

PHOTOGRAPHY EXPEDITION



Capercaillie and black grouse in Tiveden National Park. Sweden

Lights and sounds of the taiga
forest in spring



April, 20-27th, 2026



A true adventure in search of two of the iconic species of the vast coniferous forests of northern Europe: the black grouse and the capercaillie. Magical nights under the lights and sounds of the taiga forest.



Capercaillie and black grouse in Tiveden National Park.



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SWEDEN

Lights and sounds of the taiga forest in spring



April, 20- 27th, 2026

8 days and 7 nights



Small group

Maximum 5 photographers



Tour Leader

Yanina Maggiotto



Local guides

David Tverling

Lovisa Larsson

OUTLINE

- Place of origin - Stockholm
- Tiveden National Park
- Capercaillie (1st session)
- Capercaillie (2nd session)
- Capercaillie (3rd session)
- Capercaillie (4th session) or black grouse
- Gallo lira (2nd session) or photography of species (loons)
- Return to Stockholm-Place of origin





We traveled to Sweden in search of two of the most representative species of spring in the taiga: the black grouse and the capercaillie. In April, both species are at the height of their mating season, when the males gather at display areas called leks where they compete for the attention of the females. Black grouse select open areas, while capercaillies establish their leks within the forest. Both arrive at these locations during the night to perform their mating dances at dawn and during the early hours of the morning. Therefore, in this experience, photographers are required to spend the night in these display areas, with carefully prepared logistics to enjoy one of nature's great spectacles.

Although the tetraonids will be the stars of the trip and the species that determine our itinerary, if the sessions are completely satisfactory and productive, we may be able to devote a day to other species characteristic of the taiga, such as the red-throated loon and the black-throated loon.



ITINERARY



Day 1 April 20th

Place of origin-Stockholm-Tiveden National Park

Reception at Arlanda Airport (Stockholm) and transfer to Tiveden National Park. Check-in at the Hamgarden hotel and dinner. There will be a welcome reception in the afternoon to explain the week's schedule and organisation, with particular emphasis on the rules for behaviour in the hide, which are essential for the success of the photography sessions. Useful photography tips and advice will also be provided to help you get the best possible results along the week.

Day 2 April 21th

Tiveden National Park

After breakfast, guided tour of Tiveden National Park to familiarize ourselves with the environment where the activity will take place, returning to the accommodation for lunch. In the afternoon, we will focus on preparing the equipment and materials for the first session before heading out to the photography location. From the point where we leave the vehicle, we will walk no more than 1 km to the capercaillie lek. Each photographer will set up in a hide tent prepared for spending the night. The session will begin around 4:00 p.m.

Days 3 and 4 April 22th-23th

Capercaillie (1st session)

Day 3: The capercaillies will arrive at the lek during the previous evening already in the darkness, although we will have to be patient and wait until dawn to start taking photographs. The session ends at noon (12:00-1:00 p.m.) with a coordinated departure from the hide led by the local guide. We will then return to the accommodation for lunch and a short rest before returning for the second session, entering the hide at 4:00 pm.

Capercaillie (2nd session)

Day 4: the previous day's schedule will be repeated. Second capercaillie session.

Day 5 April 24th**Capercaillie (3rd session)**

New capercaillie session (third session). In the initial plan, we will still have one more capercaillie session during the trip, although depending on the results of these first three sessions, the guides may propose a change in the program to devote the following days to the black grouse or even other northern species such as the red-throated loon and the black-throated loon.

Day 6 April 25th**Capercaillie (4th session) or black grouse**

Departure from the capercaillie hide (fourth session) at midday (12-1 p.m.) and return to the accommodation for lunch and a short rest, following the same routine as the previous days. On this day, we will alter the routine of the previous days to have dinner at 4:00 p.m. and leave for the black grouse lek at around 5:30 p.m. Night in a tent hide at the black grouse lek.

Day 7 April 26th**Gallo lira (2nd session) or photography of other Nordic species (loons)**

Departure from the black grouse hide at noon and return to the accommodation for lunch and a short rest. In the afternoon, photography of loons. Farewell dinner and night at the accommodation.

Day 8 April 27th**Return to Stockholm-Place of origin**

Breakfast at the hotel or picnic on the road, depending on flight departure times. Transfer to Arlanda Airport (Stockholm).



€ Price

€ 3.828/person *Double room

€ 4.048/person *Single room

Price for 2 people.

€ 3.020/person *Double room

€ 3.230/person *Single room

Price for 5 people.

INCLUDED

- Transfers throughout the entire journey
- Accommodation and full board
- Tour guide accompanying the trip
- Activities in hides, fully equipped for the experience

NOT INCLUDED

- Flight to and from the tour
- Drinks and personal expenses
- Services not specified.

Reservation Deposit

- Reservation Deposit: A non-refundable deposit of €1,350.00 is required.
Payment deadline: April 1, 2026.
- * Important note: The tour is guaranteed to run with a minimum of 2 participants.
- If the tour cannot take place due to a lack of participants, we will refund the deposit paid minus €100 to cover administrative costs.

Cancellation and refund policy

- If the participant withdraws after paying the deposit, €1,250 will be refunded (€100 is non-refundable to cover administrative costs).
- If you decide to cancel your trip, the refund will be made as follows: Between 2 and 1 month before departure: 40% refund.
- Less than 30 days before departure: no refund.
- If you decide to return home before the end of the trip, please note that we will not be able to offer refunds for the unused portion of the tour.

⚙ Tips and recommendations

Instructions for black grouse lek

Photographing black grouse and capercaillie in the forests of northern Europe in the middle of April requires carefully planned logistics. Below is a detailed description of the experience and equipment needed to photograph the both species.

Session time

Start time of sessions: 6:00-7:00 p.m. (depending on the time of year).
Duration: from 6:00 p.m. on day 1 to 12:00-1:00 p.m. on day 2.

Hide and night

To photograph black grouse in the lek, it is necessary to spend the night in the birds' singing area (or arena), known as lekking area in scientific terms. To do this, each photographer will set up inside a separate Tragopan Monal V2-type hide, from which they can take photographs while lying down at the birds' level. The ground is flat, and you will sleep and rest on a thick mattress. A pillow and a super warm down sleeping bag are also provided, which is used as a cover for the sleeping bag that each tour participant must bring with him.

Equipment

We recommend bringing a beanbag to use as a support for your camera. About lens, we recommend a 70-200 and a 400 or 500 mm for this species. The hides are located 10-50 meters from the birds.

Toilet and personal needs

There is a toilet in a separate tent that can be used during the night or in the morning after leaving the hide or after the birds have left the lek, at some point after 10:00 a.m. In any case, it is recommended not to eat or drink too much to minimize the need to use the toilet. It is also advisable to bring wide-mouthed urine bottles adapted for both men and women.

Journey to the lek

On the way from the accommodation to the hide, the guides will give the necessary instructions for using the hides, which are very important as they are the only way to guarantee the success of the photo-sessions. At this point, food and drink will be also provided for the session. We will also check that alarms have been set correctly to avoid sounds on mobile phones, and that all participants are connected via a WhatsApp group created specifically to maintain contact during the sessions (as it will not be possible to talk while in the lek). The route from the parking place to the lekking area runs through a very humid marsh area, so you should wear rubber boots and use walking sticks to help you balance as you walk. The distance to be covered is less than a kilometer, but it is important to follow the guide's footsteps at all times, especially in the vicinity of the singing area, where conditions are even more humid. For this walk, it is recommended not to dress too warmly, as otherwise you may sweat, which will make you feel cold later on. The pace will be slow, and the group will remain together at all times.

Installation and development of the session

To enter the tent, you must first sit down to take off your shoes with your feet outside the hide. Boots should be placed in a plastic bag inside the tent. You can then settle into the tent, prepare your equipment, and adjust the observation windows. Night will fall quickly while you listen to birds such as lapwings, golden plovers and cranes. Try to get to sleep early because the session will start very early in the morning (the alarms will go off at around 3:00 a.m. and a contact round will be made via WhatsApp to check that everyone is awake).

Still in the early hours of the morning and without light for photography, we will see that the birds are already taking up positions in the lekking area. It is advisable to observe the behavior of the birds at this time without trying to take photographs yet. If they fly away from the lek, be patient and wait for their returning (this may be due to the presence of a predator or any other reason). When it starts to get light, you can begin the photography session, first taking photos slowly and moving the camera when the birds are active. If they stop singing and pause, exercise extreme caution and wait motionless.

Instructions for black grouse lek

Hide exit

To leave the hide, we always wait until the activity has ended, which is usually around 10:00 a.m. At that point, the guide will check with all the photographers to make sure there are no birds left in the vicinity before giving the order to leave the hide. All equipment must be carefully collected, along with any waste and other personal items, leaving the hide exactly as it was found upon arrival.

Once outside the hide and away from the lek, lunch will be provided and you will be taken back to your accommodation to rest.

Instructions for capercaillie lek

Unlike the black grouse lek, the capercaillie lek is located inside the forest, with trees in between, and the birds move around much more, so you need to be patient and wait for them to settle in the right place for photography.

Session time

Start time of sessions: 4:00 pm.

Duration: from 4:00 pm on day 1 to 12:00-1:00 pm on day 2.

Hide and night

This experience uses 9 m² Caper hexagonal hides for single use. The hide has 6 windows, 3 of which can be opened simultaneously. For photography, you will remain seated in an office chair. The hide is very spacious inside, leaving room to move around and for a thick mattress to lie down and sleep on. A pillow and a super-warm sleeping bag are provided, which can be used as a cover for the sleeping bag or personal sleeping sheet.

Equipment

We recommend using 70-200 mm, 200-400 mm, or 500-600 mm lenses, as well as a tripod.

Toilet and personal needs

Each tent has a simple toilet system with bags that must be collected when leaving the hide. Wide-mouthed urine bottles will also be used.

Journey to the lek

On the way to the lek, instructions will be given on how to behave inside the hide. These rules must be strictly followed as they are especially important in this case, as one mistake can ruin the entire session. It will be checked that all alarms are set to vibrate without sound and that all photographers are connected via WhatsApp.

Next, we will begin a walk through the forest, no more than 1 km long, which will be done slowly and keeping the group together. It is important not to talk near the lek or while settling into the hide. For this journey, it is best not to dress too warmly to avoid sweating, as this can cause you to feel cold inside the hide later on.

Tips and recommendations

Instructions for capercaillie lek

Installation and development of the session

Once at the lek, each photographer will go to their pre-assigned hide. It is very important to have everything ready for the session at this point: camera and tripod set up, equipment in place, etc. Inside the hide, only three windows can be used at the same time to prevent the photographer's silhouette from being visible inside the hide. Once everything is ready, you must get into the sleeping bag and try to sleep. The birds will arrive in the late afternoon and make noise to alert the other males and females that they are in position. But at this stage, it is extremely important not to try to observe them through the windows of the hide or make any noise inside the hide, as this is a very delicate moment. If the males fly out of the lekking area, alerted for any reason, the session will be over.

The alarms will go off around 3:00 a.m., while it is still dark outside, to start the session. Keep an eye on your cell phone because there will be a map showing where the birds are moving, which will be very helpful in making the session a success. At this point, it is crucial to do things slowly and quietly. Capercaillies are much more wary than black grouse. Any noise or disturbance will cause them to stop, lie down, and wait for the next mistake to fly away or walk away stealthily... and the session will be ruined. If you need to cough, there is a trick to avoid it, which is to bite your tongue lightly to distract your brain. If you have a cold or a sore throat, it is simply not advisable to do the session, as the noise will prevent the birds from using the lek correctly.

As it starts to get light in the morning, the birds will become more audible and visible. Move the camera slowly and carefully and take photographs slowly, paying attention to the birds' behavior. If they stop, you must stop and remain still, and if they leave for any reason, you must stop and wait for them to return and resume their activity (depending on the disturbance, they often do not return that morning).

Hide exit

The procedure for leaving the hide will be identical to that described for the black grouse. From 10:00 a.m. onwards, we will check that there are no birds left in the singing area before proceeding to collect the equipment and all our materials, including waste, which we must take with us. All windows and openings in the hide must be closed and it must be left as it was found on arrival. Once away from the lek, a meal will be taken outside before returning to the accommodation to rest.

Clothing

In April, low temperatures are to be expected, so you should bring warm clothing for this trip. We recommend wearing rubber boots suitable for walking in wet and marshy areas but trekking boots are also useful for capercaillie lek). The clothing we wear in general should be waterproof to keep us dry at all times.

Accommodation

Hamgarden Hotel

<https://www.hamgarden.se/>

Comfortable accommodation on the shores of Lake Unden consisting of bungalows that can accommodate two people. There are also two hotel rooms in the main building.

Equipment needed

- Thermos with coffee, milk, or hot tea (protected inside a sock to prevent them from making noise).
- Cup for your drink
- Headlamp or flashlight
- Noiseless clothing (preferably cotton fabrics for outer garments):
- First layer: merino wool sweater
- First layer: merino wool pants
- Two pairs of merino wool socks (in case they get wet on the way to the hide)
- Warm wool socks
- Wool hat
- Thick wool sweater
- Warm wool pants
- Gloves
- Balaclava to cover the face
- Sleeping bag/sleeping bag sheet
- Rubber boots
- Backpack
- Camera and lens, batteries (spare batteries should be kept close to the body to protect them from low temperatures), memory cards, bean bag
- Other photographic equipment
- Toothpaste and toothbrush
- Wide-mouthed urine container (at least 2)
- Binoculars or telescope

All equipment should be packed in small bags or socks to prevent items from knocking together and making noise.

Important notes about the tour

Photography of the key species on this trip is done from a hide, following the specific instructions explained in detail in other sections of this document. Throughout the trip, we will have numerous opportunities to photograph very relevant and attractive species at close range with potentially excellent results, but it should be noted that these results depend largely on the skill and ability of the photographer, as the photography situations will be completely natural and spontaneous.

Please note that this program does not include arrival and departure flights from Stockholm Airport. These flights will be booked individually based on each participant's place of origin. It is important that the arrival time for the outbound flight is in the morning, before 2:00 p.m. in any case. As for the return flight, the departure time should be after 5:00 p.m.

Join our group on this exciting adventure in the forests of the Swedish taiga. An experience only offered in Spain through Wild Spain Travel.

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