

## Southern Sweden 22<sup>nd</sup>-23<sup>rd</sup> January 2000

### **Introduction**

After reading the Remco Hofland's trip report (see at <http://www.crosswinds.net/~birdtrips/Sweden00.html>) about a three days trip in Denmark and Sweden on 14<sup>th</sup>-16<sup>th</sup> January 2000, I decided to contact friends for joining me on such a mini-trip. Our aim was to see Hawk, Snowy and Pygmy Owl as well as Pine Bunting. We largely used internet and e-mail for preparing this successful trip. We traveled some 2,800 kilometer by car, the Northernmost place visited being Göteborg (West coast).

Since the Hawk, Snowy and Pygmy Owls and Pine Bunting have been there for quite some time now, one can expect these birds to linger for a while (and new ones to be found!). So, for the remaining of the winter '99/'00, this report might give you a good chance in finding these sought-after birds.

As said before, we traveled by car (Toyota Carina 2.0 E) and were able to drive fast, mostly in Germany, thus shortening the time spent travelling. Once in Skåne, the southernmost province of Sweden, distances between birding sites were short, so we didn't have to drive a lot there. Our car was equipped with LPG but don't think to buy LPG in Germany, Denmark or Sweden : that doesn't exist ! Hopefully, the prices of Euro Super and Super 98 were the same as in Belgium.

Weather : the temperatures were cold : about -5° C during the day, and around -10° C during the night. It has snowed before our arrival but the highway and main roads were already cleaned. Just be careful on secondary roads which were skiddy. Due to these severe meteorological conditions, we didn't see many duck species because of frozen lakes. Beware of the early time that the sun goes down: this is at about 16.00, but it doesn't get truly dark until about 17.30.

Maps : We used Michelin n° 987 for travelling from Belgium to the Puttgarden ferry and then the Michelin n° 985 for travelling in Denmark and southern Sweden. In a patrol station, we bought a very precise map (Röda kartan n° 20) titled Malmö costing us 120 swedish krön.

Timing : December-January are probably the best months to go there while February seems a little bit too late for wintering birds such as Owls. For professional reasons, we were obliged to take the departure on Friday and be back in Belgium on Sunday evening. This is short, very short ! You should take at least four days to be more relax once in Sweden. Due to the lack of time, we weren't able to scan large groups of Ducks at sea as well as Gulls flocks along the coast. One day is also required to look for more interesting forest birds.

The following Internet pages are important when preparing a trip in this area:

Danish bird news is available on <http://home5.inet.tele.dk/rolfc/> . This page is updated at least once a week, and is in English. Bird news from Skåne (southernmost province in Sweden) is updated (almost) daily on <http://www.skof.se/obs/sk.htm> . Bird names are stated in English and Latin. Swedish pager news, available almost immediately, is found on <http://club300.se/sokarlarm/sokarlarm.cfm> . First comes the national news, and then the regional news. 'Südlarm' gives you the news from South Sweden. Unfortunately, all info is in Swedish, so one needs a translator. I'll give you three names to start with: Fjäluggla = Snowy Owl; Hökuggla = Hawk Owl, and Sparvuggla = Pygmy Owl. Swedish news, with Swedish and scientific names, is found on <http://www.club300.se/> under 'aktuella obsar'. It is updated about once a week.

Finally, there is a site about Skåne bird sites: <http://www.skof.se/lok/lokframe.htm> . It deals with over 100 sites, but is unfortunately in Swedish.

We are gratefully to Pierre Unge (Malmö, Sweden), who sent us SMS-messages every time a new discovery was made in Skåne. His home e-mail-address is [pierre.unge@telia.com](mailto:pierre.unge@telia.com) . His daytime e-mail at office is [pierre.unge@ase.asgab.com](mailto:pierre.unge@ase.asgab.com)

Remco Hofland is also here thanked for his report rapidly published on Internet and for allowing me some copy of it in the present report.

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## Itinerary

### **Friday 21/01**

Left Mouscron at 18.15. Then Antwerpen, Eindhoven, Duisburg, Osnabruck, Bremen, Hamburg, Lübeck ...

### **Saturday 22/01**

Arrived at Puttgarden 0.30. The boat for Rødby Havn (Denmark) leaves every hour. we left at 0.45. Arrival at Rødby Havn 1.35. The combined two-way pass for the Germany-Denmark (50 min.) and the Denmark-Sweden (20 min.) crossings cost us (with Scandlines) 290 DM: that is for a car and 4 persons. Kopenhagen, Helsingør. Took the 4.30 ferry from Helsingør to Helsingborg (Sweden), and then the highway ('E 6') towards Göteborg. Arrived at Dagsås 6.30, where we slept in the car waiting for sunrise. We then rapidly found the Hawk Owl. Left this place at 8.30, arriving at Sandvik (Vicinity of Göteborg) at 9.50. Within the 10 next minits we found the Pine Bunting. We left Sandvik at 10.45 direction Glommen harbour, where we arrived at 12.30. We immediately found the 2<sup>nd</sup> winter Glaucous Gull there and 15 minits later the 1<sup>st</sup> winter Iceland Gull on the beach. Left Glommen at 13.30 to Gessie Villastad when just south of the Glommen village we found a large group of about 80 Redpoll feeding in a field. Within this group we found a probable Arctic Redpoll but unfortunately the group left quickly before we were sure of the ID. Arrived at Gessie Villastad at 15.00. First, no sign of the two Snowy Owls present for a while. We finally found them some 300 meters north of the reported spot. We left Gessie Villastad for our Hotel in Malmö at 16.45. We stayed at the Formula 1 Hotel (follow 'centre' until the highway stops: it is located next to the McDonald's), which cost 250 Swedish crowns per room (of three persons at most) (about 15 \$ a person when shared with two, like we did). We ate at the nearby McDonald's.

### **Sunday 23/01**

Got up at 6.30, left at 6.45. Arrived at Silvåkra at 7.30. We found the Pygmy Owl immediately next to the bird-tower viewing the Krankesjön-lake. Left the site at 8.30 to Ilstorp (another Snowy Owl previously reported there and a Arctic Redpoll reported the day before). Arrived at 9.00. Many Geese everywhere at this site as well as some Rough-legged Buzzard. Between a large group of Greater White-fronted Geese, we found two adults Lesser White-fronted Geese. Left Ilstorp at 9.40, arriving at Fyledalen at 9.50. where we saw plenty of Red Kites going out of their night roost. Next to Fyledalen we found two adults Golden Eagle perched on electric wires and saw 3 Great Grey Shirkes en route. Left this place at 10.30 to Helsingborg, arriving at 11.10. Boat to Helsingør (Denmark) at 11.30. Arrived at 11.50 and then go to Rødby Havn. Ferry to Puttgarden (Germany) at 14.35, arriving there at 15.30. Hamburg, Bremen, Osnabrück, Duisburg, Eindhoven, Antwerpen, Mouscron (21.10). Trip lasted 2830 km.

## **Where to find ?**

### **Pygmy Owl**

#### **Silvåkra**

Silvåkra is a very small village, located between two lakes forming a nature reserve, some 15 kilometers East of Lund, Skåne. Just 100 meters North of the church, one will find a parking lot with a birdtower viewing the lake Krankesjön (the tower is hardly visible from the road, but is indicated with a yellow sign "Fågeltornet"). Between the parking and the lake there is a narrow stretch of bushes and trees: we saw the Pygmy Owl beautifully there. The lake itself holds normally many ducks, geese, swans, etc. but was completely ice-covered when we were there so we didn't see anything special excepted some Bearded Tits calling from the reedbeds in front of the tower.

### **Hawk Owl**

#### **Dagsås**

Take the "E6" towards Varberg. We used the exit "Tvååker" (south of Varberg). Drive through Tvååker towards Åkulla. Find your way to Dagsås. After you reached Dagsås you come to the junction where the left turn leads to Varberg and the right/straight road to Åkulla (sign: Åkulla 10).

After this turn you drive 200 meters and then you turn left (north) onto a dirt road. You drive for about 150 meters until you reach a couple of houses. Then you take right and drive 300 meters. This is the place where the Hawk Owl usually sits on the telephone wires.

Just before you reach the field with the wires you see a small forest on your right with some parking spaces and a creek in front. The bird can also be in this forest, halfway the trees. (We saw it on top of a birch in this forest).

### **Snowy Owls**

#### **Gessie villastad**

Take the "E6" Highway from Malmö to Trelleborg. South of Malmö exit at "V. Klagstorp". Drive into the village Tygelsjö, don't turn anywhere but drive straight through the village and follow the road all the way until you see a village entrance sign "Gessie". Don't enter Gessie, before that sign make a right turn signposted as "to Gessie Villastad". Follow the road for ca. 2 km until you reach the village "Gessie Villastad". Drive through that village until you see the 90-degree-bend. Exactly from that curve is a footpath leading towards the sea. Follow the footpath for ca. 300-400 m. This is the usual spot but we saw the two birds 300 north of this place in a field with some horses.

### **Lesser white-fronted Goose**

#### **Ilstorp**

In search of a previously reported Snowy Owl at Ilstorp we found there large number of White-fronted and Bean Geese in which were the Lesser White-fronted Geese. This village is found some 15 kilometers SE of Silvåkra, just SW of Sjöbo. Next to the white church of Ilstorp, you take the dirt road going into the fields. Here around are the Geese. This is a good place for Rough-legged Buzzard. An Arctic Redpoll has also been seen the day before our visit, close to the church.

### **Pine Bunting**

#### **Sandvik**

NW of Göteborg. Follow signs "Hisingen", "Torslanda", "Öckerö" on Road 155. After several kilometers there is a round-about with a left turn to Andalen and Sandvik. First comes the right turn to Andalen, don't turn here, drive further and take the right turn to Sandvik. Save time and drive into that "Sandviksvägen". You can park 100 m before house no. 34. Behind the house is a feeder, sometimes the bird visits that place. Seems it is feeding on the ground, but the floor around the feeder is not visible from the road. The

house-owners don't like birders anymore to enter their property. Beside the feeder is a tree where most birds land before going down to feed. Here one can see the bunting. We saw the bird opposite the no. 34 across the road in a belt of bushes.

### **Iceland and Glaucous Gull**

#### **Glommen harbour**

This is a nice and small fishing harbor, situated on the west coast just north of Falkenberg, with lots of large gulls around, either in the harbor or on the beach and rocks just south of it. We saw the 2nd winter Glaucous Gull, present there for over two months, and also a 1st winter Iceland Gull. A possible/probable adult winter Kumlien's Gull has apparently been visiting this site for the past three winters. An adult male King Eider was seen there the previous week-end.

### **Golden Eagle**

#### **Fyledalen**

This is a small river valley, created by the 'Fyleån'. It has rather steep sides, aligned with big trees (oak and birch among others). This is the place where a couple of pairs of Golden Eagles breed, and they also stay in winter. We saw two adults perched on electric wires. This is also the place to be for large numbers of Red Kites, that sleep here communally. And several White-tailed Eagles also spend the night here. Mornings are probably best, because the birds of prey can be seen when they leave the trees, in daylight. No less than 300 Red Kites come here every evening!

To get to Fyledalen, follow road no. '19' for about 7.5 km NE of Ystad (situated at S coast). 1.1 km after Tomelilla (and the bridge crossing the Nybroån) take the turn towards Lyckås. One arrives at the S part of Fyledalen. Keep on driving until Lyckås' castle and follow the 'Fyledalen' sign. The S part can be viewed from the road, about 900 m N of Lyckås' castle, where there's an opening in the trees. Eagles and kites prefer the E part, especially when there are W winds. Three km past (N of) Lyckås, where the road crosses the river towards Tomelilla, is a concrete plate on the left hand side.

Directions are taken from <http://www.skof.se/lok/lokframe.htm> .

With more birding time in Sweden we could have visited some other sites like Torekov (west coast) for Black Guillemot, Landön and Tosteberga (east coast) for White-tailed Eagle and sea ducks species or the Vombsjön/Krankesjön area for White-tailed Eagle and other raptors.

### **Recorded birds:**

#### **Great Crested Grebe *Podiceps cristatus***

One bird in Helsinborg harbor on 23/01.

#### **Great Cormorant *Phalacrocorax carbo***

20 at Glommen harbor on 22/01 and 30 at Helsinborg on 23/01.

#### **Grey Heron *Ardea cinerea***

Two birds at Gessie Villastad on 22/01.

#### **Mute Swan *Cygnus olor***

Commonly recorded at several locations.

#### **Whooper Swan *Cygnus cygnus***

10 birds in Halland on 22/01.

#### **White-fronted Goose *Anser albifrons***

20 at Gessie Villastad on 22/01 and thousands (3-5000) at Ilstorp on 23/01.

**Lesser White-fronted Goose** *Anser erythropus*

Two adults amongst thousands of White-fronted Geese at Ilstorp on 23/01.

**Bean Goose** *Anser fabalis fabalis*

Several hundreds around Gessie Villastad and Malmö on 22/01 and some 2-3000 at Ilstorp at 23/01.

**Greylag Goose** *Anser anser*

Several at Gessie Villastad on 22/01.

**Canada Goose** *Branta canadensis*

Very common (thousands) at Gessie Villastad and around Malmö on 22/01.

**Mallard** *Anas platyrhynchos*

Commonly recorded at several locations.

**Eurasian Wigeon** *Anas penelope*

About 50 at Gessie Villastad on 22/01

**Common Pochard** *Aythya ferina*

Just one bird in a Tufted Duck flock at Helsinborg harbor on 23/01.

**Tufted Duck** *Aythya fuligula*

Several hundreds in Helsinborg harbor on 23/01.

**Common Eider** *Somateria mollissima*

Numerous at Glommen harbor on 22/01 and some recorded at several locations along the coast.

**Common Scoter** *Melanitta nigra*

One female at Glommen harbor on 22/01.

**Long-tailed Duck** *Clangula hyemalis*

Two birds flying north at Glommen harbor on 22/01 and a male in Helsinborg harbor on 23/01.

**Common Goldeneye** *Bucephala clangula*

Recorded at several locations along the coast.

**Goosander** *Mergus merganser*

10 birds in Glommen harbor on 22/01.

**Red-breasted Merganser** *Mergus serrator*

Recorded at several locations along the coast.

**White-tailed Eagle** *Haliaeetus albicilla*

One immature at Gessie Villastad on 22/01.

**Golden Eagle** *Aquila chrysaetos*

Two adults perched on an electric wire at Fyledalen on 23/01.

**Red Kite** *Milvus milvus*

25-30 birds seen in Ilstorp-Fyledalen-Silvåkra area on 23/01.

**Hen Harrier** *Circus cyaneus*

Two females at Gessie Villastad on 22/01.

**Rough-legged Buzzard** *Buteo lagopus*

1 at Silvåkra and 3 at Ilstorp on 23/01.

**Common Buzzard** *Buteo buteo*

About 50 were recorded

**Sparrowhawk** *Accipiter nisus*

Only one recorded at Gessie Villastad on 22/01.

**Common Kestrel** *Falco tinnunculus*

Regularly recorded.

**Common Pheasant** *Phasianus colchicus*

Recorded at Ilstorp on 23/01.

**Eurasian Coot** *Fulica atra*

Only recorded at Helsingborg harbor on 23/01

**Oystercatcher** *Haematopus ostralegus*

One bird found at Glommen harbor on 22/01.

**Black-headed Gull** *Larus ridibundus*

Commonly recorded.

**Common Gull** *Larus canus*

Recorded at several locations.

**Herring Gull** *Larus argentatus*

Recorded at several location but about 500 were seen at Glommen harbour and several hundreds at Helsingborg harbor.

**Great Black-backed Gull** *Larus marinus*

Recorded at Glommen and Helsingborg.

**Kittiwake** *Rissa tridactyla*

3 first-winter at Glommen harbor on 22/01.

**Glaucous Gull** *Larus hyperboreus*

A second-winter at Glommen harbor on 22/01.

**Iceland Gull** *Larus glaucoides*

A first-winter at Glommen beach on 22/01.

**Guillemot** *Uria aalge*

25 birds seen during the crossing Helsingborg-Helsingor on 23/01.

**Wood Pigeon** *Columba palumbus*

Recorded at several locations.

**Collared Dove** *Streptopelia decaocto*

Recorded around Malmö.

**Snowy Owl** *Nyctea scandiaca*

Immature male and immature female at Gessie Villastad on 22/01.

**Hawk Owl** *Surnia ulula*

1 at Dagsås on 22/01.

**Pygmy Owl** *Glaucidium passerinum*  
1 at Silvåkra bird tower on 23/01.

**Short-eared Owl** *Asio flammeus*  
3 hunting birds at Gessie villastad on 22/01.

**Great Spotted Woodpecker** *Dendrocopos major*  
Two birds at Dagsås on 22/01.

**Rock Pipit** *Anthus petrosus*  
One bird in Helsingborg harbor on 23/01.

**Meadow Pipit** *Anthus pratensis*  
3 birds at Gessie Villastad on 22/01.

**Pied Wagtail** *Motacilla alba*  
2-3 around Gessie Villastad and Malmö on 22/01.

**Wren** *Troglodytes troglodytes*  
1 heard at Dagsås on 22/01.

**Fieldfare** *Turdus pilaris*  
One bird near Dagsås on 22/01.

**Blackbird** *Turdus merula*  
Recorded at several locations.

**Great Tit** *Parus major*  
Recorded at several locations.

**Blue Tit** *Parus caeruleus*  
Recorded at several locations.

**Willow Tit** *Parus montanus*  
10 birds seen at on 22/01.

**Bearded Tit** *Panurus biarmicus*  
10-1 birds heard at Silvåkra on 23/01.

**Nuthatch** *Sitta europaea*  
Two birds heard at Dagsås on 22/01.

**Common Treecreeper** *Certhia familiaris*  
Two birds at Dagsås on 22/01.

**Great Grey Shrike** *Lanius excubitor*  
Three birds in Fyledalen on 23/01.

**Magpie** *Pica pica*  
Recorded at several locations.

**Nutcracker** *Nucifraga caryocatactes*  
One bird at Dagsås on 22/01.

**Jackdaw** *Corvus monedula*  
Recorded at several locations.

**Rook** *Corvus frugilegus*

Commonly recorded at several locations.

**Hooded Crow** *Corvus corone cornix*

Commonly seen everywhere.

**Carrion Crow** *Corvus corone corone*

One bird found just south of Glommen Harbor on 22/01.

**Common Raven** *Corvus corax*

15-20 recorded at Dagsås and 10 in Halland on 22/01.

**Common Starling** *Sturnus vulgaris*

Several recorded around Malmö.

**Tree Sparrow** *Passer montanus*

Seen in small number at Ilstorp, Göteborg, Fyledalen.

**House Sparrow** *Passer domesticus*

Recorded at several location.

**Chaffinch** *Fringilla coelebs*

One seen in Helsinborg on 23/01.

**Brambling** *Fringilla montifringilla*

2-3 at Göteborg on 22/01 and 1 at Fyledalen on 23/01.

**Redpoll** *Carduelis flammea*

A flock of about 80 birds just south of Glommen on 22/01.

**Arctic Redpoll** *Carduelis hornemanni*

One probable just south of Glommen on 22/01.

**Greenfinch** *Carduelis chloris*

Numerous seen at Göteborg on 22/01 and 10 at Fyledalen on 23/01.

**Bullfinch** *Pyrrhula pyrrhula*

10 birds at Ilstorp on 23/01.

**Hawfinch** *Coccothraustes coccothraustes*

One bird at Göteborg on 22/01.

**Yellowhammer** *Emberiza citrinella*

20 at Göteborg on 22/01 and 5 at Fyledalen on 23/01.

**Pine Bunting** *Emberiza leucocephalos*

One winter male at Göteborg on 22/01.

Mouscron, 25th January 2000

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