spotted Chaser dragonflies but, unfortunately, no woodpecker.

We reluctantly moved on but not very far before we stopped: a Willow Tit had been seen leaving its nest in a lakeside rotten stump. We watched for a while, waiting for it to return, as three Goldeneye swam out on the lake. Next stop was to admire a Whooper Swan on its lake-edge nest, and a Common Crane with young; we photographed obliging Ruby (Northern) Whiteface Darters and admired the forest floor covered in Lily-of-the-Valley, as Siskins called from above.

Near Rämnas, we stopped and searched a patch of mature deciduous forest straddling a stream, where we heard then saw a Red-breasted Flycatcher, a first-year bird without the red throat, but nonetheless an excellent bird to hear and see. Lunch stop was beside Lake Norrsjön, near Färna, where we had a good view of a singing Cuckoo and watched a Black-throated Diver on the lake. On a couple of isolated rocks protruding from the water, single Common Gulls were sitting on nests, and on the water, as at home, were numerous feral Canada Geese.

Lunch done, it was back in the vehicles and on to an area of forest south of Färna, with more mature Scots Pine, to search for Capercaillie. After negotiating a forest road for some distance, we parked the vehicles and followed Daniel on foot through the forest towards a mound he knew which had recently been used by a displaying male. Unfortunately, today the only signs on this Reindeer Lichen (*Cladonia rangiferina*) covered mound in the forest were some droppings and a few Capercaillie feathers. We retreated back into the bright sunlight and admired a Beautiful Demoiselle near the vehicles and, as we were leaving the forest, a male Red-backed Shrike. We then returned to Sättra Brunn for final check-out before heading northwards.

We were in a bit of a rush as we had an appointment with some owls and we were late, but we had not gone far up the road when there was a further delay in the form of two White-tailed Eagles seen just south of Sabohed, one of which obliged by soaring around a few times, with a Common Gull valiantly trying to chase it off.

We reached our appointment in the woods a little further north, and met a band of ringers and photographers who were patiently waiting for us to accompany them to a nearby nestbox, so we could watch them ring the chicks of a Ural Owl, part of a long term study of this species. After another short distraction as a Honey Buzzard flew over, we followed them through the forest to a tree with a nestbox. We watched as suitable safety measures were taken (Ural Owl parents can defend their young vigorously) and two downy chicks brought down the ladder from the box and ringed. The parent bird watched the proceedings from a nearby spruce tree without too much concern: perhaps it was used to this procedure, probably experiencing it before. The young were photographed then put back safely back in the box and we quickly made our way back through the forest to our vehicles, very happy to have shared this event with these dedicated ringers who are helping to monitor and conserve this owl in Sweden, and of course with the superb views we had of an adult Ural Owl.

We now had a two-hour drive to the Green Hotel at Tällberg. Daniel had promised that alternate evenings would be 'early' but there is so much to see, and at 60° N sunset is late, so perhaps sleep at this latitude is made up for in winter! We arrived and were soon enjoying a delicious meal looking out on a spectacular view of Lake Siljan, the sixth largest lake in Sweden, occupying part of the Siljan ring, the largest meteorite impact crater in Europe, created 377 million years ago.

Day 3

Sunday 5th June

Särna-Fulufjället National Park-Sörvttnet-Funäsdalen

Today was sunny and 19°C but down to 2°C at midnight. Our first task, after another good breakfast, was to choose ingredients and make our own sandwich for our continuing journey northwards. Today was going to include a detour into Fulufjället National Park, so Daniel's excellent picnic lunch might be a little late. There was no risk of us going hungry on this trip! We gathered our bags and set off at 8.30, stopping just round the corner to admire a Curlew in a small newly cut grass field and, a little further on, an Oystercatcher. We skirted round the south-eastern corner of the lake then soon began following the Österdalälven valley north-westwards. We stopped beside Lake Åsdammen for a leg stretch, where both Red-throated and Black-throated Divers were seen. At Särna, a coffee stop next to Lake Särnsjön was very welcome: a superb spot next to the old wooden church. Just offshore were a pair of Red-breasted Mergansers, the lawns around were busy with Fieldfares collecting food for their young, and a lone wader on the shore proved to be a Temminck's Stint. Nearby was an exhibit of old traditional Swedish log buildings, some of which were open to for exploration within.

After an enjoyable interlude, we set off again, soon turning westwards towards Fulufjället National Park and the tallest Swedish waterfall, Njupeskar. We parked the vehicles and set off in the sunshine to walk the two kilometres or so to the waterfall. Bramblings, Chaffinches and Willow Warblers sang from the Scots Pine and Spruce Taiga forest, whilst on the boggy moss areas where trees were sparse, we admired the carpets of Cloudberry flowers. It was not just the waterfall that encouraged us on: Daniel had promised us something special and, on arrival at a viewpoint, suggested we scan the cliff beside the fall. Eventually we all saw what we had come for: a nest of a Gyrfalcon. Halfway up the cliff, it was at some distance but through the 'scope we could clearly see a sitting bird on the nest. We settled down to watch, enjoying a coffee from the flasks Daniel

and one or two others had carried up. We ate a celebratory biscuit, then all watched again as the adult bird stood up on the nest took off and flew across the cliff and back a few times, she then perched some distance away and appeared to pick up something. It was a food cache, which she took back to the nest and began feeding to two small chicks whose heads we now could just see, periodically appearing above the rim of the nest. Fantastic! We moved closer to a viewpoint nearer the base of the waterfall, bathed in sunlit spray, hoping perhaps she might fly off the nest again above us, but all we could see was her tail protruding, as she settled down to brood the chicks again. Highlights of our return walk were a Redstart singing from a Spruce top, more Bramblings and a Scots Pine not that large but over 500 years old, demonstrating how slowly trees grow at this latitude.

Back at our vehicles we enjoyed a late lunch in the sunshine before setting off back to the main road north. We made a couple of stops: a lake with an Arctic Tern, another with 13 Velvet Scoters, then an unsuccessful search for a Moose just seen up the road near Sörvttnet by a fellow motorist. We did, though, see a very obliging Brambling in a roadside tree.

We finally reached our hotel for the next three nights at Funäsdalen, in time for another delicious dinner. There was not too much relaxation, though, as this was another evening out - yesterday was an 'early' one, remember. So after dinner, we travelled a few miles then up a track, parked and set off on a walk across moorland part way up a mountain still with pockets of snow on its flanks. A Willow Ptarmigan was heard, but our target this evening, as the light dimmed, was Great Snipe. We settled down to watch a patch of low Juniper scrub and stunted birch, surrounded by long, dead grass. It was getting cold, not much was happening, and we were getting a bit resigned to the idea that there were no birds. As it got a little darker, however, one bird began its strange popping call and, after a while, the excitement increased as more birds joined in, until at least eight birds were calling. We watched and attempted to pinpoint them as they called and sometimes scurried through the long grass below us. It was a unique experience watching them. We were very happy as we made our way back down to the vehicles. It was nearly midnight, but still light enough to see the two Black Grouse we had heard calling fly off into the trees.

Day 4

Monday 6th June

Flatruet high plateau-Storsjön Delta- Storsjö

Today was sunny and 19°C. It was another clear bright morning as we set off for the Flatruet plateau. Through Funäsdalen, we headed north towards Mittådalen; as we gained height the landscape was dominated by stunted birch forest, valley bogs and distant mountains still with snow. We stopped sharp, however, when Richard spotted a Moose with two yearling calves, and we all bundled out to get a view as they stood watching us from the edge of the birch forest. A little further on, we watched two Willow Ptarmigan as they walked along the edge of the bog. Then we visited a small lake where we saw Redshank, Golden Plovers, a couple of Wood Sandpipers, singing Redwing, and Arctic Tern.

Moving on, we reached higher ground above the tree line, in fact the highest road in Sweden at 975m; it was true Tundra with numerous grazing Reindeer. Either side of the road there were still snow banks remaining from winter snow-clearing, and where we stopped, a shallow pool had formed around which a Wood Sandpiper and Ringed Plover fed.

We enjoyed a drink, then donned our wellies and set off across this extensive area of *Sphagnum* bog, interspersed with pools and drier dwarf willow-, grass- and lichen-covered land. Our first bird was a handsome Lapland Bunting singing from its rock song-post. There were more Wood Sandpipers, a singing Greenshank, Meadow Pipits and a Common Crane. A beautiful male Hen Harrier quartered the grassland and two very confiding Red-necked Phalaropes on a pool provided superb photo opportunities. Ravens were heard and a distant Golden Eagle spotted. Later, we returned to the vehicles and enjoyed our lunch looking out over moorland, sheltering from the cool wind in the lee of a lone wooden building. Over lunch, we had learnt that a Dotterel had been seen on the snow bank just back down the road, so we set off to have a look. As we started off, four waders flew rapidly over our heads, calling: they were Broad-billed Sandpipers; unfortunately they kept going. We searched for the Dotterel but no success. Back in the vehicles, we continued northwards, stopping for photos of the Reindeer with their photogenic young calves. Turning eastwards, we arrived at the village of Storsjö overlooking the extensive Lake Storsjön. We explored a small enclosed pond with a couple of islands, one covered in nesting Black-headed Gulls. Several Slavonian Grebes were sitting on nests, and a Common and two Little Gulls flew round and settled on the water. There was a Red-throated Diver on the main lake, Sand Martins overhead, plus Cuckoo and Pied Flycatcher in the shoreline trees. We did a circuit around the well-kept village with its clean white church surrounded by hay meadows overlooking the lake, then began our return by checking the delta just upstream of the lake. Here, there were a group of multicoloured Ruff, a Whooper Swan and a distant Osprey nest but no sign of its owners. As we started down from the highest point of Flatruet, we stopped a few times to scan the short vegetated area each side of the road. Having been cleared of snow during winter, it seemed particularly attractive to nesting waders, as there were Ringed Plovers, Dunlin, and a Dotterel that we watched return to its nest.

Near where we had seen the Moose this morning, Daniel stopped as he thought it would be a likely Bluethroat spot; sure enough, we were all soon watching a superb male on top of a birch tree. A track led to a stream and here we later saw Reed Bunting and Yellow Wagtail perching obligingly.

We arrived back at our hotel at Tännaldalen in good time this evening: time to enjoy the delightful and friendly atmosphere of the hotel, a delicious dinner and a relatively early night!

Day 5

Tuesday 7th June

Stor-Mittåkläppen-Bruksvallarna-Funäsdalen

The fantastic weather continued - sunny and 21°C - so today we were to climb a mountain, albeit a small one, but first we had to try out the special sausage we bought in the supermarket last night. Breakfast finished, we drove a short distance to an area where several cabins have been built in the forest, most being occupied in winter by winter-sports enthusiasts. The area now was quiet, so no-one was around who might wonder what we were doing, as Daniel cut slices of the specially selected sausage and stuck them to nearby tree branches. A short burst of call was enough to announce food was ready and, in a very short time, two Siberian Jays had arrived and were scoffing the bits of sausage. We had brilliant close views of them and the photographers all hopefully managed to get pictures, though they did not sit still for long, quickly eating one piece then nipping back into the forest before being tempted out by another piece.

Moving on, we travelled through Funäsdalen then up the valley of the Ljusnan to Bruksvallarna, where we joined a locally maintained toll road leading north up into the mountains, our target was Stor-Mittåkläppen a 1212m

peak. We parked near the old summer log cabins of Djupdalsvallen with their birch bark and turf roofs. The start of the walk led us up through birch woods with Willow Warblers, Common Redpoll, Brambling and, higher up where dwarf willow and juniper predominated, Bluethroat. The mountain, about a 300m climb, was ahead of us still with patches of snow, one such patch covered by a herd of Reindeer watching us warily. We were able to follow a path to the top avoiding the snow and, on the way up, saw several Rock Ptarmigan, two Ring Ouzels and a Golden Eagle and admired many patches of mountain flowers. At the top it was breezy but the view was magnificent, part-covered snowy mountains in all directions.

Later, once down, we had lunch next to the old cabins at a convenient picnic table. A Redwing sang from the forest and, on the opposite side of the building, a Fieldfare was feeding newly hatched chicks. As we ate, a Rough-legged Buzzard flew over. From the mountaintop, we had seen an interesting looking track to the east, leading into the Daddån valley which Daniel had not visited recently: it looked a good place to explore. We set off but, unfortunately, only travelled about two kilometres before coming to a log bridge over a stream where, I think wisely, we decided not to test it with the minibus. We retraced our route back down to the Ljusnan valley where we had a coffee by the river and found some Violet Copper butterflies on the grassy roadside verge. Daniel then took us to a spot where a Golden Eagle's nest was visible. We could see there was a small chick in the nest but no sign of the adult bird. We watched for a while then returned to our hotel for an early-ish dinner as we were going out again later.

Dinner done, we headed back to the Golden Eagle's nest viewpoint and this time the adult was on the nest and we had an excellent view. Back up on the plateau, as the sun was setting, we searched again, finding the Dotterel on its nest and seeing a few Golden Plover magnificent in their summer plumage. As it was now past 11pm we turned around and bade farewell to this superb area; tomorrow we had to leave and start making our way south.

Day 6

Wednesday 8th June

Funäsdalen-Nipfjället-Översjökölen-Älvdalen

The weather today was sunny intervals with snow flurries; it was breezy and mostly 8-9°C. We awoke to a distinctly lower temperature and there were still signs of the overnight dusting of snow. We said our goodbyes to everyone at Skarvruets who had made our stay so enjoyable, then made our way down to the lake at Funäsdalen. There was not much on the lake, but on a cliff above the town there was Peregrine's nest with an adult Peregrine. Next we headed south-east down to the outskirts of Tännäs, where Daniel had a spot for Icterine Warbler at the edge of open birch woodland. It was fairly windy and, although there were glimpses of birds, we had nothing positive. So we carried on south, on to a river crossing at Sörvattnet where a Dipper had two young which appeared to have just left their nest under the bridge. There was a Greenshank together with Fieldfares, plus Bramblings in the birch trees around. A log shelter by the river gave some respite from the cold wind as we had our coffee. It was bright but a definite nip in the air today. Our next stop was a log cabin in the forest with bird feeders outside: a spot where Siberian Tit used to be regular. We had Crested Tit, Blue Tit, Greenfinch, the pale Scandinavian form of Nuthatch and singing Pied Flycatcher but, unfortunately, no Siberian Tit. Daniel did warn us that recently the birds had stopped coming to the feeder but he had hoped we might be lucky this time. We continued south to Idre then back north-west to get to the base of Nipfjället where we had lunch. We then drove up towards the top of the mountain (1191m) parked and walked across the tundra habitat near the top; to the south, the unusual conical shaped mountain of Städjan was dominant. We soon were watching a Dotterel at quite close range then another standing prominently on a snow bank, with five or six seen in total. The wind was

cold but the views to the north-east across forest, lake and moorland to distant mountains were superb. Nipfjället-Städjan Nature reserve is the most south-easterly of nine reserves straddling the Swedish-Norwegian border in a 2000km² protected area, known as Gränslandet.

We set off again, stopping in Idre for a quick supermarket stop, then on to Sarna from where we crossed the river and headed east. After some distance, we parked then followed Daniel on foot through the forest and around the edge of a bog, avoiding a Robin's nest next to the path, until we arrived at the edge of the trees overlooking a large shallow lake. This was Översjökölen a lake about 1km long, special because of its population of breeding Taiga Bean Geese and, after some repeat counting, we managed to get to 18 birds. Satellite tracking a few of a small wintering population of this bird in Scotland has recently shown them coming to this area of Sweden to breed. There were Whooper Swans, Common Cranes, Golden Plover, Greenshank, Ruff and numerous Common Swifts overhead. We celebrated such a superb spot and Pat's birthday with a piece of birthday cake. Returning through the forest to the vehicles, we noticed fresh Moose droppings but the owners were long gone. Setting off southwards again, with one further lakeside leg stretch stop, we reached our hotel at Älvdalen at about 7pm, in time for dinner and a relatively early night.

Day 7

Thursday 9th June

Älvdalen-Orsasjön-Tällberg-Leksands-Falun-Borlänge-Sätra Brunn

We enjoyed sunny intervals today and a max of 17°C. We soon got our bags in the vehicles and set off to continue our journey south, detouring just to visit the area next to Älvdalen's church where two interesting log buildings were sited. The first was a church store, one of the oldest buildings in Sweden with decorations dating from the middle ages, and the second a loft store, built in the 1580's. Both buildings were noted by Linnaeus on his travels through the area in summer 1734. Our next stop was at Lake Orsasjön, where an excellent birding platform at Lindänget gave an excellent view of the lake and its marshy shoreline, a site particularly good at migration times which has recently produced two new birds for the Swedish list (Swainson's Thrush and American Bittern); today, however, we were happy to see more multicoloured Ruff, Greenshank, Lapwing, Curlew, Wood and Common Sandpipers, Tundra Bean Geese, Whooper Swan and Osprey, all whilst Common Snipe were 'drumming' over the marshy fields nearby.

We had been promised waffles, and the next stop was the Dalmål Kafé & Kök overlooking Lake Siljan at Tällberg where we enjoyed the food and the view from upstairs, then later visiting the handicrafts shop downstairs. We left here but had not gone far when a Corncrake's rasping song was heard coming from a lush vegetated bank below some houses. We searched, trying to pinpoint the sound, but the bird was not visible in the tall vegetation. A little further south, we made a stop at Limsjön, a small shallow lake near Leksands at the southern tip of Siljan. There were reeds surrounding the water with singing Reed Warblers and, hunting dragonflies over the water, two Hobbies. We walked in the sunshine, warmer now we were further south, along a walkway to a hide overlooking the lake.

Later we arrived at Falun where at the edge of the town was a very large hole in the ground, a copper mine that operated between approximately 1000 and 1992, at one time producing two-thirds of Europe's copper, now a UNESCO site and museum. Our reason for coming, however, was a pair of Eagle Owls which nest in the cavities left in the rock faces of the old mine. So, armed with our lunch, we ascended up onto a viewing platform to start our search. Scanning the rock ledges, a young bird was found and then another behind a small tree; we

found a Black Redstart but no sign of any adult owls. Eventually from a different viewpoint, which gave a view of a rocky section to our left, an adult was found, quite some distance but still in sight of its young. We had some good views in the 'scope and left very happy.

Continuing south, our next stop was at Dala airport, a small local airport near Borlänge, surrounded by mostly intensive arable farmland. However, at the southern end of the runway, an island of scrub and grassland with isolated bushes provides a different habitat where one species previously much more common just about hangs on: Ortolan Bunting. We soon managed to see a singing male along with Whinchat, Yellowhammer, Red-backed Shrike, Whitethroat, Crested Tit and a male Marsh Harrier.

We set off south again and, with just over another hour of travel, reached Sättra Brunn. We were soon walking in the evening sunshine through the hotel grounds to the restaurant; the mowed lawns had what appeared to be the whole village assembled: it was the last day of school term and families and children were just finishing their celebrations. Luckily, they weren't eating in the restaurant and we soon were enjoying another delicious dinner. Daniel was having an evening off so his friend Nicholas arrived just as we finished; we were going to have one more try for those Great Grey Owls. We travelled to the area we had tried on the first evening, hearing from Nicholas how he had seen one bird only three days before our arrival last Friday. It had not been seen since that time but it was worth a try. The second area we visited had Wild Boar hunters; they had not seen the owl so we soon moved on from there. The third spot had one or two other patient watchers but no success, just another roding Woodcock. Nicholas then took us to another spot where a River Warbler had been singing for a few days. It was late evening but apparently not late enough for it to start singing so we moved onto a bridge across a quiet stream to look for European Beaver. It was getting a little dark, but still light enough to make out two animals having a sparring match about 70m upstream. We watched for a while, then one swam quietly towards us before disappearing under the trees bordering the bank. Another one was also seen on the other side of the bridge making three in total. It was time to move on, as Nicholas had one more spot just back down the road to visit. We arrived, got out of the vans and were immediately immersed in the songs of two birds: a Thrush Nightingale across the road in the edge of the woodland, and a Blyth's Reed Warbler singing in a bush, very close. We listened to its song for some time; it was full of mimicry of various bird songs. It was a superb finale on our last full day but now it was heading towards midnight, so it was time to get some sleep.

Day 8

Friday 10th June

Sättra Brunn-Fläcksjön-Frövisjön

Our final day was sunny, then cool and cloudy, and 12°C. For our last morning, we checked out of the hotel and were on our way just after 8.30 heading west towards the village of Hassmyra. We stopped in an area of grass fields bordering marshy grassland and willow scrub as we heard a Grasshopper Warbler singing; further away in the scrub Rosefinch and Sedge Warbler also could be heard. In the field a Hare watched us and a Common Buzzard soared in the distance.

We moved on a little, stopping for another Rosefinch, then on until we came to a farmstead overlooking Lake Fläcksjön. It was warm, sunny and the red painted timber buildings set amongst the lush green verges, fields and ash trees with the lake beyond made up a delightful scene; not many wanted to leave Sweden today, I thought: I certainly didn't. To add to the pleasure, a Wryneck flew round us and settled in a nearby small ash tree, sitting for a while so we could all see it. Over at the lake, many Black Terns were flying low over the water erratically

dipping down to feed as a Marsh Harrier glided over the reeds. Nearby, Swifts were flying in under the eaves of a small building and Tree Sparrows were nesting around the farmstead. We enjoyed the moment with another cup of coffee from Daniel's well-provisioned flasks which he provided without fail every day. But now we had to go and head towards the airport. Daniel did, however, have one last spot for us: a short walk through a wood with carpets of Lily-of-the-valley brought us to a viewpoint overlooking a flooded valley, Frövisjön near Skultuna. There were many birds on the water and along the marshy shorelines, including breeding Black-headed Gulls, Little Gull, Lapwings, two Common Cranes in the surrounding grass, probably with chicks, Teal, Goldeneye with chicks, Gadwall, Wigeon and Slavonian Grebe. We also recorded five Spotted Redshanks in summer plumage, Common Redshank, Ruff and numerous duck. It was a fine last selection to sort out as we ate our picnic. It was then just a short drive to the airport where we said our goodbyes and thanked Daniel for a superb week looking after us and showing us the birds of his beautiful country.

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Group at Fläcksjön

Species Lists

Birds (✓=recorded but not counted; H = heard only)

	Common name	Scientific name	June							
			3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
1	Black Grouse	<i>Lyrurus tetrix</i>			2		1			
2	Rock Ptarmigan	<i>Lagopus muta</i>					6			
3	Willow Ptarmigan	<i>Lagopus lagopus</i>			H	4	2			
4	Taiga Bean Goose	<i>Anser fabalis</i>						18		
5	Greylag Goose	<i>Anser anser</i>								71
6	Canada Goose	<i>Branta canadensis</i>		✓	✓			2	✓	✓
7	Mute Swan	<i>Cygnus olor</i>		4					✓	✓
8	Whooper Swan	<i>Cygnus cygnus</i>		✓		1		3	✓	✓
9	Gadwall	<i>Anas strepera</i>		2						1
10	Eurasian Wigeon	<i>Anas penelope</i>				1		1		✓
11	Mallard	<i>Anas platyrhynchos</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
12	Northern Shoveler	<i>Anas clypeata</i>								1
13	Eurasian Teal	<i>Anas crecca</i>				✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
14	Common Pochard	<i>Aythya ferina</i>								1
15	Tufted Duck	<i>Aythya fuligula</i>			✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
16	White-winged Scoter	<i>Melanitta fusca</i>			13		6			
17	Common Goldeneye	<i>Bucephala clangula</i>		3	✓	✓	✓	1	✓	✓
18	Goosander	<i>Mergus merganser</i>				1		1		
19	Red-breasted Merganser	<i>Mergus serrator</i>			3					
20	Red-throated Diver	<i>Gavia stellata</i>			✓	✓				
21	Black-throated Diver	<i>Gavia arctica</i>		1	✓			1		
22	Little Grebe	<i>Tachybaptus ruficollis</i>		1	□					
23	Great Crested Grebe	<i>Podiceps cristatus</i>							✓	✓
24	Slavonian Grebe	<i>Podiceps auritus</i>				6				✓
25	Grey Heron	<i>Ardea cinerea</i>		3						✓
26	Great Cormorant	<i>Phalacrocorax carbo</i>								2
27	Western Osprey	<i>Pandion haliaetus</i>							1	
28	European Honey Buzzard	<i>Pernis apivorus</i>		2						
29	White-tailed Eagle	<i>Haliaeetus albicilla</i>		2						
30	Western Marsh Harrier	<i>Circus aeruginosus</i>	1						✓	✓
31	Northern Harrier	<i>Circus cyaneus</i>				2				
32	Eurasian Sparrowhawk	<i>Accipiter nisus</i>		1						
33	Common Buzzard	<i>Buteo buteo</i>	✓	✓	✓		1		✓	✓
34	Rough-legged Buzzard	<i>Buteo lagopus</i>					1			
35	Golden Eagle	<i>Aquila chrysaetos</i>				1	1			
36	Common Kestrel	<i>Falco tinnunculus</i>	1	1		✓	4	1	✓	✓
37	Eurasian Hobby	<i>Falco subbuteo</i>							2	1
38	Gyrffalcon	<i>Falco rusticolus</i>			1					
39	Peregrine Falcon	<i>Falco peregrinus</i>					2	1	1	
40	Corn Crake	<i>Crex crex</i>							H	
41	Common Moorhen	<i>Gallinula chloropus</i>	1							
42	Eurasian Coot	<i>Fulica atra</i>								✓
43	Common Crane	<i>Grus grus</i>	2	2+2yg	3	✓	1	3	✓	✓
44	Eurasian Oystercatcher	<i>Haematopus ostralegus</i>			1	□			□	□
45	Northern Lapwing	<i>Vanellus vanellus</i>	4	✓	✓			1	✓	✓
46	European Golden Plover	<i>Pluvialis apricaria</i>				✓	✓	✓		
47	Common Ringed Plover	<i>Charadrius hiaticula</i>				3pr+	✓		2	

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			3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
48	Eurasian Dotterel	<i>Charadrius morinellus</i>				1	✓		6	
49	Eurasian Woodcock	<i>Scolopax rusticola</i>	3		✓	1	1	1	1	
50	Great Snipe	<i>Gallinago media</i>			8+					
51	Common Snipe	<i>Gallinago gallinago</i>			✓	✓	1		✓	1
52	Whimbrel	<i>Numenius phaeopus</i>				H		2		
53	Eurasian Curlew	<i>Numenius arquata</i>		1	1				✓	
54	Spotted Redshank	<i>Tringa erythropus</i>								5
55	Common Redshank	<i>Tringa totanus</i>			✓	✓	H		✓	✓
56	Common Greenshank	<i>Tringa nebularia</i>			✓	✓	1	2	✓	
57	Green Sandpiper	<i>Tringa ochropus</i>	1	2						
58	Wood Sandpiper	<i>Tringa glareola</i>			✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
59	Common Sandpiper	<i>Actitis hypoleucos</i>							1	
60	Temminck's Stint	<i>Calidris temminckii</i>			1					
61	Dunlin	<i>Calidris alpina</i>				6+				
62	Broad-billed Sandpiper	<i>Limicola falcinellus</i>				4				
63	Ruff	<i>Philomachus pugnax</i>				4		4	✓	✓
64	Red-necked Phalarope	<i>Phalaropus lobatus</i>				2				
65	Black-headed Gull	<i>Chroicocephalus ridibundus</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓	□	□	✓	✓
66	Little Gull	<i>Hydrocoloeus minutus</i>				4				8
67	Common Gull	<i>Larus canus</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
68	European Herring Gull	<i>Larus argentatus</i>							✓	✓
69	Common Tern	<i>Sterna hirundo</i>	1						✓	✓
70	Arctic Tern	<i>Sterna paradisaea</i>			✓	✓		1		
71	Black Tern	<i>Chlidonias niger</i>								25-30
72	Common (Feral) Pigeon	<i>Columba livia 'feral'</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
73	Common Wood Pigeon	<i>Columba palumbus</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
74	Common Cuckoo	<i>Cuculus canorus</i>	H	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	□	□
75	Eurasian Eagle-Owl	<i>Bubo bubo</i>							1+2	
76	Ural Owl	<i>Strix uralensis</i>	1	✓						
77	Eurasian Pygmy Owl	<i>Glaucidium passerinum</i>	1							
78	Common Swift	<i>Apus apus</i>	✓	✓	✓			✓	✓	✓
79	Eurasian Wryneck	<i>Jynx torquilla</i>								1
80	Great Spotted Woodpecker	<i>Dendrocopos major</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓	□	□	✓	✓
81	Black Woodpecker	<i>Dryocopus martius</i>	1	3						
82	European Green Woodpecker	<i>Picus viridis</i>							1	
83	Red-backed Shrike	<i>Lanius collurio</i>	✓	✓					✓	
84	Great Grey Shrike	<i>Lanius excubitor</i>		1						
85	Siberian Jay	<i>Perisoreus infaustus</i>					2			
86	Eurasian Jay	<i>Garrulus glandarius</i>		1						
87	Eurasian Magpie	<i>Pica pica</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
88	Western Jackdaw	<i>Coloeus monedula</i>	✓	✓	✓	□	✓	✓	✓	✓
89	Hooded Crow	<i>Corvus cornix</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
90	Northern Raven	<i>Corvus corax</i>		2		✓	✓	1	✓	✓
91	Willow Tit	<i>Poecile montanus</i>		1	2					
92	Coal Tit	<i>Parus ater</i>				✓				
93	European Crested Tit	<i>Lophophanes cristatus</i>		H				1	1	
94	Great Tit	<i>Parus major</i>	✓	✓		✓		✓	✓	✓
95	Eurasian Blue Tit	<i>Cyanistes caeruleus</i>	✓	✓		✓		✓	✓	✓
96	Eurasian Skylark	<i>Alauda arvensis</i>	H	H						✓
97	Sand Martin	<i>Riparia riparia</i>				✓				
98	Barn Swallow	<i>Hirundo rustica</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓

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99	Common House Martin	<i>Delichon urbicum</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓			✓	✓
100	Willow Warbler	<i>Phylloscopus trochilus</i>	H	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
101	Common Chiffchaff	<i>Phylloscopus collybita</i>							H	
102	Sedge Warbler	<i>Acrocephalus schoenobaenus</i>								2H
103	Blyth's Reed Warbler	<i>Acrocephalus dumetorum</i>							H	
104	Eurasian Reed Warbler	<i>Acrocephalus scirpaceus</i>							✓	
105	Common Grasshopper Warbler	<i>Locustella naevia</i>								H
106	Eurasian Blackcap	<i>Sylvia atricapilla</i>	H	H					✓	✓
107	Garden Warbler	<i>Sylvia borin</i>		✓		H	✓	✓	✓	
108	Lesser Whitethroat	<i>Sylvia curruca</i>		2	1		H			
109	Common Whitethroat	<i>Sylvia communis</i>	H						✓	✓
110	Goldcrest	<i>Regulus regulus</i>	H	H	✓					
111	Eurasian Wren	<i>Troglodytes troglodytes</i>		H	H					
112	Eurasian Nuthatch	<i>Sitta europaea</i>						1		H
113	Eurasian Treecreeper	<i>Certhia familiaris</i>	✓	2						
114	Common Starling	<i>Sturnus vulgaris</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓		1	✓	✓
115	Ring Ouzel	<i>Turdus torquatus</i>					2			
116	Common Blackbird	<i>Turdus merula</i>	✓	✓			✓	✓	✓	✓
117	Fieldfare	<i>Turdus pilaris</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
118	Redwing	<i>Turdus iliacus</i>		✓		✓	H		H	
119	Song Thrush	<i>Turdus philomelos</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
120	Mistle Thrush	<i>Turdus viscivorus</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓	□	✓	□	✓
121	European Robin	<i>Erithacus rubecula</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓		1	✓	✓
122	Bluethroat	<i>Luscinia svecica</i>				2	2			
123	Thrush Nightingale	<i>Luscinia luscinia</i>	H	H					H	
124	Black Redstart	<i>Phoenicurus ochruros</i>							1	
125	Common Redstart	<i>Phoenicurus phoenicurus</i>			1	H				
126	Whinchat	<i>Saxicola rubetra</i>		H	H				✓	✓
127	Northern Wheatear	<i>Oenanthe oenanthe</i>	1	✓		1	1		✓	
128	Spotted Flycatcher	<i>Muscicapa striata</i>	✓	✓	3		✓			
129	Red-breasted Flycatcher	<i>Ficedula parva</i>	□	1			□			
130	European Pied Flycatcher	<i>Ficedula hypoleuca</i>	✓			✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
131	White-throated Dipper	<i>Cinclus cinclus</i>					1	3		
132	House Sparrow	<i>Passer domesticus</i>	✓	✓					✓	✓
133	Eurasian Tree Sparrow	<i>Passer montanus</i>	1			1			✓	✓
134	Dunnock	<i>Prunella modularis</i>		H						
135	Western Yellow Wagtail	<i>Motacilla flava thunbergii</i>			1	1	2	2	✓	
136	Grey Wagtail	<i>Motacilla cinerea</i>			1					
137	White Wagtail	<i>Motacilla alba</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
138	Meadow Pipit	<i>Anthus pratensis</i>	□	□	✓	✓	✓	□	□	□
139	Tree Pipit	<i>Anthus trivialis</i>	H	✓						
140	Common Chaffinch	<i>Fringilla coelebs</i>	✓	✓	✓	□	✓	✓	✓	✓
141	Brambling	<i>Fringilla montifringilla</i>			✓	✓	✓	✓		
142	European Greenfinch	<i>Chloris chloris</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓	□	✓	□	✓
143	Eurasian Siskin	<i>Spinus spinus</i>	H	H	✓	✓	✓	✓	H	H
144	European Goldfinch	<i>Carduelis carduelis</i>	H	✓	✓					✓
145	Common Redpoll	<i>Acanthis flammea</i>			✓		✓			
146	Common Rosefinch	<i>Carpodacus erythrinus</i>								✓
147	Red Crossbill	<i>Loxia curvirostra</i>		12						
148	Eurasian Bullfinch	<i>Pyrrhula pyrrhula</i>						2		
149	Hawfinch	<i>Coccothraustes coccothraustes</i>	1							

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			3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
150	Yellowhammer	<i>Emberiza citrinella</i>	H	H			H	H	✓	
151	Ortolan Bunting	<i>Emberiza hortulana</i>							1	
152	Common Reed Bunting	<i>Emberiza schoeniclus</i>				1	1		✓	✓
153	Lapland Longspur	<i>Calcarius lapponicus</i>				5				

Mammals

1	Brown Hare	<i>Lepus europaeus</i>	✓	✓					✓	✓
2	Roe Deer	<i>Capreolus capreolus</i>	✓	✓	1				✓	✓
3	European Beaver	<i>Castor fiber</i>							3	
4	Wild Boar	<i>Sus scrofa</i>							1	
5	Moose	<i>Alces alces</i>				3				
6	Reindeer	<i>Rangifer tarandus</i>				✓	✓			
7	Mountain Hare	<i>Lepus timidus</i>				1				

Reptiles & Amphibians

1	Grass Snake	<i>Natrix natrix</i>	1							
2	Toad	<i>Bufo bufo</i>		1						
3	Common Frog	<i>Rana temporaria</i>				✓	✓			

Dragonflies

✓

1	Four Spotted Chaser	<i>Libellula quadrimaculata</i>		✓						
2	Downy Emerald	<i>Cordulia aenea</i>		✓						
3	Ruby Whiteface	<i>Leucorrhinia rubicunda</i>		✓					✓	
4	Large Red Damselfly	<i>Pyrhosoma nymphula</i>		✓						✓
5	Small White Face	<i>Leucorrhinia dubia</i>		□		1			✓	
6	Beautiful Demoiselle	<i>Calopteryx virgo</i>		✓						
7	Variable Bluethroat	<i>Coenagrion pulchellum</i>							✓	
8	Azure Bluethroat	<i>Coenagrion puella</i>								✓

Butterflies

1	Green-veined White	<i>Pieris napi</i>			✓				✓	
2	Green Hairstreak	<i>Callophrys rubi</i>		✓						
3	Brimstone	<i>Gonepteryx rhamni</i>		✓					✓	
4	Comma	<i>Polyommatus icarus</i>		✓						
5	Wood White	<i>Leptidea sinapis</i>		✓	✓	✓				
6	Pearl-bordered Fritillary	<i>Boloria euphrosyne</i>		✓						
7	Dingy Skipper	<i>Erynnis tages</i>		✓						
8	Orange Tip	<i>Anthocharis cardamines</i>		✓		✓	✓			
9	Small Copper	<i>Lycaena phlaeas</i>		✓						
10	Violet Copper	<i>Lycaena helle</i>					✓			
11	Large Skipper	<i>Ochlodes sylvanus</i>		✓						
12	Swallowtail	<i>Papilio machaon</i>	✓	✓						
13	Camberwell Beauty	<i>Nymphalis antiopa</i>				1				
14	Holly Blue	<i>Celastrina argiolus</i>				1			✓	

Other Insects

1	A Bumblebee	<i>Bombus polaris</i>					✓			
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A selection of Plants

Mountain Forget-me-not, *Myosotis decumbens*

Arctic Cottongrass, *Eriophorum scheuchzeri*

Alpine Cinquefoil, *Potentilla crantzii*

Dog Violet, *Viola canina agg*

Common Bugle, *Ajuga reptans*

Cloudberry, *Rubus chamaemorus*

Creeping Azalea, *Kalmia (Loiseleuria) procumbens*

Mountain Avens, *Dryas octopetala*

Matted Cassiope, *Harrimanella (Cassiope) hypnoides*

Strict Primrose, *Primula stricta*

Lapland Diapensia, *Diapensia lapponica*

A Butterwort, *Pinguicula sp*

Lily-of-the-valley, *Convallaria majalis*

Chickweed Wintergreen, *Trientalis europaea*

Spreading Bellflower, *Campanula patula*

Herb Paris, *Paris quadrifolia*

Mountain Heath, *Phyllodoce caerulea*

Bogbean, *Meyanthes trifoliata*

Moss Campion, *Silene acaulis*

Purple Saxifrage, *Saxifraga oppositifolia*

Crimson-tipped (Oeder's) Lousewort, *Pedicularis oederi*



Heading for the Great Snipe lek



Reindeer on Flatruet high plateau