

Eastern Finland in summer 2013 - a mixture of family and birding holidays

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28/6: At 8:00 in the morning my wife Cristina, our six-year-old son Valentin and I leave the ferry-boat from Travemünde in our car in Helsinki. We drive to a campsite in **Imatra** (ca. 280 km) near Ruokolahti, where a Lanceolated Warbler has been reported singing the previous nights. After we have already checked the Warbler area I receive an SMS from Hannu Palojärvi: The Warbler's song has been recorded and sent to a specialist – who found out, that it is indeed a River Warbler singing. We spend the rest of the day at the lake nearby.

29/6: In the early morning (from ca. 4:00) I go out birding near the campsite for about 1 ½ hours. Later we head north to a Caravan-park near **Vuonismaa** („Pielisen-Karjala“, ca. 280 km), where we stay until 1st of July, sleeping in our tent, bathing, fishing, rowing, having a sauna, eating good Pizza in Lieksa, ... Temperatures reach 27° C, thunderstorms occur.

In the evening of the 29th I do a „birding-safari“ in the evening, which produces a hunting **Great Grey Owl** and a singing **Blyth's Reed Warbler** (and 2 singing **Scarlet Rosefinches**).

1/7: Drive to **Lentira** N of Kuhmo (ca. 200 km), where we rent a hut at „Lentiiran Lomakylä Oy“ at Lake Niskanselka.

2/7: Family activities at/near/on the lake.

3/7: 17:00 briefing at „Wild Brown Bear“ near **Vartiokierros** (<http://wbb.fi/bear>), at 17:30 we go into „our“ hide (nr. 5), where we stay until next morning, 7:00. Great views of a **Brown Bear** and at least one **Wolverine** (seen 6 times).

4/7: Quiet day in/near Lentira-hut. From 17:30 second night in bear-hide (nr.1). Even better views of both mammals (2 bears and a **Wolverine** less than 10 meters near the hide). **Wolves** heard far away as in the night before.

5/7: After 2 sleepless nights recreation-day near Lentira-hut (rowing, sauna, ...).

6/7: We drive to **Juuma** (ca. 260 km) and rent a hut at a campsite W of the city. In the evening we do a walk nearby.

7/7: Go to **Ruka** and do the **Valtavaara**-trail at midday (2 singing **Red-flanked Bluetails**). Visit waterfalls near National-Park-Infocentre. Do **Valtavaara**-trail again alone in the evening (2 probably new singing **Bluetails**).

8-9/7: We do a part of the „Pieni Karhunkierros“-trail up to Silastupa. In the afternoon alone „Rytisuon lumikenkäilyreitti“-trail (8 km, looking for Lady's Slippers, which have already finished flowering, see a male **Rustic Bunting**).

From 23:30 to 5:30 **Valtavaara** III (2 **Three-toed Woodpeckers**, ca. 8 **Bluetails**, 2 **Siberian Jays**, 3 **Two-barred Crossbills**) and skiing area on other side of the parking place. At about 23:00 temperatures down to 3° C.

Rest of the day in the house due to rain. In the evening „car-safari“ - without any interesting sightings.

10/7: Walk in the North of the Oulanka NP: „Karhunkierroksen lähtöpiste“ until Ristikallio (2 *Three-toed Woodpeckers*).

11/7: 2:30-5:30 **Valtavaara** IV (2-3 singing *Bluetails*, 3 *Pine Grosbeaks*). We drive southwards to a campsite near the N 75 between Kuhmo and Nurmes, having a break at „The Silent People“ between Suomussalmi and Kuusamo (<http://www.visitfinland.com/service/the-silent-people>).

12/7: Drive to **Suur-Onkamo** near Tohmajärvi. Since some nights a real Lanceolated Warbler has been singing between Saario and Värtsilä, but from 22:00 to 2:20 I don't hear it. Coming back to Suur-Onkamo tired I have a great observation of *Ural Owl* near our hut.

13/7: Whole day at the lakeside, family business. From 17:15 *Ural Owls* start feeding young on island in front of boat bridge.

14-18/7: nice days in Helsinki, 18/7 ferry to Travemünde.

We had a great time in Finland, with mostly very good weather and small numbers of mosquitos, great landscape and nature and always nice people.

My thanks go to my family for their patience and to Hannu Palojärvi and Jan Kelchtermans for informations given before and during the trip.

Bird species list (not complete; for photos see www.club300.de – Gallery WP):

001 Black-throated Diver	1.7.-6.7. 8.7.	nearly daily 1-2 heard	Lentira Valtavaara
002 Great Crested Grebe	28.6. 29.+30.6. 18.7.	1+ + +	Lake Saimaa Vuonisolahti S of Helsinki
003 Red-necked Grebe	28.6.	1	Lake Saimaa
004 Cormorant	18.7.	> 30	SW Helsinki
005 Whooper Swan	8.7. 13.7.	1 2 ad, 4 juv.	near Juuma Suur-Onkamo
006 Mute Swan	12.7. 18.7.	1 2 ad, 6 juv.	? Helsinki, „Finnlines“-harbour
007 Canada Goose	18.7.	2 families	Helsinki, „Finnlines“-harbour
008 Barnacle Goose	common in Helsinki		
009 Wigeon	16.7.	3	Helsinki (island)
010 Mallard	28.6. 29.+30.6.	+ +	Lake Saimaa near Vuonisolahti

011 Teal	3.-5.7. 8.7.	fem. with 4 juv. 3	„WBB“-hides ?
012 Tufted Duck	18.7.	fem. with 7 juv.	Helsinki, „Finnlines“-harbour
Tufted Duck/Scaup	8.7.	fem. with 5 juv.	near Juuma
013 Eider	16.+18.7.	+	Helsinki
014 Goldeneye	nearly on every lake, many nest boxes!		
015 Red-breasted Merganser	12.7.	1 fem.	Suur-Onkamo
016 Goosander	28.6. 8.7.+10.7. 18.7.	2-3 5-6 fem. 3 fem.	Lake Saimaa near Juuma Helsinki
017 Sparrowhawk	altogether 2-3		
018 Common Buzzard	altogether only 3-4		
019 White-tailed Eagle	18.7.	1 ad	Helsinki, „Finnlines“-harbour
020 Osprey	6.7.	1 over salmon farm between Lentira a. Juuma	
021 Kestrel	altogether ca. 10		
022 Capercaillie	29.6. 1.7. 8.7.	fem. with juv. fem. with juv. fem. with juv.	roadside S of Vuonisahti roadside S of Lentira roadside in Oulanka NP
023 Black Grouse	1.7.	2 fem.	S of Lentira
024 Corncrake	night 12.-13.7.	2-3 heard	E of Saario
025 Common Crane	29.6. 3.-5.7.	2 heard both nights 2 more seen	S of Vuonisahti „WBB“-hides ?
026 Oystercatcher	14.-18.7.	+	Helsinki
027 Lapwing	+ in suitable habitats		
028 Curlew	+ in suitable habitats		
029 Greenshank	29.6. 12.7.	1 heard 1 heard	Vuonisahti Suur-Onkamo
030 Common Sandpiper	+ in suitable habitats		
031 Green Sandpiper	+ in suitable habitats		

032 Woodcock	29.+30.6. 11.6. 12.7.	1 displ. 1 displ. 1 displ.	near Vuonisolahti Valtavaara E of Saario
033 Common Snipe		some heard	
034 Arctic Skua	18.7.	1 ad. light phase	SW of Helsinki
035 Little Gull	30.6. 8.7. 11.7. 12.7.	1 ad. 1 ad. 1 ad. 1 ad.	near Vuonisolahti Oulanka NP S of Juuma Suur-Onkamo
036 Black-headed Gull		+	
037 Common Gull		+	
037 Herring Gull		+	
038 Lesser Black-backed Gull	3.-5.7.	3 ad.	„WBB“-hides
039 Common Tern		+	
040 Arctic Tern	18.7.	10 +	SW of Helsinki
041 Caspian Tern	18.7.	5 + (ad. + juv.)	Helsinki, „Finnlines“-harbour
042 Woodpigeon		+	
043 Cuckoo	30.6. 3.-5.7.	heard 1	near Vuonisolahti „WBB“-hides
044 Long-eared Owl	29.6.	1 hunting	campsite near Vuonisolahti
045 Ural Owl	12.+13.7.	pair feeding at least 2 juv. (heard)	on island „Haapasaari“, Suur-Onkamo, 62°17'32" N, 30°02'54" E.
046 Great Grey Owl	29.6.	1 hunting	SE of Vuonisolahti, road „Pohjantie“ between N 5071 („Vuonislahdentie“) and railway, 63°07'10" N, 30°01'44" E.
047 Nightjar	night 12.-13.7.	1 heard sing.	E of Saario
048 Swift		+, nearly every day	
049 Wryneck	28.6.	1 heard	near Imatra
050 Black Woodpecker	3.-5.7.	1 male, 1 fem.	„WBB“-hides
051 Great Spotted Woodpecker		+	

052 Three-toed Woodpecker	9.7. early morning 10.7.	2 drumming 2 together	Valtavaara (southpath) „Karhunkierroksen lähtöpiste“
053 Swallow		+	
054 House Martin		+	
055 Tree Pipit	3.+4.7. 12.-14.7.	1 family +	„WBB“ Suur-Onkamo
056 Meadow Pipit		+	
057 White Wagtail		+	
058 „Yellow Wagtail“	8.7.	1 heard	Oulanka
059 Waxwing	6.7. 10.7.	3 + 1 +	Juuma „Karhunkierroksen lähtöpiste“
060 Dipper	7.7.	1 ad.	Kiutaköngäs-falls
	8.7.	1 ringed juv.	Jürävä-hut
061 Wren	9.7.	1 heard	Valtavaara
062 Robin		+	
063 Red-flanked Bluetail	7.7. midday 7.7. evening 9.7. ca. 0:00-3:00 11.7. ca. 3:00-5:00	2 sing. 2 new ones sing. 7-8 sing., 1 fem. warn. 2-3 sing.	Valtavaara northpath, Valtavaara southpath Valtavaara, Valtavaara
064 Redstart		abundant in all suitable habitats	
065 Whinchat	1.7. 12.7.	1 warn. 1 family	S of Lentira E of Saario
066 Northern Wheatear	1.7.	+ in 3 deforested areas S of Lentira	
067 Blackbird		+	
068 Fieldfare		most abundant Thrush in southern part of traveled area	
069 Redwing		most abundant Thrush in northern part of traveled area	
070 Song Thrush		+	
071 Mistle Thrush	3.-5.7. 9.7.	2-3 2	„WBB“-hides Valtavaara

072 Blyth's Reed Warbler	29.6.	1 sing. in garden of house nr. 5, road „Julkuvarantie“ E of N73 (Lieksa-Joensuu), 63°07'48.56" N, 30°08'17.63" E.	
073 Garden Warbler			+
074 Whitethroat	30.6.	1	near Vuonisolahti
075 Blackcap			+
076 Wood Warbler	30.6. 3.-5.7.	+ +	near Lake Saimaa S of Lentira
077 Willow Warbler			+
078 Chiffchaff	29.6.	1 heard	near Vuonisolahti
079 Goldcrest	8.7. 9.7.	1 sing. 2 sing.	Oulanka NP Valtavaara
080 Pied Flycatcher	28.6. 29.-30.6.	1 +	near Lake Saimaa near Vuonisolahti
081 Spotted Flycatcher			+
082 Willow Tit	3.-5.7. 7.-11.7.	+ +	near Lentira around Valtavaara
083 Blue Tit			+
084 Great Tit			+
085 Long-tailed Tit	29.-30.6.	+	near Vuonisolahti
086 Nuthatch	12.-13.7.	heard	Suur-Onkamo
087 Starling			+
088 Siberian Jay	9.7. early morning	2 together	Valtavaara southpath
089 Jay			+
090 Magpie			+
091 Jackdaw			+
092 Raven	29.-30.6. 3.-5.7.	2-3 3-5	near Vuonisolahti „WBB“
093 Carrion Crow			+

094 House Sparrow		+		
095 Chaffinch		+		
096 Brambling	1.7. 3.-5.7. 7.-11.7.	1 sing. + +		S of Lentira around Lentira Oulanka NP
097 Siskin			+ (daily?)	
098 Greenfinch		+		
099 Goldfinch	ca. 16.7.	1		Helsinki
100 Bullfinch („Trumpeter“-)	3.-5.7. 9.+11.7.	heard +		„WBB“ Valtavaara
101 Redpoll	9.+11.7.	1+		Valtavaara
102 Scarlet Rosefinch	30.6.	2 sing. in Gardens		SE of Vuonisahti, road „Julkuvarantie“
103 Pine Grosbeak	11.7.	ca. 3:00 male feeding 2 fledged juv.		Valtavaara, SW-corner of ridge
104 Common Crossbill	28.+29.6.	ca. 15		campsite near Lake Saimaa
105 Two-barred Crossbill	9.7. morning	2 heard + 1 heard and seen in flight,		Valtavaara
Crossbill spec.	7.-11.7.	1-4 heard/in flight		Valtavaara
106 Yellowhammer		+		
107 Rustic Bunting	8.7. 8.7. 8.-10.7.	2 fem./juv. 1 male 2+ fem./juv.		Oulanka NP, „Rytisuon lumikenkailyreitti“-trail Campsite Juuma 1 found dead there 10.7. (window accident).

Mammals:

Brown Bear	3.-5.7.	2		„Wild Brown Bear“-hides, first night 1 big, dark ind., second night this one and a smaller, lighter one.
Wolverine	3.-5.7.			both nights about 6 observations of 1-2 ind.
Wolf	3.-5.7.			both nights heard far away
Red Fox	5.7.	1		„Wild Brown Bear“-hide
Moose	8.7.	1 male		Oulanka NP

Alpine Hare

7.-11.7.

5 +

around Ruka/Valtavaara (skiing-area).



