

# BIRDING TRIP REPORT

## FINLAND & NORWAY

21 May – 31 May 2004

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### Introduction

A trip to Scandinavia had long been in the offing. PB had made several previous trips and the general consensus was that Finland offered the best opportunities in terms of the Owls and other specialities. A major off putting factor previously had been the cost of flights to Finland, however, this changed drastically in late 2003 when we discovered that Ryanair were operating cheap flights to Tampere in Southern Finland. We eventually flew out for the ridiculous cost of £44 return each and all in, the whole trip including flights, car hire, petrol, hotels and guiding probably cost less than £700 each. Great value for money and significantly cheaper than any organised tour !!!

### Target Species

I think we had all pretty much agreed before the trip that if we could get a good selection of Owls in the bag, everything else would be a bonus. We certainly achieved this aim seeing, **Ural, Tengmalm's, Pygmy, Eagle, Short-eared and Hawk Owl**. Other highlights in Finland included **Hazel Hen, Siberian Tit, Three-toed Woodpecker, Black Woodpecker, Terek Sandpiper** and **Little Bunting**. Our mad dash to Varanger Fjord (what a place !) yielded **White-billed Diver, Steller's Eider, King Eider, Brunnich's Guillemot, Gyr Falcon** and **Red-throated Pipit**. A final bonus were the excellent views of several difficult to see British species such as **Capercallie, Black Grouse** and **Ptarmigan**.

### Main Dips

The biggest disappointment was missing **Great Grey Owl**. At the time of the visit Finnature had been unable to find any nest sites, and only did so in June, well after we had returned home. We also dipped on **Pine Grosbeak**, although they are notoriously difficult at this time of year, and we hadn't really banked on seeing it. We looked for **Red-flanked Bluetail**, and would probably have been successful if we had given it more time, but we were keen to maximise our time in Varanger. There were a few other species that we didn't see such as **Rustic Bunting** and **Common Rosefinch**, but in all honesty we made no real effort, preferring to concentrate on other target birds. We were a bit too early for Arctic Warbler.

### Flights

We flew from London Stansted to Tampere with Ryanair. The airport is about 15 miles out of town, and there's not much there. Looked like it has just opened for our flight !! Flights were booked on-line at [www.ryanair.com](http://www.ryanair.com).

### Car Hire

There's no avoiding it, car hire in Scandinavia is expensive, although it was somewhat offset by the cost of the flights. We eventually booked a Chrysler Grand Voyager People Carrier through [www.hertz.co.uk](http://www.hertz.co.uk) at a cost of £917 for ten days and although the luggage space was a bit tight for six people, once we had got our daily system in place, it was perfectly adequate. Prices for an Astra sized car were around £400 for the same period but we

decided against the two car option, as this would have doubled the petrol costs and meant an additional driver all the time. In total, we covered 3180 miles and petrol costs came to roughly £340.

## Weather

Generally dry, with only one day where we experienced persistent spells of rain. The only real woolly hat weather was right up in the far north at Varanger. Not too bad under foot, though there were one or two sites where a pair of wellies would have ensured dry feet.

## Trip Reports

The following reports were used:-

<http://home.kabelfoon.nl/~trogon/Scand2003/text.html>

Northern Scandinavia 28 May - 9 June 2003 John van der Woude

[www.surfbirds.com/mb/trips/finland-bs-0403.html](http://www.surfbirds.com/mb/trips/finland-bs-0403.html)

Finland/ Norway 2<sup>nd</sup> - 13<sup>th</sup> June 2002 - Steve Bird, Birdseekers

[www.surfbirds.com/mb/trips/finland-farrelymay01.html](http://www.surfbirds.com/mb/trips/finland-farrelymay01.html)

Finland and Varanger 23<sup>rd</sup> May - 3<sup>rd</sup> June 2001 Wilton Farrelly  
(Good breakdown of all the main sites in this report)

## Guides

Seeing the owls is pretty much impossible without a guide and we provisionally arranged a trip with Finnature by e-mail before we left the UK. Understandingly, Finnature [www.finnature.com](http://www.finnature.com) were keen to sell us the use of a guide for a period of several days whilst we were in the Oulu and Kuusamo area, however we resisted this option and eventually settled for one night's guiding on 24 May (the final date/times were confirmed whilst in Finland). Our trip lasted from 16.00 - 22.30 hrs, and cost £80 each, with Olli Karhu, our guide driving our hire vehicle.

Olli duly delivered the birds, including four species that we didn't see elsewhere on our trip, namely, **Tengmalm's Owl, Pygmy Owl, Ural Owl and Three-toed Woodpecker**. We couldn't try for **Hawk Owl** as the site Finnature were using this year was right on the Russian border and too far away. We contacted Finnature again when we were in the Kuusamo area, with a view to a one off hit on the **Hawk Owl**. This proved more difficult as they didn't have any guides available to take us in when we wanted to go, though they did say it might have been possible to accompany a photographer who was visiting the site later in the week. We eventually decided against this option and gambled upon finding one ourselves and the gamble paid off big time, as we found three different birds !!!

## Accommodation

For our first night's accommodation we drove straight from the airport into Tampere, and checked into a hotel right in the centre. Can't remember the name but it was about £30 each for B&B.

Accommodation for our stays in the Oulu and Kuusamo areas was prebooked through Finnature. For the first part of the trip we, we spent two nights at the Liminganlahti Visitor Centre on a B&B basis and this cost 150 euros per night for a room for six people. The Centre is situated right on Liminka Bay, well positioned for some early morning birding. The

room was fine though the Centre doesn't do evening meals (or beer !!), and it's a bit of a drive to find somewhere to eat.

In Kuusamo we stayed at the Hotel Kuusamon Portti which is situated about 15km south of Kuusamo on the shores of Lake Iijärvi, at a cost of 31 Euros per person per night (B&B). The hotel is run by a Dutch/Korean couple - we can thoroughly recommend it and we also ate here in the evenings.

Once we left the Kuusamo area, to head towards Varanger we arranged accommodation whilst on the road, with little problem, none of which was overly expensive. There's not a huge amount of accommodation at Vardo, and we ended up staying at the campsite (c£10 each per night) which is situated on the left just before you enter the road tunnel that leads to the town itself. The accommodation is cabin style and pretty basic, though there's shared cooking and washing facilities. Although the sign indicated they didn't open until 1 June, we had no problem staying here several days before this.

## Itinerary

We undertook the following route; **Tampere** (1 night) - **Oulu** (2 nights) - **Kuusamo** (3 nights) - **Inari** (1 night) - **Varanger** (1 night) - **Ivalo** (1 night) - **Kuusamo** (1 night) - **Tampere**. This involved several long stints of driving but worked out well enough, though in hindsight, I think we all would have liked an extra night at Varanger.

### Friday 21 May

After arriving at Tampere airport fairly late in the evening, we headed straight into the city and booked into a centrally located hotel, and grabbed a quick beer before bed.

### Saturday 22 May

We commenced the six hour drive to Oulu early the next morning and were lucky enough to see three fly over **Black Woodpeckers** during the journey. Other birds noted were regular pairs of **Whooper Swans** on roadside lakes, along with several groups of **Common Cranes**. We arrived at **Liminganlahti Visitor Centre** mid afternoon and after checking into our room we checked out the main hide and got our first views of the impressive **Liminka Bay**. A reasonable selection of waders included **Ruff, Wood Sandpiper, Black-tailed Godwit, Greenshank**, along with **Little Gull, Common Tern, Arctic Tern, Little Tern**, and **Slavonian Grebe**.

We made a brief but unsuccessful attempt to find the tower platform which overlooks the shoreline near **Oulu Oilport** and this was eventually abandoned in favour of an evening meal at a service station on the way back to Liminganlahti.

### Sunday 23 May

Another visit to the main hide at **Liminganlahti** first thing was followed by a successful visit to **Oulu Oilport** after securing some better directions from a local birder. It wasn't too long before the main target bird, **Terek Sandpiper** wandered into view, even if it was a bit distant. Other interesting birds included **Caspian Tern, Temminck's Stint, Arctic Skua**, and plenty of **Little Gulls**.

In the afternoon we tried **Hirvsuo Bog** about 40km east of **Oulu** off the main **Kuusamo** road (E20) but saw little of note. On the way back into **Oulu** we walked into several tracts of suitable looking forest and we flushed a male **Capercallie**, and also saw **Crested & Willow Tit**.

### **Monday 24 May**

Today was Owl day. We spent the morning and early afternoon birding around **Liminganlahti**, and visited the viewing platform at the east end of the bay. We eventually had an early tea before meeting up with Olli Karhu outside Oulu airport at 16.00. Additional birds of note seen in and around **Liminganlahti** included **Red-necked Phalarope**, **Red-necked Grebe** and **Grey-headed Wagtail**.

What followed was a whistle stop six hour tour within the general vicinity of **Oulu**, with Olli showing us **Pygmy**, **Tengmalm's** and **Ural Owl**, along with excellent views of **Three-toed** and **Black Woodpecker**. We also got good views of **Capercallie**, **Black Grouse** and **Willow Grouse** and managed to stumble across a **Goshawk** nest too. The only real disappointment was the **Ural Owl** sitting very low in the nest throughout the time we were on site.

After dropping Olli back at his car in **Oulu** we then headed straight to **Kuusamo** arriving at the **Hotel Kuusamon Portti** sometime after 1am. Fortunately we had already phoned ahead and the owner had kindly agreed to wait up for us. Top man !!!

### **Tuesday 25 May**

All day spent in the **Kuusamo** area. As is typical of forest birding there were some long periods when birds were thin on the ground. We managed to catch up with **Siberian Jay** at the top of the famous **Valtavaara ridge**, but no sign of any **Red Flanked Bluetails**. Again, we had some good views of **Capercallie**, **Willow Grouse** and **Black Grouse**, and we were given a site for a singing **Little Bunting**, a few kms to the south of **Kuusamo** on the E63/E5, which we duly saw. No joy however with **Siberian Tit**.

### **Wednesday 26 May**

We started early this morning, with a view to driving the side roads to the east of **Kuusamo airport**, which we had been advised were good for **Hazel Hen**. The first bird of note seen was a **White Stork** in a roadside field, which had apparently been around for a few days. As it was, after several hours we did manage to see one **Hazel Hen** though not everyone got onto it before it moved off into the forest. However any disappointment soon disappeared later in the day when we had superb views of several birds by the layby at the start of the track that leads to **Valtavarra Ridge**. Otherwise the day was quite frustrating as we tried a large number of nest boxes in search of **Siberian Tit** but to no avail. We also made an unsuccessful attempt to see **Eagle Owl**, having been tipped off about the general area of the nest site by a Finnish birder we bumped into at **Valtavarra**.

### **Thursday 27 May**

Up early again, in an attempt to see **Red-flanked Bluetail**. There had been no signing birds at **Valtavarra** and we had been advised of a bird singing at **Iivaara Ridge**. This involved a fairly arduous hike up to the top of a ridge but unfortunately, we needed to start our long journey up to **Varanger**. This prevented us from putting in enough time and we eventually gave up mid morning without success and headed off north on the five hour drive to **Inari**, which included a brief photo stop as we crossed the Arctic Circle.

After booking into the **Hotel Inari**, we decided to check out the **Haapalahti Bird Tower** some 22km to the north. Wilton Farrelly (see trip reports above) had seen **Hawk Owl** from the tower in 2001, however there were few thoughts of a repeat performance. A nice male **Lesser Spotted Woodpecker** right next to the tower and a hunting **Short-eared Owl**, all added to the trip list, and after an hour or so we decided to head back towards **Inari** to try the forest on the edge of town for **Siberian Tit**.

Upon leaving the tower, what started as a casual shout of "**Sparrowhawk**", turned to pandemonium when it landed on a telegraph pole and metamorphosed into a magnificent **Hawk Owl**. Several members of the group narrowly avoided injury when the van shot forward as they attempted to exit it, after the driver (who will remain anonymous ☺) stalled the vehicle during all the commotion. Paying a guide to show you owls is one thing, but nothing beats the adrenalin surge of finding your own !!!

After grilling the **Hawk Owl** for the best part of ½ hour we finally headed back to **Inari**, and not even drawing another blank on **Siberian Tit** could dampen our euphoria for the day.

### **Friday 28 May**

Today we completed the second leg of our journey to **Varanger**, stopping briefly at **Utsjoki** to stock up on provisions before crossing into **Norway**. Upon arrival at **Tana Bru**, we headed straight for the well known **Gyr Falcon** site. After duly dipping, we moved swiftly onto **Varanger** proper, and it wasn't long before we'd found a nice flock of **Eider** which contained 40+ **Steller's Eiders**, a mile or two before the famous Norwegian Church at **Nesseby**. A pair of **Bean Geese**, **Long-tailed Skua**, **White-tailed Eagle**, and **Rough-legged Buzzard** all added to the fun.

Upon arrival in **Vardo**, we headed straight to the far side of town to view **Hornoya Island**, and the large auk colony. Unfortunately, the island is some way off shore and those auks that were on the water were bobbing up and down and just a bit too far off to get decent views. This was frustrating, as there were doubtless, small numbers of **Brunnich's Guillemots** somewhere amongst them. The island can be visited by boat, but we didn't find time for this option (they wanted £30 pp for a Saturday morning trip). We did however, see several **King Eider**.

The drive from **Vardo** to **Hamningberg** (literally the end of the road or should that be end of the world !!!) through some spectacular scenery was one of the highlights of the trip. The birds competed very well with the scenery and we had superb views of adult **White-tailed Eagle**, a flock of **80+ Glaucous Gulls**, many **Arctic Terns**, **20+ Arctic Skuas**. **Hamningberg** itself was just a bit nippy, particularly with the wind but a shortish seawatch produced **2 White-billed Divers** and a close fly-by **Brunnich's Guillemot**, which turned out to be the only one of the trip.

We spent the night at **Vardo Campsite** (in a cabin not a tent !!!), and paid the extortionate price of nearly £10 for a burger and chips when we ate out in **Vardo**. We did manage to find an Irish Pub (is there anywhere in the world without one !!) though, and £3 a pint was more bearable.

### **Saturday 29 May**

We paid a quick visit to **Hamningberg**, where we again saw **White-billed Diver**, and several road side stops produced some good views of **Purple Sandpiper**, **Temminck's Stint** and **Red-necked Phalarope**.

A quick kick around the back of the church at **Nesseby** produced up to **4 Red-throated Pipits**, and we stopped at the same site as yesterday for another look at the **Steller's Eiders**. Next stop was the **Gyr Falcon** site at **Tana Bru**, this time armed with very accurate site details, courtesy of a Finnish photographer who had been staying at **Vardo Campsite**. Before we could even park the van, a shout of **Gyr** had gone up, with the bird

circling right above us. We obtained brilliant views of this grey phase female and it must have come close to pushing **Hawk Owl** for 'bird of the trip'.

The rest of the day was spent heading south and on the way back down to **Ivalo** we again searched several suitable looking areas for **Siberian Tit**, and our failure to see this species was starting to play on the mind, to say the least. As with only one full day left after today, dipping altogether was now a real possibility. We spent the night at the **Hotel Kultahippu** in **Ivalo**, which had a reasonably priced bar.

### **Sunday 30 May**

A pre-breakfast trip to an area of forest right on the edge of town, following a recommendation from a Finnature guide we had bumped into at the hotel finally produced a **Siberian Tit**. The only down side was that it quickly moved off into the forest after the initial sighting, but it was a relief to finally nail it.

**Mt Kaunispaa** south of **Ivalo** was the first proper stop of the day and 4 very tame **Dotterel** right next to the car park were a nice surprise. This was followed by a quick dash up **Mt Kiilopaa** where we had great views of **3 Ptarmigan**.

The subsequent rather uneventful drive to **Kuusamo** was rudely interrupted when someone spotted a **Hawk Owl** sat on road side telegraph wires. Upon promptly abandoning the van, to our amazement, we saw yet another bird at the bottom of a nearby field. This certainly perked us up for the rest of the drive back to Kuusamo, and we eventually booked back into the **Hotel Kuusamon Portti** for the night.

### **Monday 31 May**

Today was our final day and we decided to give the **Eagle Owl** site near **Kuusamo** one final crack. We finally managed to find the right rock face and after some considerable scanning, we eventually located the nest with two chicks in it. However, we were unable to locate the adult birds. We headed off south at 11.00 and the rest of the day was taken up with the long 7 hour drive to Tampere Airport, from where we flew back to the UK at 22.00.

In total, we recorded 168 species.

### **Species List**

The list below follows the sequence, nomenclature and taxonomy of the '*British Birds' List of the Birds of the Western Palearctic*.

**Mute Swan** *Cygnus olor* - First day only, Southern Finland.

**Whooper Swan** *Cygnus cygnus* - Common throughout.

**Bean Goose** *Anser fabalis rossicus* - 2 birds Varanger.

**Greylag Goose** *Anser anser* - Maximum of 20 seen, mainly in Oulu area.

**Common Shelduck** *Tadorna tadorna* - Seen on several dates.

**Eurasian Wigeon** *Anas penelope* - Seen daily.

**Gadwall** *Anas strepera* - Liminganlahti only.

**Eurasian Teal** *Anas crecca* - Seen daily.

**Mallard** *Anas platyrhynchos* - Seen daily.

**Pintail** *Anas acuta* - Almost daily.

**Garganey** *Anas querquedula* - 8 in total all at Liminganlahti.

**Shoveler** *Anas clypeata* - Liminganlahti only.

**Tufted Duck** *Aythya marila* - Seen daily.

**Common Eider** *Somateria mollissima* - Varanger only.

**King Eider** *Somateria spectabilis* - 6 Vardo, Varanger.

**Steller's Eider** *Polysticta stelleri* - Varanger only, maximum of 43.  
**Long-tailed Duck** *Clangula hyemalis* - Varanger only.  
**Common Scoter** *Melanitta nigra* - Varanger only.  
**Velvet Scoter** *Melanitta fusca* - Varanger only.  
**Goldeneye** *Bucephala clangula* - Seen daily.  
**Red-breasted Merganser** *Mergus serrator* - Numerous Liminganlahti, seen at several other sites as well.  
**Goosander** *Mergus merganser* - Common, maximum of 250 at Liminganlahti.  
**Smew** *Mergellus albellus* - Maximum 30 - Liminganlahti.  
**Hazel Grouse (Hen)** *Bonasa bonasia* - 1 bird from car whilst driving tracks to the east of Kuusamo. Superb views of up to 5 birds at Valtavara Ridge later same day.  
**Willow Grouse** *Lagopus lagopus* - Seen on 6 different dates.  
**Ptarmigan** *Lagopus mutus* - Excellent views of 2 males & a female at top of Mt Kiilopää, 42km south of Ivalo.  
**Black Grouse** *Tetrao tetrix* - Several sightings in Kuusamo area.  
**Capercallie** *Tetrao urogallus* - Numerous sightings in Oulu and Kuusamo areas.  
**Red-throated Diver** *Gavia stellata* - Varanger only.  
**Black-throated Diver** *Gavia arctica* - Small numbers seen on most days.  
**White-billed Diver** *Gavia adamsii* - Three birds, all at Hamningberg.  
**Great Crested Grebe** *Podiceps cristatus* - Seen on several dates.  
**Red-necked Grebe** *Podiceps grisegena* - 1 bird only, Liminganlahti.  
**Slavonian Grebe** *Podiceps auritus* - Several birds Liminganlahti.  
**Northern Gannet** *Morus bassanus* - Small numbers off Hamningberg.  
**Great Cormorant** *Phalacrocorax carbo* - Varanger only.  
**Shag** *Phalacrocorax aristotelis* - Varanger only.  
**Eurasian Bittern** *Botaurus stellaris* - One heard Liminganlahti.  
**White Stork** *Ciconia ciconia* - One in field just east of Kuusamo, rare this far north.  
**White-tailed Eagle** *Haliaeetus albicilla* - At least 7 birds Varanger, including great views of an adult sat on a rock near Hamningberg.  
**Marsh Harrier** *Circus aeruginosus* - Several seen in Liminganlahti area.  
**Hen Harrier** *Circus cyaneus* - 1 Liminganlahti.  
**Northern Goshawk** *Accipiter gentilis* - 1 flushed off nest in Oulu area and another bird Kuusamo.  
**Eurasian Sparrowhawk** *Accipiter nisus* - 1 Iivaara Ridge, Kuusamo.  
**Common Buzzard** *Buteo buteo* - Seen on two dates only.  
**Rough-legged Buzzard** *Buteo lagopus* - Several sightings in the north, including Varanger, not as numerous as expected.  
**Osprey** *Pandion haliaetus* - A total of 5 birds seen.  
**Common Kestrel** *Falco tinnunculus* - Several sightings.  
**Merlin** *Falco columbarius* - 1 Liminganlahti.  
**Gyr Falcon** *Falco rusticolus* - 1 female Tana Bru.  
**Common Coot** *Fulica atra* - Seen only in Liminganlahti area.  
**Common Crane** *Grus grus* - Seen regularly, maximum 40 at Liminganlahti.  
**Oystercatcher** *Haematopus ostralegus* - Seen only at Liminganlahti and Varanger.  
**Ringed Plover** *Charadrius hiaticula* - Seen only at Liminganlahti & Varanger .  
**Dotterel** *Charadrius morinellus* - 4 at Mt Kaunispää. There's a road that leads to a visitor centre, and the turning is on the left (when heading south from Ivalo) several kms before Saariselkä. The birds were running around the car park !!!  
**European Golden Plover** *Pluvialis apricaria* - Seen only at Liminganlahti & Varanger.  
**Northern Lapwing** *Vanellus vanellus* - Seen on an almost daily basis.  
**Sanderling** *Calidris alba* - Only at Varanger.  
**Temminck's Stint** *Calidris temminckii* - Oulu Oilport & Varanger.

**Purple Sandpiper** *Calidris maritima* - Good numbers up at Varanger.  
**Dunlin** *Calidris alpina* - Liminganlahti & Varanger.  
**Ruff** *Philomachus pugnax* - Maximum of 50 at Liminganlahti, including many displaying males. Also seen up at Varanger.  
**Common Snipe** *Gallinago gallinago* - Seen daily.  
**Woodcock** *Scolopax rusticola* - 2 birds in Oulu area.  
**Black-tailed Godwit** *Limosa limosa* - Liminganlahti and Oulu Oil Port.  
**Bar-tailed Godwit** *Limosa lapponica* - Seen only at Liminganlahti and Varanger.  
**Whimbrel** *Numenius phaeopus* - 1 Kuusamo, also Varanger.  
**Eurasian Curlew** *Numenius arquata* - Seen nearly every day.  
**Spotted Redshank** *Tringa erythropus* - 1 on road side pool north of Sodankyla at Petkula Marsh.  
**Common Redshank** *Tringa totaus* - Seen at both Liminganlahti and Varanger.  
**Greenshank** *Tringa nebularia* - Seen daily.  
**Green Sandpiper** *Tringa ochropus* - 2 near Valtavarra Ridge.  
**Wood Sandpiper** *Tringa glareola* - Small numbers seen on an almost daily basis.  
**Terek Sandpiper** *Xenus cinereus* - 1 bird Oulu Oil Port. Heading north through Oulu on the E75, leave the dual carriageway at the junction of route 20 (signposted Kuusamo). At the end of the slip road there's a T-Junction. Rather than turning right to go to Kuusamo, turn left and follow this road for several Kms. The road eventually drops from four to two lanes. Keep an eye open for an archery field on the right, which has an accompanying car park along side. Park here and proceed to the far end of the car park, and follow the path through the woods for several hundred yards to view the shoreline from an obvious tower viewing platform. If you reach the gates to the oil terminal, you've gone too far.  
**Common Sandpiper** *Actitis hypoleucos* - Almost daily.  
**Turnstone** *Arenaria interpres* - Liminganlahti and Varanger.  
**Red-necked Phalarope** *Phalaropus lobatus* - Group of 13 in Liminganlahti, and small numbers up at Varanger.  
**Arctic Skua** *Stercorarius parasiticus* - 1 Oulu Oil Port. Some excellent close quarter encounters at Varanger.  
**Long-tailed Skua** *Stercorarius longicaudus* - Up to 5 different birds at Varanger.  
**Great Skua** *Chataracta skua* - 1 Hamningberg, Varanger.  
**Little Gull** *Larus minutus* - Daily, maximum 100 near Kuusamo.  
**Black-headed Gull** *Larus ridibundus* - Seen daily.  
**Common Gull** *Larus canus* - Seen daily.  
**Lesser Black-backed Gull** *Larus fuscus* - Seen in Oulu and Kuusamo area.  
**Herring Gull** *Larus argentatus* - Seen daily.  
**Great Black-backed Gull** - Several in Liminganlahti area, also seen at Varanger.  
**Kittiwake** *Rissa tridactyla* - Seen only at Varanger where very common.  
**Caspian Tern** *Sterna caspia* - Maximum of 12 at Oulu Oil Port.  
**Common Tern** *Sterna hirundo* - Seen frequently.  
**Arctic Tern** *Sterna paradisaea* - Daily, very common.  
**Little Tern** *Sterna albifrons* - 5, all Liminganlahti.  
**Common Guillemot** *Uria aalge* - Large numbers Vardo, looking towards Hornoya Island.  
**Brunnich's Guillemot** *Uria lomvia* - 1 on sea watch, close in shore past Hamningberg.  
**Razorbill** *Alca torda* - Common Varanger.  
**Black Guillemot** *Cephus grylle* - Small numbers Varanger.  
**Puffin** *Fratercula arctica* - Several small groups on the sea between Vardo and Hornoya Island.  
**Feral Pigeon/Rock Dove** *Columba livia* - Seen daily.  
**Wood Pigeon** *Columba palumbus* - Seen in Oulu/ Kuusamo area, absent in far north.  
**Common Cuckoo** *Cuculus canorus* - Heard most days.

**Eagle Owl** *Bubo bubo* - 2 chicks on a nest in Kuusamo area.

**Hawk Owl** *Surnia ulula* - 3 seen in total. 1 at Haapalahti Bird Tower just north of Inari, and a pair located from the car on the drive between Ivalo and Kuusamo.

**Pygmy Owl** *Glaucidium passerinum* - 1 Oulu area. Refused to come out of nest box, so reluctantly we agreed for Olli our guide to remove the top of the box briefly, so we could look inside.

**Ural Owl** *Strix uralensis* - An adult sat on the nest in the Oulu area. Disappointingly, it spent the whole time low down in the nest, with just the top of the head visible. But still, a great bird to get !!

**Short-eared Owl** *Asio flammeus* -1 Haapalahti Bird Tower, 1 Varanger.

**Tengmalm's Owl** *Aegolius funereus* - 1 in a nest box in the Oulu area. Unlike the Pygmy Owl it did actually have the decency to stick its head out.

**Common Swift** *Apus apus* - Several seen during trip.

**Black Woodpecker** *Dryocopus martius* - 3 flyovers during the drive from Tampere to Liminganlahti Visitor Centre. Another bird seen during Owl Tour.

**Great Spotted Woodpecker** *Dendrocopos major* - Commonest woodpecker, though absent in Varanger (no trees !!!!).

**Lesser Spotted Woodpecker** *Dendrocopos minor* - Great views of a male at base of Haapalahti Bird Tower, north of Inari.

**Three-toed Woodpecker** *Picoides tridactylus* - Fabulous views of a male at a nest hole during our owl trip in the Oulu area.

**Sky Lark** *Alauda arvensis* - Several sightings during the trip.

**Sand Martin** *Riparia riparia* - Seen regularly.

**Barn Swallow** *Hirundo rustica* - Seen regularly.

**House Martin** *Delichon urbica* - Seen regularly.

**Tree Pipit** *Anthus trivialis* - Seen/heard in both Oulu and Kuusamo areas.

**Meadow Pipit** *Anthus pratensis* - Seen regularly, including far north.

**Red-throated Pipit** *Anthus cervinus* - At least 4 summer plumaged birds around pool at back of Nesseby Church, Varanger.

**Rock Pipit** *Anthus petrosus* - 1 Varanger.

**Yellow (Grey-headed) Wagtail** *Motacilla flava thunbergi* - Seen/heard regularly, but difficult to get views on the ground. Maximum of 30 at Liminganlahti.

**Grey Wagtail** *Motacilla cinerea* - One sighting Kuusamo area.

**White Wagtail** *Motacilla alba* - Seen daily.

**Waxwing** *Bombycilla garrulus* - Small numbers seen on six different dates.

**Robin** *Erithacus rubecula* - Oulu and Kuusamo only.

**Bluethroat** *Luscinia svecica* - Sightings at several locations, including Liminganlahti, Inari and Varanger.

**Common Redstart** *Phoenicurus phoenicurus* - Seen in Kuusamo area.

**Whinchat** *Saxicola rubetra* - Seen regularly.

**Northern Wheatear** *Oenanthe oenanthe* - Seen on several different days.

**Blackbird** *Turdus merula* - Only two sightings all trip.

**Fieldfare** *Turdus pilaris* - Common throughout trip.

**Song Thrush** *Turdus philomelos* - Several sightings in Oulu and Kuusamo areas.

**Redwing** *Turdus iliacus* - Common, nice to hear the song for once !!

**Mistle Thrush** *Turdus viscivorus* - Seen in Oulu and Kuusamo areas.

**Sedge Warbler** *Acrocephalus schoenobaenus*- Liminganlahti area only.

**Garden Warbler** *Sylvia borin* - 1 bird singing close to Tampere airport on final day.

**Lesser Whitethroat** *Sylvia curruca* - Seen at Liminganlahti.

**Common Chiffchaff** *Phylloscopus collybita* - Much scarcer than Willow Warbler, seen only in Kuusamo area.

**Willow Warbler** *Phylloscopus trochilus* - Common throughout.

**Goldcrest** *Regulus regulus* - One bird heard Oulu area.

**Pied Flycatcher** *Ficedula hypoleuca* - Seen regularly.  
**Willow Tit** *Parus montanus* - Plenty of sightings mainly in Kuusamo area. Every one a poor substitute for our real target. See next species.  
**Siberian Tit** *Parus cinctus* - Frustratingly, only 1 bird seen all trip. Heading south through Ivalo, we turned left off the main road just past the Hotel Ivalo and after driving through a small area of housing we birded the forest right on the edge of town.  
**Crested Tit** *Parus cristatus* - 4 birds 10km west of Hirvsuo Bog.  
**Coal Tit** *Parus ater* - Several birds, Oulu Oil Port.  
**Blue Tit** *Parus caeruleus* - Several sightings.  
**Great Tit** *Parus major* - Fairly regular.  
**Great Grey Shrike** *Lanius excubitor* - 1 Kuusamo area.  
**Eurasian Jay** *Garrulus glandarius* - Seen on three days only, Oulu/Kuusamo.  
**Siberian Jay** *Garrulus glandarius* - Up to half a dozen birds in total, all in Kuusamo area, including two birds at the top of Valtavarra Ridge.  
**Magpie** *Pica pica* - Common.  
**Western Jackdaw** *Corvus monedula* - Absent in north, relatively common in south.  
**Rook** *Corvus frugilegus* - Oulu area only.  
**Hooded Crow** *Corvus Cornix* - Common.  
**Common Raven** *Corvus corax* - Common.  
**Starling** *Sturnus vulgaris* - Absent in far north.  
**House Sparrow** *Passer domesticus* - Common.  
**Common Chaffinch** *Fringilla coelebs* - Common.  
**Brambling** *Fringilla montifringilla* - Seen regularly.  
**Greenfinch** *Carduelis chloris* - Only seen on two dates.  
**Siskin** *Carduelis spinus* - Common.  
**Linnet** *Carduelis cannabina* - One sighting, Varanger.  
**Common (Mealy) Redpoll** *Carduelis flammea* - Regular sightings.  
**Arctic Redpoll** *Carduelis hornemanni* - Several sightings in Varanger area.  
**Crossbill sp** - Several fly over birds calling in Kuusamo area. 1 very distant bird in the top of a tree briefly at Viipus Camping.  
**Lapland Bunting** *Calcarius lapponicus* - Seen only in Varanger area, including some great views of a summer plumaged male.  
**Snow Bunting** *Plectrophenax nivalis* - Easily seen in Varanger. 2 birds also seen at Mt Kaunispaa.  
**Yellowhammer** *Emberiza citrinella* - Numerous sightings.  
**Little Bunting** *Emberiza pusilla* - A singing bird in road side bushes several kms south of Kuusamo, between town and Hotel Kussamon Portti.  
**Reed Bunting** *Emberiza schoeniclus* - Common in right habitat.

## MAMMALS

**Red Deer** *Cervus elaphus* - 22 May only.  
**Red Squirrel** *Sciurus vulgaris* - Seen daily whilst in Kuusamo area.  
**Mountain/Arctic Hare** *Lepus timidus* - seen on 4 separate days.  
**Moose** *Alces alces* - Seen on 2 days only.  
**Reindeer** *Rangifer tarandus* - A common roadside site in Lapland, particularly around Kuusamo.  
**Mushrat** *Ondrata zibethicus* - A single sighting on 26 May.  
**Harp Seal** *Phoca groenlandica* - Seen at Varanger on 26 & 27 May.  
**Vole Sp.** - Sightings on 25 & 26 May.

A selection of photos can be seen at [www.cvlbirding.co.uk/photos/finland01.html](http://www.cvlbirding.co.uk/photos/finland01.html)

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