

# Wise Birding Holidays

Bird and mammal watching tours



## FINLAND: Wolverines, Bears & Birds

Monday 5<sup>th</sup> - Thursday 8<sup>th</sup> June 2017

**Tour Participants:** Tracy & Ian Hempstead, Helen Booker, Sue Healey, Paul Buckley, Michael Wilding, Colin Slator & Steve Worwood

**Leaders:** Chris Townend & Harri Hölttä

### HIGHLIGHTS OF TRIP

**Wolverine:** Nightly sightings with at least 8 different individuals seen on one night.

**European Brown Bear:** Great sightings on both nights with 2 animals seen.

**Great Grey Owl:** A fabulous start to the tour as we enjoyed great views of two adults at the nest feeding three chicks near Joensuu.

**Wolf:** Those who were in the forest hide on the second night were treated to a single animal that passed through the forest at close range early morning on the 8th June.



**Great Grey Owl on the nest feeding young and multiple sightings of Wolverines & Bears were the main highlights**

## **Tour Summary**

*This short break is specifically designed to see Wolverine and European Brown Bear by spending two nights in a purpose built hide. Early June is also a good time for breeding birds and we were spoiled this year with some fabulous views of Great Grey Owl at the nest. We enjoyed a total of 7 species of mammal and 68 species of bird.*

*Flights from Helsinki to Joensuu airport are regular and from Joensuu it is just a couple of hours drive to our hotel at Lieksa. Here, we stay at a comfortable hotel for meals and to rest after our first night in the hide.*

## **Monday 5th June: ARRIVE JOENSUU**

After a quick connecting flight from Helsinki to Joensuu of around an hour we arrived in the small and friendly airport of Joensuu where our local guide Harri was waiting for us with good news! He had managed to check on a nearby Great Grey Owl site and a pair was present feeding chicks! Within 45 minutes we were at the site and enjoying some fabulous scope views of both adults and three chicks! You can see some video of the birds [HERE](#) thanks to tour participants Ian & Tracy Hempstead.

As we drove away from the site, a Hazel Grouse flushed from the side of the track and was glimpsed by some of the group before we continued our journey to the town of Lieksa. During the journey highlights included 80+ Whooper Swans in roadside fields, a male goshawk that almost hit the minibuss windscreen(!) and wonderful views of a Eurasian Elk at dusk feeding in an open area of forest. After a meal en route, we arrived at our hotel at 11pm.

## **Tuesday 6th June: PATVINSUO NP & KELJANPURO WILDLIFE LODGE**

We met for breakfast at the civilised start time of 07.00hrs and once again met with Harri, this time to explore the nearby Patvinsuo National Park and surrounding area. The morning started very well as we enjoyed excellent views of two stunning Black-throated Divers on a roadside lake and our second Elk of the trip posed in a forest clearing before retreating to the forest.

Whilst driving one of the quiet roads in the park we also came across a small group of Bohemian Waxwings that were flycatching from the tops of the trees. We then took a walk in the forest which was surprisingly quiet considering the perfect weather but perseverance paid off and we were soon treated to some very close views of a singing male Red-breasted Flycatcher. A walk in a different area of the forest produced a singing Greenish Warbler that frustratingly refused to show itself. Colin was in the right place at the right time and managed to get views of another Hazel Grouse before it flushed. Other birds around the forest included Pied Flycatcher, Tree Pipit, Cuckoo and Garden Warbler. We then returned to our hotel at Lieksa where thanks to Colin's sharp eyes we enjoyed some great views of a female Western Capercaillie feeding on a roadside bank right beside our minibuss.

After lunch at the hotel, we took the short 30 minute drive to Keljanpuro Wildlife Lodge where and the Erä Eero hides where we would spend the night. After a welcome briefing from Heini, we collected our food and drink orders and transferred to the hides. Half the group headed to the forest hides close to the lodge and the other half travelled to the hide overlooking Uuronlampi Lake and Meadows.

Both groups were treated to excellent sightings of Wolverine with at least six individuals in the forest and two individuals at the lake. Those at the lake also enjoyed prolonged views of a European Brown Bear and Ian and Tracy enjoyed a brief bear sighting from their forest hide also.

### **Wednesday 7th June: LIEKSA WETLAND & KELJANPURO WILDLIFE LODGE**

At around 07.00hrs we all met after our first night in the hide and were able to swap stories of our exciting wolverine and bear sightings! We then returned to our hotel where we had breakfast and some time to sleep!

We met for lunch at around 1.30pm and then took a short walk around the wetland adjacent to our hotel before returning to Erä Eero hides. Highlights at the wetland included three adult Little Gull, Common Tern and a singing Reed Bunting.

We arrived at Keljanpuro Lodge for late afternoon and transferred to our hides, this time swapping hide locations so everyone in the group experienced a night at each of the sites.

Once again, both groups had more fabulous views of Wolverines with three different individuals at the lake and at least 8 different individual in the forest! Those at the lake were also treated to views of the same European Brown Bear seen here on the previous evening. However, it was those in the forest hides that had the real luck as a Wolf wandered through the forest in front of the hides at around 04.10hrs!

### **Thursday 8th June: KELJANPURO to JOENSUU**

This morning we met at the lodge for breakfast and swapped stories of the night's wildlife encounters over coffee and homemade porridge. We then took the short drive of around 1.5 hours to the airport where the tour concluded.

**Conservation Donation** – Following this tour to Finland £160 was transferred to the Wise Birding Holiday's central conservation fund. This will be used to support a conservation project in the future, yet to be determined.

For the last three years Wise Birding Holidays has been supporting a number of small conservation projects. However, we now believe that to make a bigger difference to conservation it seems best to pool the donations from most of our tours into one central fund. Once a target amount has been reached this money will be used to support one single project in the hope of achieving more for species conservation. Currently this amounts to around £3,000. Some tours will continue to donate money to help some of the smaller projects that we feel will still benefit from such smaller donations. Please visit our [Conservation News](#) and [Latest News](#) links to find out more.





**Wolverines were active from as early as 7pm and until after 5am on one morning**







The Wolverine hides were perfect for both incredible views and photography







**Whooper Swans were seen from one of the hides (above) and a singing male Red-breasted Flycatcher showed well in Patvinsuo NP (below)**







**This European Brown Bear showed very well  
from the Uuronlampi Lake hide on both evenings**







On our first evening we saw Great Grey Owl on the nest feeding 3 chicks







**Both Wolverines and Lesser Black-backed “Baltic” Gulls were eager to see what scraps of food had been left out at the feeding area within the forest**







More photos from this and other tours can be viewed on our Flickr site: [www.flickr.com/photos/129663578@N06/albums](http://www.flickr.com/photos/129663578@N06/albums)

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**FINLAND: Birds & Mammals Checklist for 5th - 8th June 2017**

This bird checklist follows the nomenclature and classification from HBW and BirdLife International Illustrated Checklist of the Birds of the World and the associated online resource, HBW Alive

#	Common Name	Scientific Name	#	Notes
1	Rock Dove / Feral Pigeon	<i>Columba livia</i>	1	Recorded on the 6th and 7th around habitation.
2	Hazel Grouse	<i>Bonasa bonasia</i>	2	A bird was flushed from the roadside whilst leaving the GGO site on the evening of the 5th and Colin saw a bird in Patvnsuo NP on the 6th.
3	Western Capercaillie	<i>Tetrao urogallus</i>	3	A great spot by Colin of a female by the roadside that gave good views on our journey from Patvinsuo to Lieksa on the 6th.
4	Black Grouse	<i>Lyrurus tetrix</i>	4	Heard “bubbling” from the forest hides early morning on the 7th.
5	Whooper Swan	<i>Cygnus cygnus</i>	5	80+ birds seen in roadside fields whilst travelling from Joensuu to Lieksa on the 5th. A pair were also seen on Lake Uuronlampi on the 6th & 7th from the hide.
6	Common Goldeneye	<i>Bucephala clangula</i>	6	Two female birds seen on Lake Uuronlampi on the 7th and 8th.
7	Mallard	<i>Anas platyrhynchos</i>	7	Recorded every day with a max. count of 11 birds on Lake Uuronlampi.
8	Common Teal	<i>Anas crecca</i>	8	Recorded on the 6th, 7th and 8th with a max. count of 5 birds on Lake Uuronlampi on the 8th.
9	Eurasian Wigeon	<i>Anas penelope</i>	9	Up to 2 birds recorded on three days from the Uuronlampi Lake hide.
10	Tufted Duck	<i>Aythya fuligula</i>	10	Five birds seen whilst travelling to Lieksa on the evening of the 5th June.
11	Common Woodpigeon	<i>Columba palumbus</i>	11	1-2 birds recorded on the 5th and 6th only.
12	Common Swift	<i>Apus apus</i>	12	Seen on the 5th at Joensuu airport and heard on the 7th at our hotel in Lieksa.
13	Common Cuckoo	<i>Cuculus canorus</i>	13	Heard calling on three days in Patvinsuo NP and from the hides.
14	Common Crane	<i>Grus grus</i>	14	Colin and Stephen heard a bird calling from their hide early morning of the 7th.
15	Arctic Loon (Black-throated Diver)	<i>Gavia arctica</i>	15	Superb views of two birds feeding very close to the edge of a small lake en route to Patvinsuo NP on the 6th.
16	Northern Lapwing	<i>Vanellus vanellus</i>	16	Single birds recorded on the 5th, 7th and 8th.
17	Eurasian Curlew	<i>Numenius arquata</i>	17	Recorded on the 5th - 7th inclusive with a max. count of 3 birds at the wetland in Lieksa.
18	Common Snipe	<i>Gallinago gallinago</i>	18	A drumming bird was heard from one of the hides on the 7th.
19	Common Sandpiper	<i>Actitis hypoleucos</i>	19	Paul saw a bird whilst travelling to Lieksa on the 5th.
20	Green Sandpiper	<i>Tringa ochropus</i>	20	Those in the hide at Lake Uuronlampi saw a single bird beside the lake on the 7th.
21	Common Greenshank	<i>Tringa nebularia</i>	21	Recorded on the 6th, 7th and 8th - seen by Lake Uuronlampi and heard displaying.
22	Little Gull	<i>Hydrocoloeus minutus</i>	22	Three beautiful summer plumaged adults at the Lieksa wetland on the afternoon of the 7th.
23	Black-headed Gull	<i>Larus ridibundus</i>	23	Small numbers recorded on the 5th, 6th and 7th.
24	Mew (Common) Gull	<i>Larus canus</i>	24	The commonest gull species recorded daily. Most obvious around the hides with groups of up to 12 birds often feeding on the bait scraps.
25	Lesser Black-backed / “Baltic” Gull	<i>Larus fuscus</i>	25	A single adult bird on the 6th and 7th from the forest hide.
26	European Herring Gull	<i>Larus argentatus</i>	26	1-2 birds recorded on the 6th and 7th from the hides.
27	Common Tern	<i>Sterna hirundo</i>	27	Two birds from the hotel on the 6th and a single at the Lieksa wetland on the 7th.
28	Great Grey Owl	<i>Strix nebulosa</i>	28	One of the bird highlights. Two adults and three chicks at the nest seen at close range 45Km west of Joensuu on the evening of the 5th.
29	Eurasian Sparrowhawk	<i>Accipiter nisus</i>	29	A single from Lake Uuronlampi hide on the 6th.
30	Northern Goshawk	<i>Accipiter gentilis</i>	30	A male almost hit the windscreen whilst travelling from Joensuu to Lieksa on the evening of the 5th!
31	Eurasian Buzzard	<i>Buteo buteo</i>	31	A single bird near Patvinsuo NP on the morning of the 6th.
32	Great Spotted Woodpecker	<i>Dendrocopos major</i>	32	Recorded daily with very obliging birds from the hides.
33	Eurasian Skylark	<i>Alauda arvensis</i>	33	Two birds at Joensuu airport on the 5th and again heard singing on our return on the 8th.
34	Barn Swallow	<i>Hirundo rustica</i>	34	1-2 birds recorded on the 6th, 7th and 8th.
35	Northern House Martin	<i>Delichon urbicum</i>	35	At least 2 birds seen whilst travelling to Joensuu on the morning of the 8th.
36	Tree Pipit	<i>Anthus trivialis</i>	36	Singing birds heard in Patvinsuo NP on the 6th and again from the forest hide on the morning of the 8th.

#	Common Name	Scientific Name	#	Notes
37	White Wagtail	<i>Motacilla alba</i>	37	Recorded on the 6th and 7th from the hotel and Lake Uuronlampi hide.
38	Bohemian Waxwing	<i>Bombycilla garrulus</i>	38	A small group of 7 birds were seen flycatching near Patvinsuo NP on the 6th.
39	Northern Wren	<i>Troglodytes troglodytes</i>	39	Singing in Patvinsuo NP on the 6th.
40	Dunnock	<i>Prunella modularis</i>	40	Singing in Patvinsuo NP on the 6th.
41	Mistle Thrush	<i>Turdus viscivorus</i>	41	Seen near Patvinsuo NP on the 6th.
42	Song Thrush	<i>Turdus philomelos</i>	42	Single birds heard singing on the 6th and seen on the 8th
43	Redwing	<i>Turdus iliacus</i>	43	At least 3 birds seen around the hotel on the 6th.
44	Fieldfare	<i>Turdus pilaris</i>	44	The commonest of the thrushes and recorded daily.
45	Common Blackbird	<i>Turdus merula</i>	45	A single bird on the 6th was the only bird seen.
46	European Robin	<i>Erithacus rubecula</i>	46	Singing in Patvinsuo NP on the 6th.
47	Spotted Flycatcher	<i>Muscicapa striata</i>	47	A single bird was a minor distraction whilst we watched the Great Grey Owls!
48	European Pied Flycatcher	<i>Ficedula hypoleuca</i>	48	Small numbers singing in Patvinsuo NP on the 6th and seen well at the Keljanpuro Lodge at Era Eero on the 7th.
49	Red-breasted Flycatcher	<i>Ficedula parva</i>	49	A cracking singing male showed very well in Patvinsuo NP on the 6th and another was heard singing at Lake Uuronlampi on the 8th.
50	Goldcrest	<i>Regulus regulus</i>	50	Singing in Patvinsuo NP on the 6th.
51	Willow Warbler	<i>Phylloscopus trochilus</i>	51	Recorded daily.
52	Common Chiffchaff	<i>Phylloscopus collybita</i>	52	A single bird singing in Patvinsuo NP on the 6th.
53	Greenish Warbler	<i>Phylloscopus trochiloides</i>	53	A singing bird in Patvinsuo NP on the 6th.
54	Garden Warbler	<i>Sylvia borin</i>	54	A singing bird in Patvinsuo NP on the 6th was seen by some.
55	Coal Tit	<i>Pariparus ater</i>	55	Recorded on the 8th only from the forest hide.
56	Great Tit	<i>Parus major</i>	56	Recorded on the 6th and 8th only.
57	Eurasian Treecreeper	<i>Certhia familiaris</i>	57	Heard in Patvinsuo NP and seen from the forest hide by some on the 7th.
58	Eurasian Jay	<i>Garrulus glandarius</i>	58	Recorded whilst travelling to Lieksa on the 5th and seen from the forest hides on the 7th and 8th.
59	Common Magpie	<i>Pica pica</i>	59	1-2 birds seen on the 5th, 7th and 8th.
60	Eurasian Jackdaw	<i>Corvus monedula</i>	60	A small group of birds west of Joensuu on the 5th was the only sighting.
61	Hooded Crow	<i>Corvus cornix</i>	61	Recorded daily.
62	Common Raven	<i>Corvus corax</i>	62	Recorded on the 6th, 7th and 8th with a max. count of 19 birds on the 6th.
63	Common Starling	<i>Sturnus vulgaris</i>	63	50+ seen on the 5th was the highest count.
64	Common Chaffinch	<i>Fringilla coelebs</i>	64	Recorded daily.
65	European Greenfinch	<i>Carduelis chloris</i>	65	Recorded on the 6th near the hotel.
66	Eurasian Siskin	<i>Carduelis spinus</i>	66	Recorded on the 5th, 6th and 7th mostly flying over.
67	Eurasian Bullfinch	<i>Pyrrhula pyrrhula</i>	67	This northern form was heard giving its nasal calls in Patvinsuo NP and seen briefly. Stephen also saw a female on the morning of the 8th.
68	Reed Bunting	<i>Emberiza schoeniclus</i>	68	A singing male at the Lieksa wetland on the afternoon of the 7th.



#	Common Name	Scientific Name	#	Notes
	<b>Mammals</b>			
1	Wolf	<i>Canis lupus</i>	1	A single animal was seen for approximately 1 minute from the forest hides at 04.10hrs as it wandered through the forest on the 8th June.
2	European Brown Bear	<i>Ursus arctos</i>	2	Tracy and Ian saw an animal from their forest hide during the early morning of the 7th and a second animal was seen on both nights from the Uuronlampi Lake hide.
3	Wolverine	<i>Gulo gulo</i>	3	Nightly sightings from both hides with a maximum of 3 individuals from the Uuronlampi Lake hide and at least 8 individuals from the forest hides.
4	Eurasian Elk	<i>Alces alces</i>	4	A great sighting at dusk as we travelled from Joensuu to Lieksa on our first evening and another animal near Patvinsuo on the morning of the 6th June.
5	European Hare	<i>Lepus europaeus</i>	5	Three animals were seen on our first evening travelling to Lieksa and a single animal was seen whilst travelling to the airport on our last morning.
6	Red Squirrel	<i>Sciurus vulgaris</i>	6	Up to 3 animals seen at the feeders at Keljanpuro Lodge on two days.
7	Muskrat	<i>Ondatra zibethicus</i>	7	A single animal was seen at dusk from the Uuronlampi Lake hide on the evening of the 6th June.
	<b>Butterflies</b>			
1	Camberwell Beauty		1	Recorded from the forest hides.
2	Comma		2	Recorded from the forest hides.
3	Green Hairstreak		3	Recorded from the forest hides.

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