

# Birding Falsterbo, Sweden

19<sup>th</sup> – 22<sup>nd</sup> September 2003

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## Introduction

Falsterbo is home to the famous bird observatory, Falsterbo Fågelstation, on the southwestern point of Sweden. This is where the two coastlines of Sweden come together, forming a funnel that concentrates migrants looking for a continuation of their overland route southwards. The short crossing over the Baltic Sea to Denmark makes this location the best-known Swedish birding hotspot for visual migration especially raptors. It really is a classic birding destination.



Paul Beresford Andy Warren and Richard Taylor (R to L) spent four days here in September 2003. The weather was generally warm and sunny with light to moderate southwesterly winds, although the 21<sup>st</sup> was cold with some rain and a strong, mainly southeasterly, wind. Despite a foggy start, the 20<sup>th</sup> developed classic raptor conditions with very warm, sunny conditions and only light south-westerlies.

## Itinerary

**Friday 19<sup>th</sup>** – After a short flight from Stansted we made our way out of Malmo Sturups international airport around 09:30 and headed south-west to Falsterbo, stopping at various points along the way to view raptors passing on the same heading and along the coast west of Trelleborg. Arriving at Falsterbo just after 11.30, we stood on the small hillock (Kolabacken) by the golf club car park to watch the raptor passage until early afternoon and then walked to the point at Nabben which overlooks a shallow saline lagoon. (A long sandspit south of the point is called Måkläppen, but it is closed to visitors between 1<sup>st</sup> February and 31<sup>st</sup> October. However, its breeding and loafing birds can easily be seen from Nabben using telescopes).

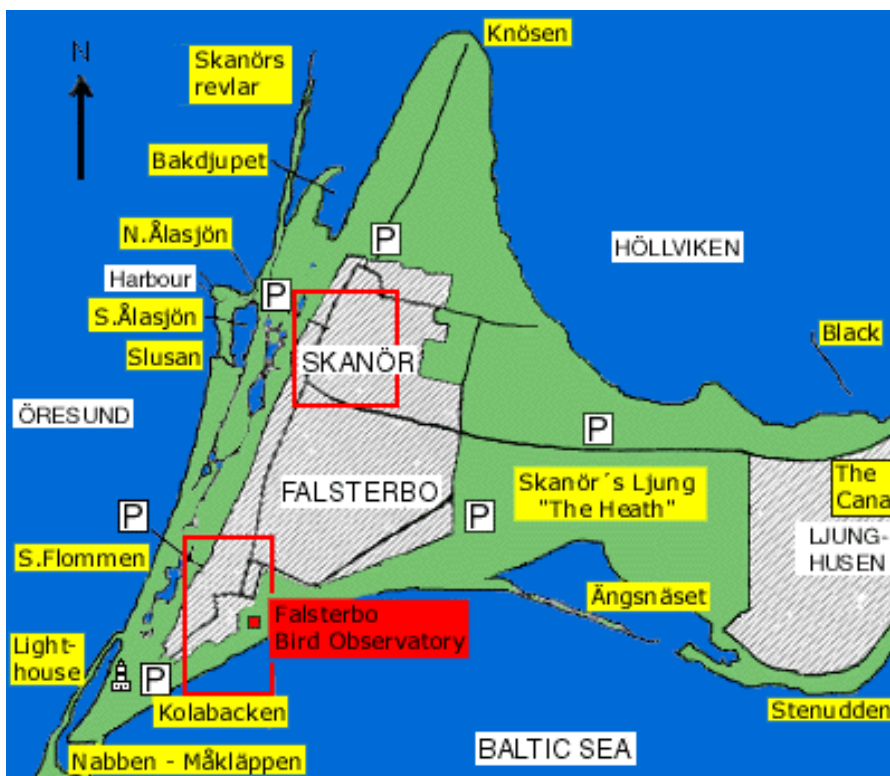
**Saturday 20<sup>th</sup>** – We were at Nabben by 07:10 and then walked around the reedbeds along the western edge of the peninsular (South Flommen). Fog moved in with very poor visibility until around 10:00. Arrived at Skanörs Ljung ("The Heath") around 10:45 and watched raptor migration passing over until 15:15. Walked along the coast at Knösen, the northernmost point of the Falsterbo peninsular, until 18:30.

**Sunday 21<sup>st</sup>** – Out at Nabben by 06:30. At 09:05 we started walking around the reedbeds and golf course at South Flommen. From 10:45 walked around the woods in Falsterbo by the church and the observatory. Then on to the lagoons in the Slusan/Ålasjön area west of Skanör until rained off, so returned to the youth hostel on

the southern end of the Falsterbokanalen. After lunch we met Lars Svensson and Heinrich Waldenstrom and they took us to Foteviken – a narrow point of land sticking out into Höllviken Bay at the start of the Falsterbo peninsular. Just off the map below, this is a good place for geese, Peregrine and Golden Plover. Finished the day off sea watching from near the hostel until 17:30.

**Monday 22<sup>nd</sup>** – Arrived at Dalby Forest at 06:45 (about a 30 minute drive north-east of Falsterbo). Left Dalby around 08:15 and arrived at Börtinge Lake (Börtingesjön – 5km east of Svedala and listed in Gooders) at 09:15. Drove down the (private) farm track and positioned ourselves overlooking the wooded promontory that stretches west into the lake. We subsequently met the landowner later in the day and he was not impressed that birders were driving down the track. He asked that we spread the word that there was no vehicular access, only on foot. Returned to Skanörs Ljung about 12:45 and at 14:30 walked around the lagoon and dunes south of the heath (Ängsnäset). Left the area around 17:00 to return in the direction of the airport with intention of checking out a few lakes. Only managed to find a viewing point at Fjällfota Lake. Ended birding around 18:00.

Map of the Falsterbo Peninsular taken from the web site [http://www.skof.se/fbo/index\\_e.html](http://www.skof.se/fbo/index_e.html) (Thanks to the Falsterbo Bird Observatory for permission to include this map): -



## Daily Diary

### **Friday 19<sup>th</sup>**

Left the airport at Sturups around 09.30 with **Hooded Crow** and **White Wagtail** as the first birds. Heading for Trelleborg, we very quickly picked up raptors flying in the same direction. Over the 25km to Trelleborg we saw 31 **Red Kites**, 3 **Marsh Harriers**, 9 **Common Buzzards**, 10 **Honey Buzzards**, 15 **Sparrowhawks**, 13 **Kestrels** and 1 **Merlin**. Other birds included c80 **Pink-footed Geese** and a steady movement of **Meadow Pipits**, **Tree Pipits** and **Chaffinches**.

A brief stop along the coast west of Trelleborg added **Common Scoter**, **Wigeon**, **Tufted Duck**, **Eider**, c40 **Coot**, 23 **Ruff**, **Dunlin**, **Redshank**, **Common Tern**, **Sandwich Tern**, 1 **Wheatear**, 4 **Tree Sparrows** and 80 **Siskins** moving through.

By 11:35 we were in position on the small hillock at Kolabacken in Falsterbo. In 2 hours, we saw 1 **Red Kite**, 3 **Marsh Harriers**, 5 **Common Buzzards**, 90 **Honey Buzzards**, 45 **Sparrowhawks**, 9 **Kestrels**, c10 **Merlins** and 1 **Hobby**. Other birds moving through included a group of 11 **Nutcrackers**, 10 **Yellow Wagtails**, a few **Bramblings**, **Willow Warblers**, **Blackcap**, **Goldcrest** and a (**Eurasian**) **Treecreeper**.

On hearing that a **Buff-breasted Sandpiper** (an annual Swedish vagrant) had been seen at the point (Nabben), we headed there and quickly picked it up feeding in the short vegetation of the salt marsh. This bird created quite a stir with the local birders and we witnessed a Swedish twitch, with pagers going and folk running for the bird. A good supporting cast of other waders included c20 **Ringed Plovers**, 5 **Grey Plovers**, c120 **Golden Plovers**, c100 **Dunlin**, c60 **Spotted Redshanks**, 2 **Greenshanks**, 6 **Curlew**, and a few **Common Snipe**. Other birds of interest included small numbers of **Shoveler**, **Gadwall**, **Pintail**, c35 **Common Scoter** (offshore), 4 **Red-breasted Mergansers** and a **Little Tern**. Raptor passage had slowed by 14:00 so we only recorded 2 **Honey Buzzards**, a **Peregrine Falcon** (a good Swedish bird for here), a **Hen Harrier** and 2 **Merlins** (including one catching dragonflies).



By the end of day, we had recorded 74 species.

### **Saturday 20<sup>th</sup>**

On the point at Nabben by 07:10 and checking out the bushes around the lighthouse. There was a heavy passage of passerines in progress including the amazing spectacle of 443 **Blue Tits** heading out over the Baltic in flocks as large as 96 and 75 birds. Unlike the finches they seemed less keen to strike out over the sea for Denmark and seemed to

wait to pluck up courage before springing out of the low growing wild rose bushes and reedbeds to head south. Also large numbers of **Meadow Pipits**, **Tree Pipits**, **Chaffling** (**Chaffinch** and **Brambling**) and **Siskins** as well as 175 **Sparrowhawks**. As the fog moved in and wiped out visibility, we moved to the reedbeds at South Flommen, finding a **Water Rail**, 2 **Sedge Warblers**, 6 **Bearded (Reedling) Tits**, 17 **Nutcrackers**, 2 **Great Spotted Woodpeckers** and a **Redpoll**.



With the sun prevailing over the fog, we moved to Skanörs Ljung about 10:45, spotting a further 12 **Nutcrackers** and a **Nuthatch** in Falsterbo village. In all there were over 150 other birders watching the raptor migration, most seated comfortably with telescopes pointing east. Some had even brought a picnic table complete with tablecloth! It was an extremely convivial atmosphere and very civilized birding indeed!

In the next 4½ hours, we were treated to near perfect conditions for raptor migration and counted: 2 **White-Tailed Eagles** (an imm. at 13:50 and a sub-adult at 14:45), 3 **Ospreys**, 154 **Red Kites**, 2 or possibly 3 **Black Kites**, 48 **Marsh Harriers**, 7 **Hen Harriers**, 3 **Pallid Harriers** (two immature ringtails and a sub-adult male), 210 **Common Buzzards**, 93 **Honey Buzzards**, 576 **Sparrowhawks**, 33 **Kestrels**, 7 **Hobby**, 1 **Peregrine Falcon** and 8 **Merlins**. Other birds moving over the heath included 31 **Common Cranes** (7 at 12:35, 17 at 12:45 and 7 at 14:15), a further 14 **Nutcrackers** (10+4), 23 **Stock Doves**, a **Cuckoo**, a **Crossbill** and a steady stream of **Meadow Pipits**, **Tree Pipits** and **Chafflings**. An English birder based locally informed us that this was a pretty good day and we were very lucky (or words to that effect!). Indeed, a Swedish couple with 40 years Falsterbo experience concluded that this was one of their best days ever.

With the raptor migration tailing off by mid-afternoon we moved to Knösen for a walk along the coast and adjacent farmland between Knösen and Skanör. Fairly quiet but we did locate a flock of 160+ **Barnacle Geese**, 4 **Greylag Geese** and c10 **Canada Geese**. On the sea were 4 **Great Crested Grebes** and a herd of c450 **Mute Swans**. Raptor passage was made up of 3 **Marsh Harriers**, 2 **Common Buzzards**, 2 **Honey Buzzards**, and at least 20 **Sparrowhawks**. There was a significant passage of hirundines, which included 1 **Swift**. Passerines seen included 4 **Wheatears**, 1 **Whinchat**, 1 **Redstart** and a **Goldcrest**.

### **Sunday 21<sup>st</sup>**

On the point at Nabben by 06:30 which was already crowded with expectant birders. Cold with a moderate southerly wind. Huge numbers of passerines moving through in swarms – mainly **Meadow Pipits**, **Tree Pipits**, **Chaffling**, **Linnets**, **Goldfinches** and **Siskins**, but also **Blue Tits** (flocks of 50, 35, 40 and 46) and at least 1 **Coal Tit** in with them. Also 161 **Stock Doves**, 71 **Starlings** and good numbers of **White Wagtails**, **Grey Wagtails**, and **House Martins**, with smaller numbers of **Sand Martins**. At its peak we estimated that the movement was in excess of 1000 birds per minute! We also

witnessed phenomenal **Sparrowhawk** migration. Between 06:30 and 06:35 we counted 100 birds and after 2½ hours we had counted 420! All morning and into the early afternoon there appeared to be a steady stream of migrants and the sky seemed full of birds on the move making a very impressive sight. A **Whimbrel** was seen down on the golf course, along with 6 **Marsh Harriers**, 1 **Hen Harrier**, 4 **Common Buzzards**, 5 **Honey Buzzards**, 14 **Kestrel**, 1 **Peregrine Falcon** and 1 **Merlin**. On the sea a **Black-throated Diver** and a **Red-necked Grebe** flew south and 4 **Brent Geese**. On the lagoon as well as the usual waders, we noted a **Black-tailed Godwit**, 3 **Sanderling** and 2 **Knot**, also 24 **Goldeneyes**. Noticing a distinct fishy smell in the air, we counted over fifty Atlantic Grey Seals hauled up on the sand about a mile down the peninsular!

We left Nabben around 09:05 to check out the reed beds at South Flommen and the gardens that back onto them. We had good views of c20 **Grey-headed Wagtail** (in reality all our Yellow Wagtail records are likely to relate to this race). Also in this area we picked up a **Wheatear**, a **Chiffchaff**, an immaculate immature **Lesser Whitethroat** and 2-3 fly-over **Crossbills**. We also recorded our second **Whimbrel** of the day here.

We left Flommen about 10:35 to check out the woodland around the observatory and the church. Very quiet other than a notable **Song Thrush** passage (20 birds) and 3 **Chiffchaffs**, 2-3 **Willow Warblers** and 2 **Goldcrests**. As ever, raptors moved through with 8 **Honey Buzzards** and 21 **Sparrowhawks**. This area gave the impression of the north Norfolk coast, Wells Woods for example, and seemed a perfect place to find exotic leaf warblers.

Moved to the lagoons at Slusan/Ålasjön around 11:35. Heavy rain showers at first but we did pick up a **Black-throated Diver** moving offshore. The lagoons held little (despite being an Avocet breeding location) but we did see 1 **Green Sandpiper**, 1 **Common Sandpiper**, 3 **Greenshanks**, 5 **Wheatears**, 7 **Skylarks** and were lucky to flush a loudly calling **Tawny Pipit** which we were unable to relocate after it appeared to land close by.

Around 14:00 we moved to Foteviken. The wind was now very strong southwesterly, with heavy rain showers and unpleasant to bird in. Good area for geese, with 605 **Barnacle Geese**, 43 **Brent Geese** plus a few **Greylags**. The only other noteworthy birds were 6 **Pintail**, 7 **Common Terns** and a **Whinchat**.

We finished the day off with a seawatch from the southern end of the Falsterbokanalen. A **Black-throated Diver**, a few **Common Scoters**, a **Kittiwake**, a **Little Gull** and an adult **Arctic Tern** were seen.

### **Monday 22<sup>nd</sup>**

Following information received from a helpful local birder, we headed for Dalby Forest arriving at 06:45. This half a square kilometre broad-leaved woodland is the smallest National Park in Sweden and is the best site for **Black Woodpecker** in the region. Within 20 minutes we located a male, joined shortly afterwards by a female. The three of us obtained superb views and were able to stand under the tree whilst the male shredded it, showering us with bark and sawdust! Also there, a **Green Woodpecker** heard, a **Great Spotted Woodpecker**, several **Nuthatches**, **Treecreepers**, and **Marsh Tits**, a **Raven**, a **Jay**, a **Redwing** and a small party of **Crossbill** flew over. In the scrub at the edge of the wood there were reasonable numbers of migrant passerines, including 9 **Blackcaps**, 5 **Chiffchaffs**, 5 **Redstarts** and c20 **Song Thrushes**. On leaving the wood, there were c10 **Tree Sparrows** by the car park and 2 **Fieldfares** flew over.

From Dalby Forest we headed south to Böringe Lake, following a tip-off by Lars Svensson that a Spotted Eagle had taken up temporary residence here. En route, we noted several groups of 50-100 **Lapwings** in the fields and also added 5 **Red Kites** and 4 **Common Buzzards**.

As we approached Böringe, we picked up 6 adult **Whooper Swans** heading south. Arriving at the lake around 09:15 there was little to be seen at first, just a few **Cormorants**, **Wigeon** and **Lapwings**. However, it soon became clear that this was a good migration watch point, with 222 **Greylag Geese** passing over in two groups, plus 30 **Brent Geese** and 3 **Barnacle Geese**. A steady movement of raptors included 3 **Ospreys**, 11 **Red Kites**, a nice **Black Kite**, 12 **Marsh Harriers**, a ringtail **Hen Harrier**, 40 **Common Buzzards**, 25 **Honey Buzzards**, an immature male **Goshawk**, 100+ **Sparrowhawks**, 20+ **Kestrels** and an adult male **Peregrine Falcon**. At 10:20 we located the bird of the trip – a superb sub-adult **Spotted Eagle**. We watched the eagle on and off for over 40 minutes as it flew over the lake and surrounding woodlands. At times it was mobbed by **Ravens**, **Common Buzzards** and a **Red Kite**, all looking tiny by comparison. Also here were 5 **Nutcrackers**, 7 **Ravens** and a few **Yellowhammers**.

We returned to Skanörs Ljung by 12:45 but it was relatively quiet. We recorded an **Osprey**, 6 **Common Buzzards**, 33 **Honey Buzzards**, 25 **Sparrowhawks**, 22 **Kestrels**, 3 **Hobby** and 12 **Merlins**.

At 14:30 we walked around the lagoon and dunes south of the heath (Ängsnäset) but a **Whimbrel** and the only **Oystercatcher** of the trip were the only noteworthy birds.

On the way back to the airport, a brief stop at Fjällfota Lake added a **Goshawk**, a **Merlin** and 2 **Ravens**.

The final bird of the trip was a **Tawny Owl**, which flew across the road at 19:44 as we approached the airport.



Discussing the finer id points of 3 Pallid Harriers with Lars Svensson & Henrick Waldenstrom .

## Systematic List

<b>Black-throated Diver (Loon)</b> <i>Gavia arctica</i>	21/9 – 1 south past Nabben. 21/9 – 1 passing off Slusan. 21/9 – 1 off the southern end of the Falsterbokanalen.
<b>Great Crested Grebe</b> <i>Podiceps cristatus</i>	20/9 – 4 on the sea off Knösen.
<b>Red-necked Grebe</b> <i>Podiceps grisegena</i>	21/9 – 1 south past Nabben.
<b>(Great) Cormorant</b> <i>Phalacrocorax carbo</i>	Very common, groups of several thousand on sandbanks off Nabben and Foteviken.
<b>Grey Heron</b> <i>Ardea cinerea</i>	Fairly common in groups of up to 6 throughout the Falsterbo peninsular.
<b>Mute Swan</b> <i>Cygnus olor</i>	Common in large numbers around the Falsterbo peninsular. 20/9 – c450 on the sea off Knösen.
<b>Whooper Swan</b> <i>Cygnus cygnus</i>	22/9 – 6 adults heading south near Börringe.
<b>Pink-footed Goose</b> <i>Anser brachyrhynchus</i>	19/9 – c80 heading south.
<b>Greylag Goose</b> <i>Anser anser</i>	Fairly common, particularly around the northern shores of the Falsterbo peninsular but also at Börringe Lake.
<b>Canada Goose</b> <i>Branta canadensis</i>	20/9 – c10 with the Greylags and Barnacles at Knösen.
<b>Barnacle Goose</b> <i>Branta leucopsis</i>	20/9 – 160+ at Knösen. 21/9 – heard passing along the Falsterbokanalen overnight. 21/9 – 605 at Foteviken.
<b>Brent Goose</b> <i>Branta bernicla</i>	21/9 – 43 at Foteviken. 22/9 – 30 moving south-west over Börringe Lake. Otherwise small groups of 1-10 moving offshore.
<b>(Common) Shelduck</b> <i>Tadorna tadorna</i>	Up to 3 birds on the lagoon at Nabben throughout with 2 at Ängsnäset.
<b>Mallard</b> <i>Anas platyrhynchos</i>	Common in all wet areas.
<b>Gadwall</b> <i>Anas strepera</i>	Up to 4 birds on the lagoon at Nabben throughout.
<b>(Northern) Pintail</b> <i>Anas acuta</i>	Up to 8 birds seen at various locations around the Falsterbo peninsular.
<b>(Northern) Shoveler</b> <i>Anas clypeata</i>	Up to 20 birds seen at various locations around the Falsterbo peninsular.

<b>(Eurasian) Wigeon</b> <i>Anas penelope</i>	Up to 30 birds seen at various locations around the Falsterbo peninsular and at Börringe Lake.
<b>(Common) Teal</b> <i>Anas crecca</i>	Up to 20 birds seen at various locations around the Falsterbo peninsular. The lagoon at Nabben held up to 100 birds and a few small groups were noted moving offshore.
<b>Tufted Duck</b> <i>Aythya fuligula</i>	19/9 – 2, on the sea west off Trelleborg. 2 on the lagoon at Nabben throughout.
<b>(Common) Eider Duck</b> <i>Somateria mollissima</i>	Groups of up to 20 at various points along the Falsterbo peninsular through to Trelleborg. 21/9 – several groups of up to 80 birds moving west off Nabben.
<b>Common Scoter</b> <i>Melanitta nigra</i>	20/9 – c35 moving west off Nabben. Otherwise, groups of up to 5 noted several times moving offshore.
<b>(Common) Goldeneye</b> <i>Bucephala clangula</i>	On the lagoon at Nabben throughout peaking at 24 on 21/9.
<b>Red-breasted Merganser</b> <i>Mergus serrator</i>	Up to 4 at Nabben, on the lagoon and moving offshore, on several occasions.
<b>White-tailed Eagle</b> <i>Haliaeetus albicilla</i>	20/9 - an immature bird at 13:50 and a sub-adult at 14:45 over Skanörs Ljung ("The Heath").
<b>Osprey</b> <i>Pandion haliaetus</i>	20/9 – 3, over Skanörs Ljung. 22/9 – 3, Börringe Lake. 22/9 – 1, over Skanörs Ljung.
<b>(Greater) Spotted Eagle</b> <i>Aquila clanga</i>	22/9 – a sub-adult watched between 10:20 and 11:00, Börringe Lake.
<b>Red Kite</b> <i>Milvus milvus</i>	19/9 – 31, on the journey from the airport to Trelleborg. 19/9 – 1, from the small hillock at Kolabacken. 20/9 – 154, Skanörs Ljung between 10:45 and 15:15. 22/9 – 5, on the journey from Dalby Forest to Börringe Lake. 22/9 – 11, Börringe Lake. Total for trip = 202 birds <i>Pers comm</i> Lars Svensson c900 pairs breed in this part of Sweden, Skåne.
<b>Black Kite</b> <i>Milvus migrans</i>	20/9 – 2-3, Skanörs Ljung 22/9 – 1, Börringe Lake.
<b>Marsh Harrier</b> <i>Circus aeruginosus</i>	19/9 – 3 on the journey from the airport to Trelleborg. 19/9 – 3, Kolabacken. 20/9 – 48, Skanörs Ljung between 10:45 and 15:15. 20/9 – 3, Knösen. 21/9 – 6, Nabben. 22/9 – 12, Börringe Lake. Total for trip = 75 birds
<b>Hen Harrier</b> <i>Circus cyaneus</i>	19/9 – 1, Nabben. 20/9 – 7, Skanörs Ljung between 10:45 and 15:15. 21/9 – 1, Nabben. 22/9 – 1, Börringe Lake. Total for trip = 10 birds

<b>Pallid Harrier</b> <i>Circus macrourus</i>	20/9 – 3, Skanörs Ljung. We picked up the first bird about 11.30, an immature ringtail. Although there was some debate amongst the three of us, Lars Svensson later confirmed our identification as he had seen the same bird. The second was half an hour later, a sub-adult male which was also seen at Nabben. The third was another immature ringtail and more straightforward to identify as the light was better. All three passed over the pines to the south of the heath.
<b>Common Buzzard</b> <i>Buteo buteo</i>	19/9 – 9, on the journey from the airport to Trelleborg. 19/9 – 5, Kolabacken. 20/9 – 210, Skanörs Ljung between 10:45 and 15:15. 20/9 – 2, Knösen. 21/9 – 4, Nabben. 22/9 – 4, on the journey from Dalby Forest to Börringe Lake. 22/9 – 40, Börringe Lake. 22/9 – 6, Skanörs Ljung. Total for trip = 280 birds
<b>(European) Honey Buzzard</b> <i>Pernis apivorus</i>	19/9 – 10, on the journey from the airport to Trelleborg. 19/9 – 90, Kolabacken. 19/9 – 2, Nabben. 20/9 – 93, Skanörs Ljung between 10:45 and 15:15. 20/9 – 2, Knösen. 21/9 – 5, Nabben. 21/9 – 8, near the observatory and church. 22/9 – 25, Börringe Lake. 22/9 – 33, Skanörs Ljung. Total for trip = 268 birds
<b>(Eurasian) Sparrowhawk</b> <i>Accipiter nisus</i>	19/9 – 15, on the journey from the airport to Trelleborg. 19/9 – 45, Kolabacken. 20/9 – 175, Nabben. 20/9 – 576, Skanörs Ljung between 10:45 and 15:15. 20/9 – 20, Knösen. 21/9 – 420, Nabben. 21/9 – 21, near the observatory and church 22/9 – 100+, Börringe Lake. 22/9 – 25, Skanörs Ljung. Total for trip = 1397+ birds
<b>(Northern) Goshawk</b> <i>Accipiter gentilis</i>	22/9 – 1, Börringe Lake. 22/9 – 1, Fjällfota Lake.
<b>Common Kestrel</b> <i>Falco tinnunculus</i>	19/9 – 13, on the journey from the airport to Trelleborg. 19/9 – 9, Kolabacken. 20/9 – 33, Skanörs Ljung between 10:45 and 15:15. 21/9 – 14, Nabben. 22/9 – 20+, Börringe Lake. 22/9 – 22, Skanörs Ljung. Total for trip = 111+ birds
<b>(Eurasian) Hobby</b> <i>Falco subbuteo</i>	19/9 – 1, Kolabacken. 20/9 – 7, Skanörs Ljung between 10:45 and 15:15. 22/9 – 3, Skanörs Ljung.

<b>Peregrine Falcon</b> <i>Falco peregrinus</i>	19/9 – 1, Nabben. 20/9 – 1, Skanörs Ljung. 21/9 – 1, Nabben. 22/9 – 1, Börringe Lake.
<b>Merlin</b> <i>Falco columbarius</i>	19/9 – 1, on the journey from the airport to Trelleborg. 19/9 – c10, Kolabacken. 19/9 – 2, Nabben. One observed catching dragonflies. 20/9 – 8, Skanörs Ljung. 21/9 – 1, Nabben. 22/9 – 12, Skanörs Ljung. Total for trip = c34 birds
<b>Common Pheasant</b> <i>Phasianus colchicus</i>	Odd birds seen here and there including one feeding on the beach at Nabben.
<b>Water Rail</b> <i>Rallus aquaticus</i>	20/9 – 1, in the reedbeds at Flommen.
<b>Common Moorhen</b> <i>Gallinula chloropus</i>	20/9 – 1, in the reedbeds at Flommen.
<b>(Eurasian) Coot</b> <i>Fulica atra</i>	A group of c40 on the sea west of Trelleborg.
<b>Common Crane</b> <i>Grus grus</i>	20/9 – 31, over Skanörs Ljung (7 at 12:35, 17 at 12:45 and 7 at 14:15).
<b>(Eurasian) Oystercatcher</b> <i>Haematopus ostralegus</i>	22/9 – 1, Ängsnäset.
<b>Common Ringed Plover</b> <i>Charadrius hiaticula</i>	Up to 20 on the lagoon at Nabben throughout.
<b>Grey Plover</b> <i>Pluvialis squatarola</i>	Up to 5 on the lagoon at Nabben throughout.
<b>European Golden Plover</b> <i>Pluvialis apricaria</i>	19/9 – c120, Nabben was the only significant count with odd birds seen flying over the Falsterbo peninsular throughout.
<b>Northern Lapwing</b> <i>Vanellus vanellus</i>	Groups of 50 – 100 seen throughout, in particular at Nabben, in fields around Dalby and at Börringe Lake.
<b>Red Knot</b> <i>Calidris canutus</i>	21/9 – 2, on the lagoon at Nabben.
<b>Sanderling</b> <i>Calidris alba</i>	21/9 – 3, on the lagoon at Nabben.
<b>Dunlin</b> <i>Calidris alpina</i>	Up to 100 on the lagoon at Nabben throughout. Small groups also seen along the coast west of Trelleborg and on the lagoons south of Skanörs Ljung.
<b>Green Sandpiper</b> <i>Tringa ochropus</i>	21/9 – 1, Slusan/Ålasjön lagoons. 22/9 – 3 small pond near Yddingesjön.
<b>Common Sandpiper</b> <i>Actitis hypoleucos</i>	21/9 – 1, Slusan/Ålasjön lagoons.

<b>Common Redshank</b> <i>Tringa totanus</i>	Up to 10 birds seen on the coast west of Trelleborg, the lagoons south of Skanörs Ljung and on the shoreline on the north of the peninsular near the Falsterbokanalen.
<b>Spotted Redshank</b> <i>Tringa erythropus</i>	Up to 60 on the lagoon at Nabben throughout.
<b>Common Greenshank</b> <i>Tringa nebularia</i>	Up to 3 birds seen at a number of locations around the Falsterbo peninsular.
<b>Black-tailed Godwit</b> <i>Limosa limosa</i>	21/9 – 1, Nabben.
<b>Eurasian Curlew</b> <i>Numenius arquata</i>	19/9 – 6, Nabben. 20/9 – c5 at Knösen.
<b>Whimbrel</b> <i>Numenius phaeopus</i>	21/9 – 1, Nabben. 21/9 – 1, Flommen. 22/9 – 1, Ängsnäset.
<b>Common Snipe</b> <i>Gallinago gallinago</i>	Up to 5 birds seen throughout the Falsterbo peninsular.
<b>Ruff</b> <i>Philomachus pugnax</i>	19/9 – 23, on the coast west of Trelleborg. Up to 4 birds on the lagoon at Nabben throughout.
<b>Buff-breasted Sandpiper</b> <i>Tryngites subruficollis</i>	19/9 – 1, Nabben. This bird was located on the 18 <sup>th</sup> and was still present on the 20 <sup>th</sup> , enabling many local birders to catch up with this wandering New World traveller. Several Dutch, Belgian and Danish birders were also seen in the scrum!
<b>Black-headed Gull</b> <i>Larus ridibundus</i>	Fairly common all areas.
<b>Common Gull (Mew Gull)</b> <i>Larus canus</i>	Scarce but seen throughout coastal areas.
<b>Herring Gull</b> <i>Larus argentatus</i>	Scarce but seen throughout coastal areas.
<b>Lesser Back-backed Gull</b> <i>Larus fuscus</i>	Fairly common all areas.
<b>Great Black-backed Gull</b> <i>Larus marinus</i>	A few seen off Nabben.
<b>Little Gull</b> <i>Larus minutus</i>	21/9 – 1, offshore at the southern end of the Falsterbokanalen.
<b>Black-legged Kittiwake</b> <i>Rissa tridactyla</i>	21/9 – 1, offshore at the southern end of the Falsterbokanalen.
<b>Little Tern</b> <i>Sterna albifrons</i>	19/9 and 21/9 – 1, Nabben lagoon.
<b>Sandwich Tern</b> <i>Sterna sandvicensis</i>	Up to 10 birds seen throughout the Falsterbo peninsular.
<b>Common Tern</b> <i>Sterna hirundo</i>	Up to 4 birds seen throughout the Falsterbo peninsular.

<b>Arctic Tern</b> <i>Sterna paradisaea</i>	21/9 – an adult seen moving close offshore at the southern end of the Falsterbokanalen.
<b>Stock Dove</b> <i>Columba oenas</i>	20/9 – 23, over Skanörs Ljung. 21/9 – 161, over Nabben.
<b>Common Wood Pigeon</b> <i>Columba palumbus</i>	Fairly common all areas.
<b>Eurasian Collared Dove</b> <i>Streptopelia decaoto</i>	Small numbers around the villages in the region.
<b>Common Cuckoo</b> <i>Cuculus canorus</i>	20/9 – a tail-less bird flew low overhead over Skanörs Ljung.
<b>Tawny Owl</b> <i>Strix aluco</i>	22/9 – 1 flew across the road as we approached the airport.
<b>Common Swift</b> <i>Apus apus</i>	20/9 – 1, Knösen with hirundines.
<b>Black Woodpecker</b> <i>Dryocopus martius</i>	22/9 – a pair, Dalby Forest.
<b>Green Woodpecker</b> <i>Picus viridis</i>	22/9 – 1 heard, Dalby Forest.
<b>Great Spotted Woodpecker</b> <i>Dendrocopus major</i>	20/9 – 2, Flommen. 22/9 – 1, Dalby Forest.
<b>Common Skylark</b> <i>Alauda arvensis</i>	Singles in the dunes at Flommen and Ängsnäset, 1 at Nabben and 7 at Slusan/Ålasjön on the 21 <sup>st</sup> .
<b>Sand Martin</b> <i>Riparia riparia</i>	Moving through Nabben in small numbers.
<b>Barn Swallow</b> <i>Hirundo rustica</i>	Continuous passage in significant numbers throughout.
<b>Common House Martin</b> <i>Delichon urbica</i>	Moving through Nabben in fairly large numbers.
<b>Tawny Pipit</b> <i>Anthus campestris</i>	21/9 – 1, Slusan/Ålasjön lagoons.
<b>Meadow Pipit</b> <i>Anthus pratensis</i>	Continuous passage in large numbers.
<b>Tree Pipit</b> <i>Anthus trivialis</i>	Continuous passage in large numbers, probably equaling Meadow.
<b>White Wagtail</b> <i>Motacilla alba</i>	Continuous passage, fairly heavy off Nabben on 21/9.
<b>Yellow Wagtail (Grey-headed Wagtail)</b> <i>Motacilla flava thunbergi</i>	Small numbers noted moving through the Falsterbo peninsular throughout. 21/9 – c20 feeding on the golf driving range at Flommen allowed the sub-species to be well studied at close range.
<b>Grey Wagtail</b> <i>Motacilla cinerea</i>	Small numbers passing over Nabben, particularly on 21/9.

<b>Winter Wren</b> <i>Troglodytes troglodytes</i>	Odd birds here and there, especially in gardens in Falsterbo.
<b>Duncock</b> <i>Prunella modularis</i>	Surprisingly the only records were 1 at the Observatory and 1 in the gardens at South Flommen.
<b>European Robin</b> <i>Erithacus rubecula</i>	Odd birds here and there, especially in the gardens in Falsterbo village.
<b>Common Redstart</b> <i>Phoenicurus phoenicurus</i>	20/9 – 1, Knösen. 22/9 – 5, Dalby Forest.
<b>Northern Wheatear</b> <i>Oenanthe oenanthe</i>	19/9 – 1, on the coast west of Trelleborg. 20/9 – 4, Knösen. 21/9 – 1, South Flommen. 21/9 – 5, Slusan/Ålasjön area.
<b>Whinchat</b> <i>Saxicola rubetra</i>	20/9 – 1, Knösen. 21/9 – 1, Foteviken.
<b>Song Thrush</b> <i>Turdus philomelos</i>	21/9 – c20, Observatory. 22/9 – c20, Dalby Forest.
<b>Redwing</b> <i>Turdus iliacus</i>	22/9 – 1, Dalby Forest.
<b>Fieldfare</b> <i>Turdus pilaris</i>	22/9 – 2, Dalby Forest.
<b>Common Blackbird</b> <i>Turdus merula</i>	Odd birds here and there, especially in gardens in Falsterbo.
<b>Blackcap</b> <i>Sylvia atricapilla</i>	19/9 – 2, Kolabacken. 22/9 – 9, Dalby Forest.
<b>Lesser Whitethroat</b> <i>Sylvia curruca</i>	21/9 – 1, in gardens adjacent to South Flommen.
<b>Sedge Warbler</b> <i>Acrocephalus schoenobaenus</i>	20/9 – 2, South Flommen.
<b>Willow Warbler</b> <i>Phylloscopus trochilus</i>	19/9 – 3-4, Kolabacken. 20/9 – 2-3, Observatory woodlands. 22/9 – 2, Dalby Forest.
<b>Chiffchaff</b> <i>Phylloscopus collybita</i>	21/9 – 1, in gardens adjacent to South Flommen. 21/9 – 3, Observatory woodlands. 22/9 – 5, Dalby Forest.
<b>Goldcrest</b> <i>Regulus regulus</i>	19/9 – 2, Kolabacken. 20/9 – 1, Knösen. 21/9 – 2, Observatory woodlands.
<b>Great Tit</b> <i>Parus major</i>	Odd birds here and there and small numbers with the Blue Tit flocks at Nabben.
<b>Coal Tit</b> <i>Parus ater</i>	21/9 – 1, South Flommen with Blue Tits.
<b>Blue Tit</b> <i>Parus caeruleus</i>	20/9 – 443, Nabben. 21/9 – 171, Nabben. These migrating flocks gave us a new perception of our familiar garden birds. We will not look at them in the same light again!

<b>Marsh Tit</b> <i>Parus palustris</i>	22/9 – small numbers heard, Dalby Forest.
<b>Long-tailed Tit</b> <i>Aegithalos caudatus</i>	21/9 – a group of 9 birds around the Observatory.
<b>Bearded (Reedling) Tit</b> <i>Panurus biamicus</i>	20/9 – 6, South Flommen.
<b>Eurasian Nuthatch</b> <i>Sitta europea</i>	20/9 – 1, in Falsterbo village. 22/9 – at least 2 birds in Dalby Forest.
<b>Eurasian Treecreeper</b> <i>Certha familiaris</i>	19/9 – 1, Kolabacken. 22/9 – at least 2 birds in Dalby Forest.
<b>Common Magpie</b> <i>Pica pica</i>	Up to 3 birds seen throughout, particularly farmland.
<b>Eurasian Jay</b> <i>Garrulus glandarius</i>	22/9 – 1, Dalby Forest.
<b>(Spotted) Nutcracker</b> <i>Nucifraga caryocatactes</i>	19/9 – 11, Kolabacken. 20/9 – 17, South Flommen. 20/9 – 12, in Falsterbo village. 20/9 – 14, Skanörs Ljung. 22/9 – 5, Börringe Lake. Total for trip = 59 birds all were of the thick-billed "Siberian Race" <i>N. caryocatactes</i>
<b>(Western) Jackdaw</b> <i>Corvus monedula</i>	Small numbers all areas with some groups moving off Nabben.
<b>Rook</b> <i>Corvus frugilegus</i>	Fairly common in farmland and roadside verges.
<b>Hooded Crow</b> <i>Corvus corone cornix</i>	Common all areas, especially farmland.
<b>Common Raven</b> <i>Corvus corax</i>	22/9 – 1, Dalby Forest. 22/9 – 7, Börringe Lake. 22/9 – 2, Fjällfota Lake.
<b>Common Starling</b> <i>Sturnus vulgaris</i>	Small groups passing throughout with 71 at Nabben on 21/9 being the largest group.
<b>House Sparrow</b> <i>Passer domesticus</i>	5 birds in a village south of Börringe Lake were the only birds.
<b>Eurasian Tree Sparrow</b> <i>Passer montanus</i>	9/9 – 4, on the coast west of Trelleborg. 22/9 – c10, in the car park at Dalby Forest.
<b>Common Chaffinch</b> <i>Fringilla coelebs</i>	Huge numbers seen passing through Nabben, particularly on 20/9 and 21/9. Certainly the most numerous passerine. We didn't count them (we could not keep up!) but the Observatory counted over 90,000 'Chaffling' on 21/9!
<b>Brambling</b> <i>Fringilla montifringella</i>	Probably the second most numerous passerine, moving mainly in flocks mixed with Chaffinch.
<b>Common Linnet</b> <i>Carduelis cannabina</i>	Passed through Nabben but only in a handful of small groups of c10 birds.

<b>Common Redpoll</b> <i>Carduelis flammea</i>	20/9 – 1, South Flommen.
<b>European Goldfinch</b> <i>Carduelis carduelis</i>	A few birds noted moving through Nabben on 21/9 with the 'Chaffling'.
<b>European Greenfinch</b> <i>Carduelis chloris</i>	Small flocks noted moving through Nabben.
<b>Eurasian Siskin</b> <i>Carduelis spinus</i>	Probably the third most numerous passerine, with several hundred moving through Nabben each day. Passage was particularly heavy early on 21/9 with several thousand birds.
<b>Common Crossbill</b> <i>Loxia curvirostra</i>	20/9 – 1, Skanörs Ljung. 21/9 – 2-3, South Flommen. 22/9 – a small group flying over Dalby Forest.
<b>Common Reed Bunting</b> <i>Emberiza schoeniclus</i>	Small numbers in the reedbeds at South Flommen.
<b>Yellowhammer</b> <i>Emberiza citrinella</i>	22/9 – c10, Börringe Lake.

**Total number of species recorded over the four days 138**

**Mammals**

Roe Deer, Brown Hare, 2 Polecat (road casualties), 1 Red Squirrel, c50 Atlantic Grey Seals.

**Butterflies**

Good numbers of Painted Lady, Comma, Red Admiral and whites.

**Dragonflies**

Southern Hawker (*Aeshna cyanea*) and Common Darter (*Sympetrum striolatum*) were seen all through the weekend. A Merlin was watched catching dragonflies out on the Nabben on the 19<sup>th</sup>.

## **Background Reading**

***Birding Southern Sweden*** Editor Anders Wirdheim [anders.w@ornitologerna.se](mailto:anders.w@ornitologerna.se) A Wetlands in Spatial Planning Interreg 11C North Sea Region funded publication. Came free with Birdwatch Magazine and also available from the local Tourist Info Centre.

***Where to Watch Birds in Scandinavia*** Gustaf Aulen 1996 published by Hamlyn/Bird Life International ISBN 0 600 58459 3

***Where to Watch Birds in Europe*** John Gooders 1974 edition ISBN 0 233 96620 X. This may be 30 years old but it had the spread of species seen absolutely spot on. This classic text along with S Bayliss Smith's ***Wild Wings to the Northlands*** and Alan Davidson's ***A Bird Watcher in Scandinavia*** along with the original Poyser ***Flight Identification of European Raptors*** grainy black and white photographs taken at Falsterbo inspired the three of us 30 years ago to make this pilgrimage & bird in Sweden.

Best Field Guide - ***Collins Bird Guide*** Killian Mullarney, Lars Svensson, Dan Zetterström Peter J Grant 1999 ISBN 0 00219728 6

## **Trip Logistics**

**Flights** – Ryanair out of Stansted. Departed 06:30 on 19/9 arriving at 09:15 (Swedish time) in Sweden – Malmo (Sturups). Returned on 22/9, departing at 22:00 arriving Stansted at 23:00 (UK time). These excellent early and late flights gave us full days in the field and no lost birding time. Cost £37 each. <http://www.ryanair.com/>

**Airport Parking** - £28 for the four days. <http://www.bookings@airport-parking-centre.co.uk/>

**Accommodation** – Our hostel on the southern end of the Falsterbokanalen, the Lotsvillans Hostel, was excellent costing approx £35 per night for a 3 bed room. <http://www.vellinge.se/> (The local Tourist Information Centre staff were very helpful).

**Car Hire** – We hired a Ford Focus for £47.00 per day including insurance, etc. <http://www.kasbah.com/>

So if you want, this trip can be done on a reasonably low budget. For four people over four days expect to pay £117.25 each plus food and petrol (we paid slightly more as there were only three of us). Despite popular myth, it is not expensive to eat out in Sweden and there are plenty of restaurants where a meal can be bought for under £5. (Current exchange rate 12.5 Swedish Kronor to the pound). The village to the east of the Falsterbokanalen had an excellent supermarket (Co-Op) with a delicatessen for picnic lunches. Just across the street is an excellent pizza place which served huge portions.

## **Final Comments**

This was a fantastic trip, seeing some excellent birds and in amazing numbers. Plenty of friendly Swedish birders were about, all of whom seemed to speak excellent English and knew English bird names. By talking to the locals we picked up sites for Black

Woodpecker and Spotted Eagle. It was interesting that birds were not called out as they would be in the UK when birding in a large group. We called out birds and soon created some repartee with those around us. It appeared that folk were perhaps nervous of miss-calling or are Swedish birders just more reserved? Better a bird be miss-called than missed!

To some extent we were lucky. In a four day trip it would be possible to not have the right weather conditions for good raptor passage. Falsterbo veterans say you need to book a week to be confident of having at least one reasonable raptor day. However Sweden deserves more coverage and recognition as an excellent place to experience some thrilling birding.

One aspect of the break that surprised us (and some of the visiting Swedes) was mosquitoes. In the dunes and reedbeds of the Peninsular and at Nabben, mosquitoes were present in plague proportions and they were biting very effectively. Apparently this was due to the long hot summer and was not typical. However, we still recommend you take good insect repellent just in case.

The Observatory web site is excellent for counts of sightings, site details, etc. – [http://www.skof.se/fbo/index\\_e.html](http://www.skof.se/fbo/index_e.html)

A final thought, for prolonged watching of the raptor passage, you might want to consider taking a folding chair. Many of the Swedish birders had chairs. We stood for 4½ hours one day at the heath and it was rather tiring!

**PB/RTT/ADW**  
**October 2003**

