



One Swedish meadow, two Eurasian lynxes, in 3 days

“It has eyes, seen by no other eye”

“It’s a shadow, the phantom of the forest. It moves, always unseen”

“I’ve lived in Sweden all my life. I’ve seen more than a thousand mammal species. I’ve never seen a Eurasian lynx”

“Guys, there’s a place in Sweden with a mother and cub Eurasian lynx present for several days now. I went there and saw them.”

“If I were you, go!”

The Eurasian lynx is a mammal species where most mammal watchers only dream of. They often don’t even bother with searching for it and hope to stumble on it one day. As far as I always heard, there are no places in their distribution range where lynxes can be seen from a lookout or hide. The wolverine hide at Era Eero had a lynx present once for several days. A few lucky Finnish people managed to see it.

All the advise I ever received was “spend as much time as you can in the right habitat and hope that you will be extremely lucky one day”. Oh nice! Because of this we traveled to Poland many times in search of lynx and other carnivores. Bieszczady mountains (SE Poland, bordering Ukraine) is a stronghold for this forest ghost. I’ve met people there who see them every year. They told us insane stories of lynxes sitting in their backyard at 10m from the kitchen window.

But after all these years, still no Lynx. When it comes to your nr 1 target species, it’s all about persevering right. In March 2011 Europesbig5 guided a tour in Spain for wolves and Iberian lynxes. There Jan and I met the famous mammal specialist Phil Telfer, who had managed to spotlight a Eurasian lynx in Poland several months before. We spoke about our shared passion for carnivores.

Meeting Phil would turn out crucial in the quest of seeing a Eurasian lynx.

Two months later –three weeks prior to leaving to Norway on a [mammal trip](#)- Phil contacted me. He had exciting news. One of his Scandinavian contacts had called him to report a mother lynx with cub being present on a Swedish meadow for several days now. He and Steve Morgan had left at once, and had seen it.

Immediately I made some calls to people who might be interested. No response... As usual it was easy leveling with my good friend Iwan. I spoke to Jan Kelchtermans, the only other person I know who had seen Eurasian Lynx, he told us to stop thinking and start driving. We decided to leave in the evening and drive through the night.

We had three days to drive the 2x 1700km, try to see the lynxes and get back for work. On the way to Iwan, my car broke down. This meant transferring everything into the infamous Nissan Sunny, also known as "wrecky" or "The phantom of Kessel-lo". Twenty hours later we were in Sweden, at the meadow where the Lynxes had been seen. Upon arrival we met an old friend, Henrik Lind (Club 300 foundation), with whom we had birded in Falsterbo several years ago.



A long drive North

At the lynx spot around a dozen lynx watchers were present. Normally Eurasian lynx is very shy, but the mother was reported to be approachable to 100-200m (usually seen at 300-400m). The cub was inexperienced and apparently photographed at no more than 40m. Mother lynx was teaching her cub to catch voles, probably she was learning her cub to hunt independently. This is very very unusual, two (temporarily) sedentary lynxes.

Everybody very nervous, scanning non-stop, but no Lynxes. The local Great grey owl –it where the owl watchers who found the lynxes- paid us a visit, nice indeed but no lynx.



Owl is coming



Nature photographer admiring Great grey owl at 30m



Great grey owl perched and looking for voles

Far too little hours of sleep later, we were back at the meadow. Nothing there. Another two hours later, I waddled to the car to eat something. In the corner of my eye I saw Iwan stressed out, grabbing for his scope. I left my bowl of frosties and ran towards him. He had caught a glimpse of what looked like a Lynx, but subsequently lost sight of it. A very intense atmosphere was now present amongst the few Lynx watchers. I think I had a heart rate of at least 150. Two minutes later, I noticed something moving in the grass, but I lost the animal as well trying to put the scope on it. Nerve wrecking! Moments later I was looking in the eyes of the adult female lynx... It was a MEGA



Adult female Eurasian Lynx



Probably the cub, moving along the forest edge



The cub, photographed a few days earlier at the same spot by Phil Telfer

We saw mother and her cub for about an hour. My picture is nothing special, but shows a wild Eurasian Lynx, which makes the photo very special.



Tired lynx watchers on the way home

“If this fails, it was the most stupid idea ever”. Iwan & Karl, Prior to leaving

Special thanks go out to Phil Telfer for letting us know.