

Cranes, owls and woodpeckers of Hornborga

Western Sweden is within easy reach of the UK and offers exceptional birding in early spring with large concentrations of Common Cranes at Lake Hornborga. In addition to the cranes this is an optimal time to search for several species of owls and woodpeckers, many of which will be on territory at the end of March. The area around Hornborga is dominated by a mix of agricultural land, huge coniferous forests, bogs and shallow lakes which attract a wide variety of birds and other wildlife.

Day 1: On arrival transfer to the small town of Skövde travelling along quiet roads passing through patches of forest and farmland. On the forest edge there is a good chance of locating Fieldfare, Eurasian Nuthatch, and the Scandinavian race of Long-tailed Tit, Marsh Tit and Hawfinch.

Days 2-4: Three full days to explore the delights of Lake Hornborga and several other areas within close proximity. Hornborga is one the largest lakes in Sweden, being fairly shallow and fringed with reeds and willow scrub. Our main interest is connecting with almost 25000 Common Cranes which rest on their journey north to breed. On the lake we should locate Great Crested, Red-necked, Little, Black-necked and Slavonian Grebes. In the reedbeds a sizeable population of

Dates

TOUR A: Wednesday March 23rd – Sunday March 27th 2022

TOUR B: Wednesday March 22nd – Sunday March 26th 2023

Leaders: Kent-Ove Hvass and Simon McLaughlin

Group size: 8

Birds: 75–100

Eurasian Bittern is present and with luck we should locate some birds giving their booming calls. Other species we may encounter include Greater White-fronted, Greylag and Taiga Bean Geese, Northern Pintail, Eurasian Teal and hunting White-tailed Eagles. On one day an early morning



Eurasian Eagle Owl
Photo: Kent-Ove Hvass



Common Cranes Photo: Kent-Ove Hvass

visit to the woodland bogs at Billigen may reveal Western Capercaillie, Black Grouse, Eurasian Pygmy and Tengmalm's Owls and the impressive Black Woodpecker. To the north is Lake Osten, another important stopover point where we have a chance of finding the rare Lesser White-fronted Goose whilst the reedbeds attract Western Marsh Harriers to breed. Lake Dattern is another area to visit where we may encounter passage waders in the water meadows. During late March we may find lingering visitors from further north including Golden Eagle, Rough-legged Buzzard and Northern Goshawk. The extensive forest also has scarcer species, notably Eurasian Eagle-Owl, Spotted Nutcracker, Common and Parrot Crossbills and, if it has been an invasion year, Northern Hawk-Owl and Great Grey and Ural Owls from the High Arctic.

Day 5: Depart from Skövde to Gothenburg via Torslandaviken, a vast bay fed by one of Sweden's largest rivers. The area is a noted migration hot-spot with a wide range

of waterbirds using it as a staging post including Whooper Swan, Common Eider, Common Goldeneye and Greater Scaup. Later in the day we transfer to the airport for flights back to the UK.

Prices

Ground Price: £1645; Tour B: £1745
 Single room: £ No Charge
 Deposit: £150
 *Air Fare: £150

This holiday is fully inclusive of flights, accommodation and meals, transport, permit fees, guidance, tips and taxes.

Not included: drinks, insurance, items of a personal nature.

* Please refer to our terms and conditions relating to flights