



Brown Bear

## Birds & Mammals on Snow

**Destination:** Oulu - Kuhmo - Oulu

**Focus:** Wildlife photography

**Grading:** Moderate walks only – max 1000 meters one-way

**Group size:** 4 – 6 photographers

**Time:** 17 – 26 April 2023

**Price:** 4790 € per person, single supplement 450 €

Eagle Owl



### Photograph birds and mammals on snow

Winter has yielded to the power of the sun, and the main cores of migratory birds are arriving to their breeding areas. Sixteen hours of daylight and an hour's twilight with half a meter of snow still in the forest and the lakes still partly covered with ice create excellent conditions for a keen wildlife photographer.

This photography tour to Finland in April is perfectly timed to photograph a full array of Finnish wildlife and birds! **Black Grouse** are actively lekking and mystical **Eagle Owl** is visiting at the site, and in some years we can photograph a spectacular variety of magnificent owls, including **Great Grey** and **Northern Hawk Owl**.

In eastern Finland we will focus our lenses on Finnish **Brown Bears**, just awakened from their winter sleep. Finally, in Kuhmo, our primary photographic target will be the elusive **Wolverine** and fascinating **Wolf**. Join us for a photo safari with a difference and get to experience some of the best that Europe has to offer!

**Highlights:** Black Grouse lek, Eagle Owl, Whooper Swan, Brown Bear, Wolverine, Wolf, Elk, Wild Forest Reindeer

**For more information:**

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## ITINERARY

### Day 1 Arrival at Oulu

Upon arrival at the airport, you will be met and welcomed by our guide, and transferred to cozy Villa Finnature. Time permitting, we begin our photographic adventure and visit at the best bird sites for the spring. An evening excursion might include an area that sometimes holds a number of **owl** species and, if luck is on our side, the magnificent **Elk**. Or we might photograph Whooper swans in the sun set.

Cosy Villa Finnature will serve as a base for the next 5 nights.

### Day 2 Black Grouse and Eagle Owl

We depart very early in the morning in order to arrive at our strategically placed hides in the Finnish wilds in time. Here, we spend time capturing the awe-inspiring display of **Black Grouse** with their lyre-shaped tails and striking red skin around the eye. While Black Grouse are spectacular birds in their own, it is their amazing courtship display during the early spring that makes them desirable for bird and wildlife photographers. This courtship behavior, known as lekking, begins soon after the long winter's cold embrace is finally broken and the snow begins to melt. Not only do these open arenas make for easy viewing and photography, but the early morning's first light blankets this stage and illuminates the males as they call, leap, dance and even spar in full view of the hides.

After early morning photography session we will have a good day break to empty memory cards and have a short sleep before entering our Forest feeder hides in Liminka. These comfortable hides are converted caravans. In evening lights we might see gallant Goshawk flying to the site.

At dusk we can first hear the Eagle Owl's deep hooting somewhere behind the hide and excitement grows. When the magnificent Eagle Owl comes? This powerful bird is characterized by its large size, prominent ear tufts and large orange eyes. At our hides we have lighting system so no need for flashes! After a night in hide Goshawk might be back in morning light for breakfast.

Great Grey Owl



Black Grouse



Goshawk



Eagle Owl





Red Squirrel



Grey-headed Woodpecker

### Day 3 Eagle Owl and Spring birds

Mornign at Forest feeder for **Goshawk** after night with **Eagle Owl**. Mornign waiting for **Goshawk**. Breakfast at Villa Finnature and good day break.

Afternoon / evening session depends of the spring. We might photograph **Whooper Swans** – national bird of Finland - with beautiful sunset colors in Oulu river or we might visit nearby Liminka Bay, where impressive numbers of **Greylag and Taiga Bean Geese** and other waterfowl can be found feeding and wheeling around in large flocks. Other possibilities include various wonderful **Owls**. During our time in Oulu we might also visit in Finnature's famous **Golden Eagle** hides in Utajärvi.

Our guide will make the final plan according to the bird situation. We will follow the situation carefully during the spring and adjust the program with the latest information. During this time of the spring weather conditions and bird migration might vary greatly between the years.

### Day 4 Black Grouse and Eagle Owl

Like day 2. Early morning trip to **Black Grouse** hides, breakfast and break at Villa Finnature before heading to Forest feeder for **Goshawk** and **Eagle Owl**.

### Day 5 Eagle Owl and Spring birds

After early morning photography session in Forest feeder we head back to Villa Finnature for breakfast and well deserved break. In afternoon we take it easy and photograph from Villa Finnature's studio where many small birds are visiting. A good variety of **Great-, Blue, Willow- and Crested Tits, Bullfinches, Jays, Great-spotted and even Grey-headed Woodpeckers and Red Squirrels** might visit. Imposing **Goshawk** is the high light of this place. Those who wisht to have more relaxes afternoon can have well deserved rest while others can photograph. Or of course if there are **Owls** around we jump to our minibus and look for the owls. Maybe evening session for Whooper Swans.

### Day 6 Black Grouse and drive to Brown Bears

Our final day in Oulu region starts with a early session with Black Grouse. After a breakfast in Villa Finnature we head to Brown Bear site for two days.

Following a long hibernation through the mind: an almost insatiable hunger and a fervent desire to mate! Fortunately for us, this brings normally solitary Bears into close contact with one another, providing photographers with the rare opportunity to photograph a number of bears and, more importantly, some exciting interactions between them. In particular, photographing male **Brown Bears** expressing their naked aggression toward one another has got to be one of the most thrilling experiences in any wildlife photographer's career! Fortunately, with the spring daytime exceeding sixteen hours, there will be plenty of opportunities to photograph and observe Bears in the golden light of early morning and late afternoon. Once again, Bears will not be the only subjects of our attention during our stay in the area and we can expect to photograph several other smaller denizens of the surrounding forest.



Brown Bear

### Day 7 Brown Bears

After a night in a bear hide we will head back to accommodation for breakfast and a day break. Second night in Brown Bear hide.

### Day 8 From Bears to Wolves and Wolverines

After filling our memory cards with unforgettable images of **Brown Bears** and other animals, we move on to our final stop on this photographic extravaganza.

While this may be the last stop on our journey, it certainly is not the least. With a possibility to photograph **Wolves and Wolverines** this will no doubt be one of the major highlights on our tour! Our hides here provide us with the perfect vantage point from which to photograph these ferocious and charismatic beasts as they come to feed. Sometimes the feeding site is congested and a wolf and a brown bear or wolverine meet. Here we can get to capture unforgettable moments of the interaction between the species.

### Day 9 Wolverines and Wolves and more Brown Bears

After a night in a hide we will head back to accommodation for breakfast and a day break. Second night in hide for Wolves and Wolverines..

### Day 10 Departure from Oulu

After a final morning of photography we will drive back to Oulu where we say our final goodbyes.

For more pictures: [Finnature's Flickr Gallery](#)

**Price includes:** Finnature guiding throughout the journey, land transportation from Oulu airport to Oulu airport, accommodation, use of professional hides, half board

**Accommodation:** Clean and comfortable hotel and lodge accommodation with double occupancy and with shared facilities

**Food:** Local restaurants

**Leader:** Finnature guide

**Booking:** [shop.finnature.com](http://shop.finnature.com)

**Recommended flights:** We recommend to arrive to Oulu evenign with flight around 7pm and to depart from Oulu with evening flight around 5pm.

**Please notice:** The itinerary might change due to weather conditions or bird situation. Unfortunately we cannot guarantee any of the species, but our expert Finnature guides do their utmost to ensure the best possible photography opportunities during the tour.

**Official Package travel trader (Organiser) and Travel agent**

**Registration number:** 1193/05/Mj



Wolverine



Brown Bear and Wolves