



Capercaillie Special

Photographic tour with tour leader Danny Green

6th - 13th May 2027

Trip Overview

Group size:

The trip accommodates a maximum of 5 guests.

Cost includes:

Airport transfers, accommodation, local transportation, all meals, and use of hides.

Cost excludes:

International flights, sundry items, alcohol and personal travel insurance.

Accommodation:

Our hotel type accommodation is on a twin room basis in typically clean and comfortable Finnish guest house/hotel. Single room supplements are available on request.

Level of fitness:

Photographing lekking Capercaillie involves arriving in your hide the evening before and awaiting their arrival at dawn for early morning photography. These hides are comfortable as we use wooden hides with a mattress for you to lie down in. There is a short walk to access the hides so no long hikes.

Level 2 - 3



Trip Overview



Along the Finnish and Russian Border lies an area of land as empty and as wild as it gets in Europe. Amongst this Taiga Forest roams some of Europe's most impressive and threatened mammals and birds. We have been running trips to Finland for many years now searching for the iconic wildlife of these wild forests. This is a new trip that we have put together and our target is the elusive Capercaillie. This is a very secretive bird and is rarely seen but in the spring during its breeding season it lets its guard down and it is possible to photograph the elaborate courtship ritual of this impressive bird. We have been trying to secure a slot for this very special week for several years now and are delighted that we have now been able to secure it as the week is critical for the activity at the Capercaillie Leks, where the females visit in big numbers and select the most dominant males. Our hosts have years of experience in working with Capercaillie and will have put the time and effort in selecting the right dominant male. We will be working from two different locations to give us variety in our portfolio. This trip is a great opportunity to experience the boreal forest as it begins to wake from the long winter months whilst working with one of its most elusive residents.

Itinerary



Day 1: We will fly out from our chosen destinations in the UK to Kuusamo in Finland via Helsinki where we will pick up our hire van for the short transfer to our base for the entire trip. (We will send out the flight recommendations nearer the time).

Day 2: Breakfast is served at the hotel and after breakfast, we have the day to look at each other's images and talk about what we expect from the trip and what to look out for during the photography sessions and take a rest ready for the long evening ahead. After an early dinner we will be transferring to the hides for our first evening in the hides. At this time of year, we have enough light until around 8.00pm. We must stay in the hides overnight, where a bed/mattress is provided for each person to sleep on. We can sleep for around 7 or 8 hours and then the light starts to improve around 4.00am. The Capercaillies start arriving to roost in the trees just before dusk right above there lekking arena and then during the early hours the male will drop down to start his courtship ritual. This can go onto to around 9.00am We then leave the hides and head back to our accommodation to have breakfast.

Itinerary

Days 3 – 6: After breakfast, we have a choice to either relax in our rooms or look at each other's images and do some processing techniques or critic some images. Again, after an early dinner we will then head back to the hides for our second evening. Hide etiquette is so important throughout this trip and one mistake by us could cost the group the morning's photography but might do so for the rest of the trip. Once you are in the hides you cannot leave until one of our guides comes to get us. You must have a certain type of endurance to do this trip. After our second night/morning with the Capercaillie it will be a case of heading back to our accommodation for a well-earned breakfast and then spending the rest of the day relaxing or sleeping. After an early dinner we will then head back to the hides to spend the evenings/night ready for the morning session. Food and drinks will be provided for the long night if needed.

Day 7: Afterwards we will have breakfast and relax and then get ready for our last session with the Capercaillie. By this time, you will be in a good routine, and we can then take stock of what we have achieved so far. The days are important to rest and relax and maybe spend some time looking at what images we have achieved and see what we could do differently.

Day 8: After our last session with the Capercaillie we will then head back to our hotel for some breakfast and pack our gear ready for the journey home. We will head to Kuusamo Airport for our flights back to the UK.



Things to bring



Our accommodation is very clean and comfortable with all bedding and towels provided so you simply need to bring yourself. Please let me know if you have any special dietary requirements. In terms of clothing, you'll obviously need plenty of warm and weatherproof clothing. Most of your time will be in the hides. The weather is unpredictable at this time of year, but it will be very cold at night. You won't need serious arctic gear for this trip, but the following are very much recommended - a good pair of strong waterproof walking boots, good waterproof over-trousers. For the top half it's very much a question of having several layers – like a thermal type of vest, t-shirt, jumper, fleece and then a waterproof coat with a spare jumper or 2 at hand as well, dependent on how the night goes - you'll know your own cold thresholds, but it really is a question of building it up in layers. A good waterproof down coat that is built for keeping out the wind chill is thoroughly recommended as temperatures could drop significantly at night. Temperatures could go down as low as -10.

A good hat and 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. I would suggest you bring lip balm as your lips can become chapped with the cold weather and a head torch to use inside the hides.

We are provided with coffee and sandwiches, but you may want to take along chocolate bars or biscuits to nibble on through the long night because you are in the hides for 14 hours but these can be purchased in Finland as we can visit a local supermarket. Once you are in the hides there is no going out to the toilet so be prepared to use a small chemical toilet.

You will need to bring your own sleeping bag for this trip. A good tog rating of around 3 – 4 is ideal. I also take an inflatable pillow.

Camera equipment



In many of the hides the Capercaillies can come very close, so a 70-200mm or a 100-400mm range zoom would be very useful for this trip.

For longer lenses, depending on the hide setting and the type of image you would like, anything from a 300mm to 500mm will work for longer reach.

A 100-400 type lens would cover a lot of bases, so it is a great lens to take for this trip. A gimbal for your longer lenses will be useful. The hides all have the larger 3/8 screw threads in them, so tripods are not required. You can screw your heads straight to the shelf in the hide. Smaller threaded tripod heads, for smaller lenses, will not fit the screw mounts available.

If you have a second body, this will be useful to avoid pulling lenses in and out of hide openings if bears are around. That way you can have one larger lens on a gimbal pointing out one opening and a smaller, mid-range zoom on a second body ready to go out of another.

You'll get the chance to decide what you want/need each evening, so you won't be burdening yourself with it all the time either. Camera support tripods are not ideal in the hides because of the space they take up but there are superb devices to attach your tripod head to the shelf, so make sure you can detach your tripod head if you want to use these.

Useful Contact Information

My contact number for the build up to and for the duration of the trip is:

Danny: +44 (0) 07951 945433



Please don't hesitate to contact me even if you think it is a minor question, I'm here to help.



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