

## **Falsterbo ~ Mass Migration 30<sup>th</sup> August – 3<sup>rd</sup> September 2016**



By 8.15am we are by the lighthouse at Nabben, Sweden's 'Lands End', where we open the scoring with a low flying Marsh Harrier, swiftly followed by Spotted Flycatcher and Tree Pipit posing at the top of the same Birch tree, with Swifts overhead and Yellow Wagtails all over one of the golf course greens. Within minutes we reach the shore and enjoy close views of Arctic and Caspian Terns, while a flock of Tree Sparrows circles as if reluctant to head out to sea. Meanwhile, skeins of Greylags piling in from the direction of Denmark in their thousands are a spectacular sight. At the far corner of the golf course we join a small 'crowd' of birders for a grandstand view of the lagoon which is teeming with waterbirds including Pintail, Goldeneye, Shelduck, Avocet, Ruff, Spotted Redshank, Greenshank, Curlew, Dunlin, Little Stint, Curlew Sandpiper, Sanderling, Sandwich Tern, and Grey Plovers, still in smart breeding plumage, while a bright yellow Icterine Warbler shows briefly in the reeds right in front of us. Combing the nearby beach, we find Eiders, Turnstones, Common Seals and a Bar-tailed Godwit. Back at the car park we bask in the glorious sunshine while an unexpected Nutcracker flies slowly across the blue sky from right to left, and then minutes later retraces its route for a second fabulous fly past! What amazing timing. This is instantly 'bird of the day', and we complete a very productive morning with an aerial display by a Hobby over an 'al fresco' lunch outside a nearby café.

After lunch, the Flommens nature reserve produces several Wheatears, an incredibly tame Kestrel at very close range, and then an equally obliging Pied Flycatcher, along with Spotted Fly and several Redstarts. A couple of raptors approaching from the north become the vanguard for a procession of Honey Buzzards passing directly overhead, along with a Common Buzzard, an Osprey and several Sparrowhawks, while the resident Kestrels make five different raptors from this one spot! By now it's time for afternoon tea in another café, before we check out a new lagoon back on the Flommens reserve, where the waders include Greenshank, Common and Wood Sandpipers and at least 59 Snipe, bringing the tally for the day to a total of 75 species!

It's 1<sup>st</sup> September, and another beautiful warm sunny day as we head further afield for 'Operation Eagle Owl'. Our arrival at the quarry is greeted with a juvenile Marsh Harrier, with a rich golden cap, posing in a bush near the car park, while a Red Kite drifts lazily along the quarry rim scattering Stock Doves as it goes. A scan of the extensive quarry walls soon pinpoints our elusive quarry, a magnificent Eagle Owl sitting

quietly on a ledge, giving a marvellous view in the scope of its deep amber eyes, prominent ear tufts and deadly sharp talons. Mission accomplished! A little further east is Lake Krankesjön where new birds include Nuthatch, Marsh Tit, white-headed Northern race Long-tailed Tit, Kingfisher, a couple of Whoopers among a multitude of Mute Swans, and an impressive but restless Black Woodpecker. The watchtowers allow stunning views of a mighty Caspian Tern with a bill like a carrot, with several Ospreys soaring and diving for fish. On our way back to base, a family of four Cranes feeding in a stubble field is a nice bonus and a great end to another productive day.

It's yet another lovely sunny day back at Nabben where the usual suspects, including shedloads of Sparrowhawks, are joined by a vagrant juvenile Pallid Harrier, close enough to show the ginger underparts and diagnostic buff-coloured collar. Coincidentally we saw this mega rarity in exactly the same place last year! Strolling back towards the lighthouse a cluster of high flying Honey Buzzards catches our eye, while slightly lower is a larger finger-winged dark 'eagle' with a pale rump; a possible Spotted Eagle, but it veers away before we can be sure. Within half an hour, a steady flow of one hundred plus Honey Buzzards drifting slowly west towards Denmark, form a wedge spanning a good 45 degree panorama across the sky from leader to 'tail end'; a remarkable sight. Moving on, a glance back towards the lighthouse picks out three Nutcrackers battling against the wind blowing across the strait from Denmark.

Moving on to Ljungen, after another café lunch, we find another Hobby and plenty more water birds on the Angsnäset lagoon including a red Knot, which is new for the trip. The heath is alive with White and Yellow Wagtails, feeding around the cattle, while above the heath we count at least another forty two Honey Buzzards as well as another Osprey and a White-tailed Eagle which lands behind the trees lining the coast. There is no further sign of the eagle but another ten or so Honey Buzzards pass fairly low over our heads, so that by the end of the day we must have seen almost two hundred of these relatively scarce raptors!

It's our last day and the sun is still shining as we return to the lighthouse hoping to make a century, which we score with a Pheasant, quickly followed by Great Spotted Woodpecker. Other notable sightings this morning include one Hobby, three Ospreys, several Marsh Harriers, Sparrowhawks galore, some fifty Honey Buzzards and a flock of five Nutcrackers! With at least another fifty six Honey Buzzards this afternoon we must have seen well over three hundred in total, as well as nine other raptors! This rewarding short break in glorious sunny weather, complemented by the finest possible dining, produced some real 'top drawer' birds including White-tailed Eagle, Pallid Harrier, Common Crane, Caspian Tern, Eagle Owl, Black Woodpecker, Icterine Warbler, Nutcracker, and of course, all those wonderful Honey Buzzards.

