

Oslo – 10th-12th March 2016

Introduction

This report covers a very short trip to Oslo, primarily a non-birding couple of nights away. The exceptionally cheap flights, just £20 return from London Stansted to Oslo Rygge, were the main instigators of the visit.

Having booked the trip I discovered [Simon Rix](#) online, and I arranged to spend a large part of the Friday with him. This proved a great decision, an enjoyable time out birding not too far from Oslo. As a result, I was able to obtain a trip list of 54 species. Given that spring had very much yet to get going in southern Norway, and that I spent less than 8 hours birding in what was essentially a city weekend break, it was a respectable tally.

Accommodation and transport

The Ryanair flight from Stansted to Rygge was delayed by an hour due to fog, but aside from that everything ran smoothly. A bus basically meets you outside the front door of the airport and takes you to Oslo central station for 180 kr, and from there trams, buses and taxis serve the rest of the city. The return journey was fine.

Accommodation, booked with Airbnb, was an extremely homely, spacious and well-priced apartment in the Grünerløkka area. This area was well located on the 17 tram line and close to the botanical gardens.

Books

There is limited appropriate literature on Norway, however given the trip was largely non-birding it wasn't necessary. My targets were based on what was around the Oslo area at that time of year, which was learnt via email exchange with Simon.

Itinerary

Thursday 10th April

Delayed landing at Oslo Rygge at 12:15. Arrive at accommodation at 14:15. Explore Oslo.

Friday 11th April

7am collection by Simon, followed by roughly 8 hours birding in the Oslo and Vestland municipalities. Return late afternoon. Visit botanical gardens around 16:00.

Saturday 12th April

Explore Oslo. Depart from Oslo Rygge at 18:25.

Highlights

Hawk Owl, Velvet Scoter, Willow Tit, Great Grey Shrike, Northern Long-tailed Tit, Eastern Bullfinch, Goshawk & Black Woodpecker (latter heard only)

Species List

1. **Mute Swan** – a few groups seen throughout on the 11th, including c.20 at Tønsberg
2. **Greylag Goose** – c.6 in and around Fornebu Bay on the 11th
3. **Shelduck** – 15 at Tønsberg and 1 in Fornebu Bay on the 11th

4. **Mallard** – seen on water bodies throughout
5. **Tufted Duck** – c.5 at Tønsberg on the 11th
6. **Eider** – 8 in Fornebu Bay on the 11th
7. **Velvet Scoter** – 2, a pair, in Fornebu Bay on the 11th
8. **Goldeneye** – seen at Fornebu Bay and Maridalen on the 11th
9. **Red-breasted Merganser** – c.8 in Fornebu Bay on the 11th
10. **Cormorant** – 1 in Pipervika harbour on the 10th and 1 over Fornebu Bay on the 11th
11. **Goshawk** – 1 heard in Maridalen on the 11th and 1 seen roadside near Rygge on the 12th
12. **Peregrine** – 1 on the Radisson Blu Hotel, Oslo, on the 11th
13. **Oystercatcher** – c.5 around Fornebu Bay
14. **Ringed Plover** – 3 at Fornebu Bay on the 11th were very early (the 1st local birds of the year)
15. **Black-headed Gull** – 1 summer plumage bird in Pipervika harbour on the 10th
16. **Herring Gull** – regular throughout
17. **Great Black-backed Gull** – good numbers at Fornebu Bay
18. **Guillemot** – 5 in Fornebu Bay on the 11th
19. **Woodpigeon** – regularly seen
20. **Stock Dove** – 10+ at Fornebu on the 11th
21. **Feral Rock Dove** – regularly seen
22. **Hawk Owl** – 1 very showy bird at Torp farm, Hageelva on the 11th
23. **Black Woodpecker** – 1 heard at Borrevannet forest on the 11th
24. **Green Woodpecker** – heard a few times on the 11th
25. **Great Spotted Woodpecker** – heard and seen a few times on the 11th
26. **Robin** – regularly seen
27. **Blackbird** – regularly seen
28. **Wren** – 1 singing at Fornebu Bay on the 11th
29. **Coal Tit** – seen and heard a few times on the 11th, continental type
30. **Blue Tit** – regularly seen
31. **Great Tit** – regularly seen
32. **Marsh Tit** – present at Torp Farm, Borrevannet and Maridalen on the 11th
33. **Willow Tit** – 2 at Berntsborg, Maridalen on the 11th
34. **Long-tailed Tit** – a flock of Northern type birds Dausjøelva on the 11th
35. **Bearded Tit** – 1 heard briefly at Fornebu on the 11th
36. **Nuthatch** – regularly seen and heard on the 11th
37. **Treecreeper** – regularly heard and seen on the 11th
38. **Great Grey Shrike** – 1 near Høyden on the 10th, 2 seen on the 11th (Barkåker & Maridalen)
39. **Magpie** – regularly seen
40. **Jay** – regularly seen outside Oslo
41. **Jackdaw** – regularly seen
42. **Hooded Crow** – very common
43. **Starling** – a small flock at Fornebu Bau
44. **House Sparrow** – regularly seen
45. **Tree Sparrow** – good numbers on the 11th including many at the Botanical Gardens in Oslo
46. **Chaffinch** – a few seen throughout
47. **Goldfinch** – a few on the 11th
48. **Greenfinch** – a few on the 11th including many at the Botanical Gardens
49. **Siskin** – regularly seen on the 11th
50. **Bullfinch** – regular on the 11th including 2 Northern/Eastern type at Fornebu & Berntsborg
51. **Hawfinch** – 1 heard flying over the reedbed at Fornebu

- 52. **Crossbill** – common in woodland areas on the 11th. Singing at Dausjøelva
- 53. **Reed Bunting** – 4+ at Fornebu
- 54. **Yellowhammer** – regular throughout on the 11th

Targets

Velvet Scoter – the simplest target bird, with a pair somewhat distant in Fornebu Bay on the 11th. Good 'scope views were obtained with a number of other seaduck present.

Goshawk – only heard on the 11th, with a bird calling twice near a nest site in Maridalen. A second bird was seen from a bus, near Rygge airport, on the 12th.

Hawk Owl – sensational views at Torp Farm on the 11th. A moment that will no doubt live with me for a very long time, views to pretty much the base of the tree it was sitting in were obtained for a good length of time. A special bird (and lifer), enough to make the whole trip worthwhile.

Willow Tit – 2 singing and active on feeders in Maridalen on the 11th, showing well. Now very hard to see in the south of the UK.

Dips

Pygmy Owl – the only dip, as it were, on the 11th. A reliable site failed to produce a local pair, and later searching in Maridalen also didn't turn up any.

Summary

As previously mentioned, for what was basically a weekend city break, it was a great trip. The Hawk Owl moment won't be forgotten, and added to some stunning scenery (always something I appreciate) and hard-to-get birds in the UK (Willow Tit, Velvet Scoter, Hooded Crow, Tree Sparrow) it was a success. With Ryanair one can get cheap flights to Oslo, and if affordable accommodation can be found and the services of Simon secured then I would thoroughly recommend visiting Oslo with non-birding partner/people. The highlight was certainly the Hawk Owl, with the Northern Long-tailed Tits also standing out. Pictures of the trip can be found [on my blog](#).