



Norway Winter Wildlife - 4th to 11th February 2012



Itinerary

Tour Leader: Paul Hobson

Day 1: We travel to Trondheim (we will advise you on our flight recommendations) where we will be met by our Norwegian Guide Ole Martin Dahl. Ole then drives with us (about 3 hours) to our base in Flatanger for the duration of the trip. If weather conditions and time allows we will stop off at a great location for wintering eider duck to get your photographic eye in. Over dinner we'll discuss the priorities and options for the coming days.



Days 2 to 7: The precise schedule will be very flexible based on a combination of the weather and individual priorities. We have potentially 2 hides for Golden Eagle and white-tailed eagle that will accommodate up to 5 of us. There are also 2 smaller hides that will accommodate up to 3 people. One of these offers forest birds (bullfinch, crested and various other tits, finches etc.) along with red squirrel. The other is for a pair of Goshawk's which have been visiting for the last three winters. We also have a trip planned to a Roe Deer and Moose feeding hide and a polar wildlife park to photograph captive Lynx, Wolf

and both Arctic and Red Fox. This will be a full day and will involve all of us. There is a fair amount of flexibility and personal choices to accommodate and we'll review our options on a daily basis. There's also the chance of a dramatic Northern Lights display any evening if conditions fall in our favour.





A note on hide practice:

Golden Eagles in particular are incredibly difficult birds to approach and photograph. It only becomes possible generally through the winter months when they switch their diet and search for animals that have died in the cold. It takes several years of regularly placing suitable bait (i.e. road kill deer) in a location for them to be remotely reliable in visiting the sight regularly - and that is what our guide in Norway has done for us. This location is probably the most reliable in Europe. Those years of work and effort can be destroyed very easily, as they remain incredibly wary birds - it is why we have to enter and leave the hides under the cover of dusk/darkness. Any association between people and the bait will mean the birds won't return. The same applies when they do arrive and we have the chance to photograph them. You must play the long patient game - quite a challenge if you've been sitting for several hours waiting for them to arrive. The birds must be allowed to settle first time of arriving before you start snapping. Movement and noise must be at an absolute minimum and you must have your camera on single shot mode - machine gun firing as the first bird lands will ruin the day and possibly the whole trip, not only for us but possibly for any others this winter too. If you have any concerns or questions about this then please feel free to call us.



Day 8: We are all booked on the same initial flight out of Trondheim and will head to the airport in the morning.

What to Bring

Our accommodation is clean and comfortable with all bedding and towels provided, so you simply need to bring yourself, any special dietary requirements you may have – please let us know if there's anything you can't/won't eat!! In terms of clothing you'll obviously need plenty of warm and weatherproof clothing. The vast majority of your time will involve sitting in extremely comfortable hides, but they will of course be on the cold side (inspite of the furs/sleeping bags that will be available) especially first thing in the morning. Small Heaters are provided and these warm up the hides very quickly. You don't need serious arctic gear for this trip but the following are very much recommended - a good pair of strong waterproof walking boots (walks to the hides and at the polar zoo will be through snow which can be several inches deep), good waterproof overtrousers (lined ones are best as they'll keep you warmer especially with a normal pair of trousers and some thermal leggings underneath). Dependant on how these 2 items fit together some gaiters can be useful as well. For the top half it's very much a question of having several layers - like a thermal type vest, t-shirt, thin jumper, fleece and then a waterproof coat with a spare jumper or two at hand as well dependent on how the day goes - you'll know your own cold thresholds but it really is a question of build it up in layers. A good hat, some fingerless mittens and then some warm waterproof gloves to go over the top (the former so that when you come to photograph your fingers can still work the camera) should be ideal. Temperatures can range between minus -20 to -10.



Camera Equipment

In terms of camera kit you'll need a tripod, the longest lens you have (500mm + converter would be my recommendation/choice) and then some supplementary lenses for other opportunities such as a 24-70mm for landscapes, I would suggest a macro lens of some sort and then maybe an intermediate zoom (70-200 or 100-400) so that you don't miss anything in terms of opportunity. You'll get the chance to decide what you want/need each morning anyway so you won't be burdening yourself with it all of the time.

If you don't have a 500mm lens it is worth exploring hiring one for the trip, it's not too expensive and the Canon 500mm or Nikon 200-400 with converter are approximately £45 per day plus a 20% discount if booked through Natures Images. Here is a link to the website: <http://www.theflashcentre.com/rental-department-faq-c414.html>



In the evenings we will have a chance to critique and look at individuals work if you wish so feel free to bring anything you'd like to share your images, either a laptop or memory pen/CD.

My contact number in the build up to and for the duration of the trip is **0114 2323699** or **07505351821**.

Paul





Registered Office:
4 Deer Park Drive,
Newport, Shropshire TF10 7HB
Tel: 01952 411436
E-Mail: sales@natures-images.co.uk
www.natures-images.co.uk
Registered in England and Wales No: 6635478
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