

FINLAND



"I have visited the hides where we'll be mammal watching before and they are fabulous. Seeing Brown Bears up close is amazing, but I have to say it was the Wolverines that stole the show last time – they are so characterful and fun to watch – you'll love them!" Roy Atkins

Dates Tue 2 - Thu 11 Jun 2026
Price £6,965
Deposit £1,390 Single Supp £500

Leaders Roy Atkins and local guide
Flights Finnair, scheduled
Outbound: Morning, Heathrow-Oulu
Inbound: Evening, Oulu-Heathrow
(outbound and inbound via Helsinki)
Weather Long daylight hours and like spring in Scotland we shall have sunshine with cloud and rain possible. Temperatures cool 15-20°C during the day and cold at night 5-10°C
Walking Mostly on easy trails and quite level, but with some steeper uphill walks. Walks up to two miles
Meals All included from lunch on Day 1 to lunch on Day 10
Insects Although this varies from year to year – there could be mosquitoes, so bring repellent
Accom Twin and single rooms, all ensuite, apart from the one night in the bear hide and the two nights in the Wolverine hide. Possibly one non-ensuite single at Boreal
Hide The group shares hides, which have chairs, bunk beds, sleeping bags/pillows and a compost toilet. We shall need to sit quietly and still throughout
Group 8

Just some of what we hope to see:

Brown Bear	Rough-legged Buzzard
Wolverine	Terek Sandpiper
Great Grey Owl	Broad-billed Sandpiper
Ural Owl	Red-flanked Bluetail
Hawk Owl	Rustic Bunting
Tengmalm's Owl	Little Bunting
Pygmy Owl	Waxwing
Black Woodpecker	Siberian Jay
Three-toed Woodpecker	Siberian Tit
Hazel Grouse	Pine Grosbeak
Snaw	Blyth's Reed Warbler
Pallid Harrier	Common Rosefinch
Montagu's Harrier	Thrush Nightingale

A ten-day break including a week in search of Finland's best birds and a finale staying overnight in baited hides to see Brown Bears and wonderful Wolverines.

- Owls! Great Grey, Ural, Pygmy, Hawk and Tengmalm's Owl all possible
- Red-flanked Bluetail, Siberian Tit, Rustic and Little Buntings
- Bears!! Overnight in a baited hide for close up Brown Bears
- Eastern species including Pallid Harrier, Terek Sandpiper and Blyth's Reed Warbler
- Wolverines!!! Two nights in a baited hide just to make sure
- Black and Three-toed Woodpecker, Hazel Grouse, Siberian Jay
- Wonderful wetlands, forests, taiga and boglands, with flowers and other wildlife

May and June are busy months for Finnish birds, with numerous migrants returning to their breeding grounds in the forests, fields and wetlands. We cover the areas of Oulu and the vast taiga forests of Kuusamo, before heading to visit hides where Brown Bears and Wolverines await us.

1-3 Here be owls! Oulu area has an exceptional variety of owls and we shall spend time searching out impressively large Great Grey and Ural Owl, rare Tengmalm's and tiny Pygmy Owl. The forests also hold other specialities including Three-toed and Black Woodpecker, Crested Tit, Black Grouse, Capercaillie and Hazel Grouse - so fingers crossed as this is never an easy habitat.

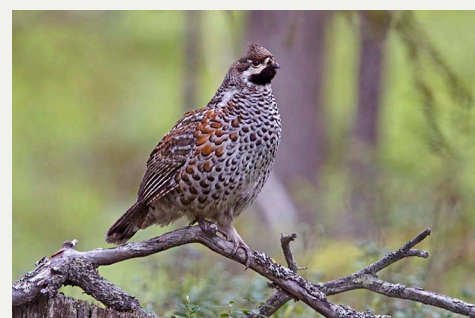
The coastal areas and wetlands of Oulu attract numerous birds to rest on their migration. We'll visit Liminganlahti - a large internationally important Wetland Reserve with a multitude of shorebirds and ducks. Whooper Swans and Common Cranes



spend their summers here and other breeding species include Black-tailed Godwit, Curlew, Greenshank, Common Sandpiper, Caspian Tern, Shoveler and Garganey. Among the numerous migrants that rest here we should see Ringed Plover, Dunlin, Spotted Redshank and Ruff in stunning breeding plumage, while Broad-billed Sandpiper are also here in small numbers.

White-tailed Eagles and Marsh Harriers patrol the shores and meadows, while rare Pallid and Montagu's Harrier are also possible. Terek Sandpiper is a rare breeding bird here, with only a few breeding pairs, but we shall make an effort to try and see them.

Songbirds include beautiful Common Rosefinch and Red-backed Shrike and some "night singers" are also found - we may hear and hopefully see Thrush Nightingale, Blyth's Reed Warbler and perhaps even Corncrake.



"There are so many amazing birds in Finland – it really is an exceptional place, with prize birds from the north and east - some of which, such as Red-flanked Bluetail, Terek Sandpiper, Siberian Tit, Tengmalm's Owl and others, are almost mythical in status!" Roy Atkins



4-6 On our drive to Kuusamo we have chances to see the delightful Little Gull and the stunning Smew, before arriving at our next destination.

An enviable number of eastern and northern species breed here and we shall look for Siberian Tit, Siberian Jay and Black and Three-toed Woodpecker in the extensive taiga forests.

Red-flanked Bluetail occurs at the extreme western edge of its range and although the terrain is mostly easy to walk in, it may involve one or two steep uphill climbs for this stunning little bird.

The vast forests are excellent grouse habitat and we'll make an early morning grouse drive in search of Willow and Black Grouse, Capercaillie and elusive Hazel Grouse. We shall look for the eastern specialties too. Rustic and Little Bunting breed here and the nearby lakes and bogs are home to Red-necked Grebe, Goldeneye, Smew, Wood Sandpiper, Spotted Redshank and Jack Snipe.

Other species may include Brambling and Common Rosefinch in breeding plumage, Bullfinch, Redpoll and Waxwing and we shall cross our fingers for chances of Pine Grosbeak. Golden Eagle and Rough-legged Buzzard breed here and are well worth scanning for as they soar the skies.

In most years, Hawk Owl and Tengmalm's Owl also breed in Kuusamo area. Time allowing, a visit to Oulanka National Park might be possible, where beautiful Calypso Orchids may be in flower.

7-9 After so much focus on birds we now start to think about mammals. For

the final three nights we intend to swap daytime birding for night-time mammal watching! For our bear-watching we shall be based at the Boreal Centre. The area has good numbers of Brown Bears and there are very comfortable hides from which to see them, which we shall enter around 4pm. Bait is placed in front of the hides to attract the bears up close and we hope to enjoy fabulous photo opportunities. The hides have comfortable chairs, a dry toilet and bunk beds, glass in the windows and holes for camera lenses. We shall spend the night in the hide before leaving first thing next morning and returning to the centre for breakfast. There will be some downtime during the day to catch up on sleep.

On our final two nights we shall visit the famous Wolverine hides at Lieska, checking into a hotel before meeting up early afternoon to head out to the hides. Possibly split between two hides, with a guide in each, we shall again spend the nights in the hides, before returning the next morning to the hotel for breakfast, rest and lunch. This really is a wonderful opportunity to see one of Europe's most difficult and elusive mammals up close and personal.

10 After breakfast and a chance to freshen up we shall drive to the airport for our flights home.



Outline Itinerary

- Days 1-3** Arrive in Oulu, via Helsinki, then birdwatching in this beautiful area
3 nights Finlandia Hotel Airport Oulu
- Days 4-6** Drive to Kuusamo for more birding in the forest and taiga
3 nights Club Kuusamon Tropiikki
- Day 7** Drive to Viiksimo - overnight in Brown Bear hide (freshen up next morning at Boreal Wildlife Centre, where group have their own rooms)
- Days 8-9** Drive to Lieska - 2 nights in Wolverine hide (freshen up each morning at Hotel Puustelli, where group have their own rooms)
- Day 10** We drive to Oulu airport for our flight back to the UK, via Helsinki

Finnature: Wolverine

Roy Atkins: Taiga landscape, Hide

Harri Taavetti: Great Grey Owl, Hazel Grouse, Three-toed Woodpecker, Siberian Jay

