

BIRDSAFARI SWEDEN



2010

Svartådalen of Sweden!

During the last few years *Svartådalen – The Black River Valley* – in *Västmanland*, central Sweden, has developed as a new birding destination with international interest.

A network of birdguides and ringers, each having stakeouts for their special birds, have developed their skills in showing birds to people.

A network of feeding stations and hides bring the birds close to the observer.

Our activities are specially designed for birdwatchers and bird photographers.

Butterflies, mammals, flowers, silence, clean air and beautiful nature provide an extra bonus alongside the birds.

Good food and warm hospitality is part of your visit to our unique Swedish countryside. Welcome!



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Our partners in Britain are:
www.naturetrek.co.uk/

www.wildwings.co.uk



www.avianadventures.co.uk



www.naturalist.co.uk



www.birdfinders.co.uk

www.anytimetours.co.uk



www.naturetravels.co.uk



“– The most fantastic bird in the world!”

The last few years British birdwatchers and photographers have started to realise that even the central area of Sweden hosts a good handful of Taiga birds, that you traditionally thought you had to travel far north in Scandinavia to see.

Many more such birds, like **Great Grey Owl**, are these days available not more than an hours drive from Stockholm, or even less from *Västerås airport*.

- The most fantastic bird in the world!
- This is one of the the worlds top five!

These are just some of the spontaneous comments from visitors catching sight of their first wild Great Grey Owl, hunting over a meadow, totally unaware of any human presence.

Photo: Stefan Oscarsson



Photo: Stefan Oscarsson



Photo: Lars Karlsson

Close encounters with Owls in the hand

Photo: Steve Young

When experienced Owl ringers set out to do their work, ringing **Ural-**, **Tengmalms-** or sometimes **Eagle Owl** nestlings or incubating females, we let you follow and peep through the keyhole of Owl family life for a moment.

In broad daylight you get close views of wild birds that are almost impossible to find on your own out in the vast forests, especially in good light.

You'll get plenty of photo opportunities and might even get to know what it feels like to hold a live and kicking **Ural Owl** in your hand.

Getting close is not always an option without the appropriate safety gear, as female **Ural Owls** actually do attack intruders, in order to protect their offspring.

As dusk falls **Pygmy Owls** appear in the surrounding treetops and start their evening concert.



Ural Owl

Photo: Daniel Green



Ural Owl

Photo: Graham Catley



Pygmy Owl

Photo: Daniel Green



Eagle Owl

Photo: Graham Catley



Tengmalms Owl

Photo: Daniel Green



Ural Owl

Winter bird feeding stations

Photo: Graham Catley

During winter many hard-to-see birds get really friendly when you give them the right food.

Imagine standing 15 feet away from a couple of **Nutcrackers** who repeatedly come back to collect hazelnuts from a branch in a snow-covered forest clearing.

Shift your gaze 10 meters to the left, where a **Grey-headed Woodpecker** is foraging on an Aspen tree.

You will be surrounded by **Crested Tits**, **Willow Tits**, (White-headed) **Long-tailed Tits**.

Scandinavian, lightbreasted Nuthatches and Northern Treecreepers will be as close as you ever imagined and **Bullfinches** will appear in immaculate plumages, contrasting with the pure, white snow.

Special feeding stations also attract **Siberian Jays** and **Hawfinches**.



Nutcracker

Photo: Torbjörn Arvidsson



Photo: Graham Catley



Photo:Hans Bister



Photo: Stefan Oscarsson



Winter safari in snowy landscapes

A winter excursion in Sweden can be as exciting as spending time at the feedings stations.

As snowy landscapes pass the windows, we scan the tree-tops for **Hawk Owls, Pygmy Owls, Goshawks, Capercaillies, Black Grouse, Nutcrackers, Rough-legged Buzzards, Great Grey Shrikes** and more.

Where berries are available **Pine Grosbeaks** and **Waxwings** may be found.

Golden - and White-tailed Eagles hunt the area and when the cold get too present, a break with hot drinks and grilled food on an open fire, makes you warm and full of energy again.

To be able to enjoy full days of birding without wasting time indoors, we provide hot & cold drinks, sandwiches, fruit, snacks and often even lunch on our excursions.

Photo: Glyn Sellors



Hawk Owl

Photo: Glyn Sellors



Rough-legged Buzzard

Photo: Niclas Lignell



Nutcracker

Photo: Daniel Green



Photo: Stefan Oscarsson



Pine Grosbeak

Photo: Michael Buckland



Pygmy Owl

Passerines with an eastern touch

Photo: Graham Catley

May- June is the best time to get acquainted with the Scandinavian passerines.

From late April, migrants like **Thrush Nightingales**, **Pied Flycatchers**, **Redstarts**, **Whinchats**, **Yellow Wagtails** of northern thunbergi and flava races, arrive.

These are soon to be followed by a second migration wave with **Red-backed Shrikes**, **Icterine** and **Wood Warblers**, **Ortolan Buntings**, and more.

And last come **Common Rosefinches**, **Marsh** and **Blyth's Reed Warblers**.

Add a days excursion and **Red-breasted Flycatcher** and **Great Reed Warbler**, might be added to your list of species.

And all this while the Swedish countryside stands in perfect full bloom, with orchards and gardens in flowery contrast to traditional, repainted wooden houses.



Thrush Nightingale

Photo: Stefan Oscarsson



Yellow Wagtail of northern race luthea

Photo: Daniel Green



Photo: Lars Karlsson



Red-backed Shrike

Photo: Niclas Lignell



Pied Flycatcher

Photo: Tero Niemi



Common Rosefinch

Woodpecker mornings

Early, calm, sunny mornings from February – March throughout spring, Woodpeckers are drumming and calling in the forests of Västmanland.

With the help of our skilled guides it's not unusual to see and hear 7 species of Woodpeckers in one single morning, including **Black - , Three-toed - , Grey-headed - , Lesser Spotted Woodpecker** and **Wryneck**.

For butterfly enthusiasts, it's good to know that the same coniferous habitats that are home to many Woodpeckers, also are excellent for spring generations of **Camberwell Beauties, Peacocks, Brimstone-** and **Comma Butterflies**.

Photo: Graham Catley



Three-toed Woodpecker

Photo: Niclas Lignell



Wryneck

Photo: Graham Catley



Grey-headed Woodpecker

Photo: Larsa Abramsson



Black Woodpecker

Photo: Mike Read



Lesser-spotted Woodpecker

Lakes and wetlands

The lakes and wetlands of Svartådalen are designated as internationally important bird areas and included on the Nature 2000 as well as the Ramsar list.

During migration they are used by Cranes, Whooper Swans, Wildfowl, Waders, Gulls and Terns.

Among breeding birds you find **Black Tern**, **Black-throated Diver**, **Osprey**, **White-tailed Eagle**, **Bittern**, **Spotted Crake**, **Corncrake** and many more.

A visit during May-June offers a good number of **Wood Sandpipers**, beautifully summer-plumaged **Spotted Redshanks** and **Ruffs**, along with many other waders.

Black tern flocks often mix with **Little Gulls**, some pairs of which stay to breed as well.

Photo: Daniel Green



Photo: Stefan Oscarsson



Little Gull

Photo: Tero Niemi



Slavonian Grebe

Photo: Mike Read



Osprey

Photo: Larsa Abramsson



Black Tern

Photohides for Raptors and Grouse

Photo: Michael Buckland

Imagine sitting comfortably inside a hide with **White-tailed-** and **Golden Eagles** or **Goshawks** not more than 25 meters away, being able to study them carefully or take close-up pictures of them.

January to March is the best time to experience Raptors from our hide. Even a Lynx might turn up. Even if it rarely happens they have a good population in the area and do frequent the feeding stations at night.

In spring lekking parties of **Black Grouse** and **Capercaillies** are on the menu. Other birds/animals that might come close to the hides are **Hazel Grouse**, **Common Cranes**, **Whooper Swans**, **Wood Sandpipers**, **Red foxes**, **Moose**, etc.



Photo: Paul Forsner



Photo: Michael Buckland

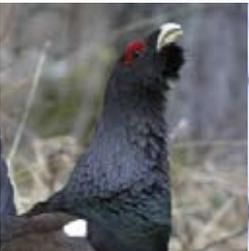


Photo: Michael Bergman



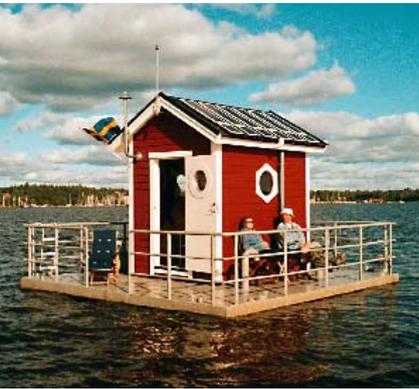
Photo: Tero Niemi



Photo: Michael Bergman



More to explore in the area



Two of the worlds perhaps most unique hotels are found in Västerås.

Innovated by the artist Mikael Genberg. (www.mikaelgenberg.com)

The floating underwater hotel Utter Inn and the treehouse Hotel Hackspett (Woodpecker) are both just consisting of one double room, but they are more than just accomodation.

www.vasterasmalarstaden.se

Photo: Helen Uliezka



Hällefors

is a part of Västmanland with lots of special attractions. Not only do they have Europes most accessible breeding area for Red-throated Divers, they also make some of Swedens finest cheese and wine. Add to that large populations of Lady Slipper Orchids and Swallow-tail Butterflies. www.hellefors.se

Photo: Mats Wikman



Sättrabrunn spa

Sättrabrunn is a 300 year old health spa, today also a modern hotel facility with hot pool, outdoor, wooden bath tubs, treatments, restaurant and all in a wonderful setting. www.satrabrunn.se

Wolf safari

Wolfs are increasing in Västmanland and now it's possible to go on safari into their territories and hear them howl and possibly even see them.

www.kolarbyn.se

More wolf and other animals/ birds from hides:

www.nordicsafari.net



Seals and Eagles in the archipelago

The Stockholm archipelago is a world heritage and a unique world of thousands of islands. Explore it from boat and get close to White-tailed Eagles and colonies of Grey Seals.

www.skargardssafari.se

Photo: Michael Bergman



Photo: Roine Magnusson

Moose safari

Still the Moose is king of the forest. Moosesafari with Moose guarantee. Spend the night in oldfashioned "kolarhuts"

www.kolarbyn.se



More to explore in Svartådalen

Photo: Daniel Green



Biking routes

Bicycle routes around beautiful Svartådalen have just been inaugurated this summer.

Hit the small countryside roads almost without any traffic and just enjoy the landscape and the views.

Make a stop at one of the cafés or handicraft stores and spend the night at a rural B&B.

Photo: Daniel Green



Culture landscapes

The culture heritage is very present in Svartådalen.

Traditional farming methods like mowing hay and making haystacks is a part of the picture.

Not to mention the red little haybarns scattered in the landscape.

Pike Fishing

Fishing Pike, Perchpike or Perch with local guides in the lakes of Svartådalen or the Lake Mälaren is a rewarding adventure.... if you want to catch the big ones.



Photo: Rebecca Nason



Butterflies

The interest for butterflies is growing in Sweden and local guides can now show you plenty of indigenous species.

June-August is the best time to see some of these; 12 species of Fritillaries including Scarce- and Marsh Fritillary, Poplar Admiral, (picture), and within a days excursion Clouded Apollo, Apollo, and Large Blue.

Canoeing

A canoe safari in the watersystem of the Black River Valley offers a variation in habitat as well as a rich bird- and wildlife.

Go canoeing with Black Terns, Ospreys and White-tailed Eagles around you.

Photo: Daniel Green



Photo: Daniel Green



Horseriding

Several farms in Svartådalen offers horseriding activities of various kinds.

The farms of Rörbo or Bångbo in the middle of the forest with lots of riding space are some of them.

Where are we?



BirdsafariSweden activities in **Svartådalen** and **Västmanland** is easy to reach from **Arlanda** or **Västerås airport**. This brochure has been financed by Västerås & Co, Hällefors kommun and Svartådalens Bygdeutveckling, together with the companies exposed in the material.