

Blue Route (Tornionjoki River Route, Road E8)

The Tornionjoki River Route starts from the northernmost tip of the Gulf of Bothnia from **TORNIO** and proceeds northwards along Road E8 to Skibotn in Norway. The sediment-filled Alkunkarinlahti Bay is at the mouth of Tornionjoki River, and it is a significant nesting and gathering place for aquatic birds. There are two bird towers and lean-to shelters at this location (S: 7297826:372844; N: 7298321:372614). The readily-accessible Kaupunginlahti Bay (7306363:368934) is located between the city centres of Tornio (Finland) and Haparanda (Sweden); following its eutrophication, it has become one of the best sites for aquatic birds in Lapland. Lake Karunginjärvi is located some 29 km north from Tornio (bird tower: 7328241:364397). This lake is a protrusion of Tornionjoki River. The lake and its shoreline serve as an important resting place for aquatic birds, especially in the autumn. Canadian Goose (*Branta canadensis*) nests there.

YLITORNIO's Kainuunkylä Islands (7347626:3532386) constitute a diverse birdlife site during both migration and nesting. If you have time to spare, it is worth the effort to make a detour from Road E8 eastwards to Aavasaksa. Lake Portimojärvi (**10**) near Ylitornio is located close to the Aavasaksa-Raanujärvi road (road no. 932), some 10 km from Aavasaksa in the direction of Raanujärvi. Lake Portimojärvi is a regulated lake and one of Lapland's best bird lakes, both when birds are nesting and when migrating. There is a bird tower (7366082:362102) located along the north shore of the lake. To get to the Meltojärvi lakes (**11**; Lake Iso Meltojärvi - Lake Vähä Meltojärvi - Lake Pitkäperä) you need to drive eastwards from Aavasaksa for some 50 km; from Lake Portimojärvi the distance there is some 40 km (road no. 932). This location is a diverse nesting area favoured by many southern bird species. The service offering at the location includes two bird towers (Lake Iso Meltojärvi: 7381765:394319; Lake Pitkäperä: 7380777:395313).

Lake Pellojärvi (**12**) birdlife place of interestpoista is located some 4 km east of the village of **PELLO**. This site is a significant nesting and migratory location. There are two bird towers (Hannunranta: 7407237:369202; Pitkäniemi: 7407396:368004). The Hannunranta tower is also wheelchair-accessible, but getting to the Pitkäniemi tower is fairly difficult if there is a flood as access to it is arranged by means of a duckboarded path.

KOLARI has two interesting birdlife-tourism sites. Not far from the Ylläs Tourism Centre (**19**) are two bird towers, Äkäslompola tower (7502615:379447) and Ylläslompola tower (7489819:385627) and the Teura-Kivijärvenvuoma wetland areas (**20**), which also has two bird towers (Teurajärvi bird tower: 7473243:373560; Kurtakko bird tower 7473243:373560) located along the hiking trails. Lompola is a regional word meaning an enlarged part of a river, which looks like a small lake.

They provide nesting and gathering places for numerous aquatic bird species. The Ylläslompola bird tower enables access by wheelchairs to the lower level of the tower. The Teuravuoma site is provided with a fine network of hiking trails with duckboards and lean-to shelters. Teuravuoma mire is a place where numerous wetland bird species nest.

A detour from Kolari to **KITTILÄ** (Levi) bird areas requires taking road no. 939. The Kittilä district has several good wetlands supporting numerous bird species, e.g. Naatsukka-aapa (7565938:452746), Juustovuoma (7451784:396169) and close to Akanvuoma (northern side of the Sirk-



Snow Bunting (*Plectrophenax nivalis*)

ka-to-Köngäs road: 7527720:408825). Kittilä's best birdlife lake is Lake Munajärvi (7531452:411563) in the village of Köngäs. Muonio has two bird towers (Puthaanranta 7542218:360658 and Rukomasari 7543828:359455) on the shore of Lake Muonionjärvi (**21**). Lake Muonionjärvi is a diverse birdlife site both at migration time (especially swans) and during nesting time.

ENONTEKIÖ is home to Finland's most significant fjell birds' nesting area. There are several sites of interest from the viewpoint of birdlife-tourism at Enontekiö, e.g. Lake Sotkajärvi and Sotka-aapa aapa mire (**23**; bird tower: 7582163.346822) and Markkinajänk-kä-Hietajänkä mires (**24**; Mannakoski bird tower 7603965). Lake Sotkajärvi and its surroundings constitute perhaps the foremost site for aquatic birds in northernmost Lapland. Impressive views of the wetlands and their birdlife can be enjoyed from atop the Mannakoski bird tower, which is located along the main road. If your fields of interest also include marine birdlife, you can easily continue your journey into Norway (Skibotn).

Orange Route (Kemi-to-Utsjoki Route, Road E75; Road 4)

This route also begins from the northern tip of the Gulf of Bothnia (Kemi) and goes up into Norway, to the Varanger Fjord. The pools of water in Veitsiluoto are excellent resting places for migrating birds, especially in the autumn. Kattilanlahti Bay (7287396:392219) has a bird tower. Simo birdlife wetlands (e.g. Martimoaapa aapa mire; Lake Martimojärvi bird tower (7302278:417666) and Järviaapa bird tower (7303113:419093) are among Finland's best wetlands for observing



Ruff (*Philomachus pugnax*)

birds. From Kemi, this route proceeds to Rovaniemi. The vast riverside fields are favoured by large numbers of migrating birds.

ROVANIEMI has several bird sites and so there is the option of exploring the local bird-observation route. About 7 km before Rovaniemi town centre there is the Niskanperä field and bay area (**3**) on the eastern side of road no. 4. A local road 5 km in length leaves from road no. 4. The local bird tower (7371307:438146) offers nice views over the nearby bay of Kemijoki River,

which is a particularly good gathering place for waders during the spring migration period. Immediately after Niskanperä, road no. 4 crosses Kuolajokisuu (**2**), another gathering place for waders during the spring migration period. The numbers of birds at Niskanperä and Kuolajokisuu is affected by the presence of sediments, which are dependent on floods and the regulation of the river. The delta of Ounasjoki River (**1**; Koivusaari floating bird tower: 7377852:4437201) is an area where 150 bird species have been recorded, and about half of them nest there. Hundreds of swans rest here in September-October. The town centre, near the church, is where two small lakes Kirkkolampi and Harjulampi (**4**; bird tower: 7374714:443118) are located and they also attract birds. Harjulampi is a small lake, and close to 100 bird species have been recorded and it is home to one of Lapland's largest colonies of Black-headed Gull (*Larus ridibundus*). Peregrine Falcon (*Falco peregrinus*) favours this site in the summer looking for prey. The Harjulampi tower is also wheelchair accessible.

Having reached Rovaniemi, the zoo in **RANUA** is an interesting place to visit. About 25 km from Rovaniemi in the direction of Ranua (road no. 78) is the Kivitaipale Lake Kivijärvi birdlife wetland (**5**; 7356734:487246). The site lies less than 1 km east of the road, along a smaller road called Ulkulantie. It is a nesting place for numerous southern bird species. Also alongside



Siberian Jay (*Perisoreus infaustus*)

road no. 78 in Ranua is where Lake Portimojärvi (bird tower: 7331679:469345) is located. Another place of interest is Lake Kuhajärvi (**9**; bird tower 7309126:587239), which lies some 12 km from Ranua in the direction of Posio (road no. 941) in the village of Kuha. This lake is an important site during migration and nesting.

Having visited this site, you can carry on along road no. 941 towards **POSIO**. There are several interesting birdlife sites along the road joining Posio and Rovaniemi (road no. 81). The two foremost ones are Korouoma (**8**; 7341248:520500 end of the road then a path leading to the canyon) in Posio and Auttiköngäs rapids (**7**; point of departure of the hiking route: 7352051:509051) in Rovaniemi. Both are known to be sites where several demanding forest bird species occur, e.g. Red-flanked Bluetail (*Tarsiger cyanurus*), Arctic Warbler (*Phylloscopus borealis*), Greenish Warbler (*Phylloscopus trochiloides*), Wren (*Troglodytes troglodytes*), and Black Woodpecker (*Dryocopus martius*). In addition, Auttiköngäs is where White-throated Dipper (*Cinclus cinclus*) and Grey Wagtail (*Motacilla cinerea*) are known to nest. Both sites are provided with a good network of hiking paths.

When continuing along the road no. 4 Orange Route northwards from Rovaniemi towards Sodankylä, the next place of birdlife interest is within Napapiiri/Vaattunki ulkoilualue (outdoor area) (**6**; point of depar-



Ring Ouzel (*Turdus torquatus*)

ture for the walks: 7386462.460939, which includes Vianaapa (bird tower, 7384330:461931). This site is provided with a fine network of paths and lean-to shelters. The distance from Rovaniemi to this site is approx. 20 km. This is a site where species such as Three-toed Woodpecker (*Picoides tridactylus*), Rustic Bunting (*Emberiza rustica*), along with many typical wetland species, nest. In the winter, a fine site for observing White-throated Dipper (*Cinclus cinclus*) in its element along Raudanjoki River is east of the village of Vikajärvi and road no. 4. The easiest way to do this is from the bridge on the road joining Vikajärvi and Kemijärvi (road no. 82), some 100 m east from road no. 4. The outdoor recreation areas at both Napapiiri and Auttiköngäs include freely-accessible path.

SODANKYLÄ is along this route and there are two readily accessible and well-appointed bird observation sites (nature trails, duckboarded walks, lean-to shelters, bird towers). Viankiaapa wetland (**18**) lies some 20 km north of Sodankylä, on the eastern side of road no. 4. There are two bird towers (Kersilö bird tower: 7493557:491706; Siurunmaa bird tower: 7484473:493617). The site is a significant nesting area for many boreal aapa mire bird species. Road no. 4 crosses Ilmakkiaapa aapa mire (**17**) some 35 km north of Sodankylä. There is a lay-by at this point along the road, and a duckboarded path (300 m) leaves from there to Lake Ilmakkijärvi bird tower (7510226:489259). Lake Ilmakkijärvi is a significant gathering place for aquatic birds during their migration



Little Bunting (*Emberiza pusilla*)

period and the wetland area attracts many species characteristic of fertile aapa mires. Before these sites road no. 4 (E75) crosses Sattasjoki River, some 12 km north of Sodankylä. Good views open from the parking area over to the river delta on the west side of the road.

On reaching **INARI**, a place worth visiting is the mouth of Ivalo-joki River (**22**; Juurakko vuopaja bird tower: 7628770:526296). To reach this site, you need to drive some 8 km along the road from Ivalo to Nellim (road no. 969) and then turn north onto the Veskonieni road. The lay-by at Veskonieni is provided with information on how to get to the bird tower at a distance of about 1 km with some duckboarding along the path. Both southern and boreal bird species are attracted to this site, and the chances for seeing some rare Arctic species are fairly good. The presence of wetland bird species is influenced by the regulation of Lake Inarijärvi. On the southern side of the village of Kaamanen, in Tovionieni, there is a bird tower (7628770:526296) enabling numerous boreal aquatic bird species to be observed. Jurmukoski rapids (7638679:492577) in Inari is one of the foremost overwintering sites of White-throated Dipper (*Cinclus cinclus*) in Lapland. On the northern side of the road joining Kaamanen and Kari-gasniemi (road no. 92; **25**; 7331679.469345) there are several extensive and difficult-to-traverse wetlands with populations of nesting species such as Long-tailed Skua (*Stercorarius longicaudus*), Red-throated Pipit (*Anthus cervinus*), Bar-tailed Godwit (*Limosa lapponica*), and Lapland Bunting (*Calcarius lapponicus*). Mellanaava wastewater treatment plant site (619819:526151) is located at



Eurasian Dotterel (*Charadrius morinellus*)

a distance of 5 km east from the village of Ivalo along the road to Nellim (road no. 91) and north of the village of Akujärvi. It attracts a diversity of bird species at migration times. The site is locked, but you will be allowed to enter when you explain at the gate that you just want to observe the birds. The Nuorgam section of the road from Inari to Utsjoki is known for is occasional occurrences of many Arctic bird species, which have accidentally entered Finnish air pace by following Tenojoki River and Utsjoki River. The destination of this route, Varanger Fjord in Norway, has much to offer to bird enthusiasts as regards Arctic species, e.g. White-billed Diver (*Gavia adamsii*), King Eider (*Somateria spectabilis*) and Steller's Eider (*Polysticta stelleri*), Glaucous Gull (*Larus*

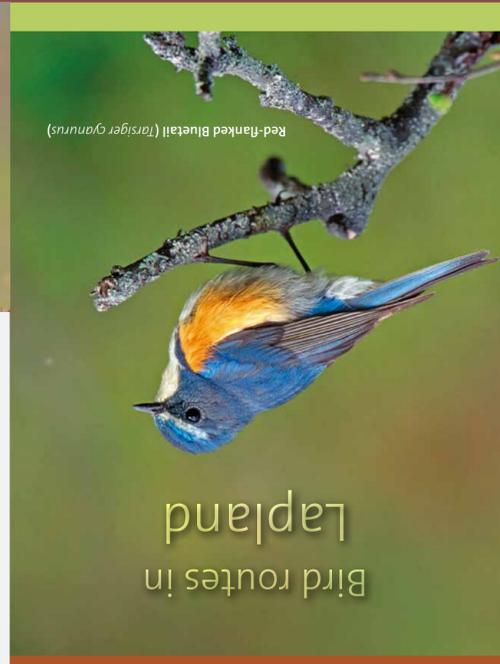


Rock Ptarmigan (*Lagopus muta*)

hyperboreus) and Iceland Gull (*Larus glaucooides*), Kittiwake (*Rissa tridactyla*), Arctic Puffin (*Fratercula arctica*), Brünnich's Guillemot (*Uria lomvia*), Little Auk (*Alle alle*), and Northern Gannet (*Morus bassanus*).

Eastern Lapland's bird sites are best approached via **KEMI-JÄRV**. It is less than 90 km from Rovaniemi to Kemijärvi. Road no. 82 (to Kuusamo) crosses Kemijoki River in the town centre of Kemijärvi. The parking area alongside this embankment stretch of the road (7399789:519935) offers good views on Lake Kemijärvi (**16**) birdlife areas. This parking area is located just 500 m from the town's church. This site is a significant resting area in the spring for waders and other aquatic bird species (the numbers of birds to be seen depend on the amount of sediments and these depend on floods and the regulation of Kemijoki River). Hundreds of Whooper Swans and other aquatic birds gather here in the late autumn. From Kemijärvi, it is easy to head for the bird sites of Pelkosenniemi by taking road no. 9643 from Kemijärvi's Kallaanvaara towards Pelkosenniemi and the north. The banks of Kemijoki River alongside Kostamo-Kummunkylä-Varrio form an important feeding area for Whooper Swans during their autumn migration. The mouth of Arvosjoki River (**14**; bird tower: 7438144:525183) is a significant bird-observation site during both migration and nesting. The road joining Pelkosenniemi and Savukoski (road no. 965) crosses Sokanaapa aapa mire (**13**), and the parking area there by the roadside is the departure point for a duckboarded path to the bird tower (7449452:524704). The bird tower is readily-accessible to wheelchair visitors as well.

You can also head off to birdlife sites in **SALLA** and **SA-VUKOSKI**. In Salla, Lake Termusjärvi's (**15**) bird tower (7418068:570490) is located northeast of the village of Salla. You need to drive about 500 m in the direction of Savukoski. Then turn left onto the Vallovaara-Ahvonselkä road, and you will come to a sign pointing to the bird tower. The tower provides good views of both the lake and the aapa mire. This area is rich in wetland bird species, e.g. Little Bunting (*Emberiza pusilla*). Savukoski is perhaps the only place in Finland where White-winged Crossbill (*Loxia leucoptera*) nests regularly.



Red-flanked Bluetail (*Tarsiger cyanurus*)

Bird routes in Lapland

"Bird Routes in Lapland" guides the reader to places of birdlife interest characterised by diverse and invaluable conglomerations of bird species during either migration or nesting. Finnish Lapland has much to offer to those interested in birds:

- The world's most diverse wetland / mire avifauna (e.g. *Jack Snipe* (*Lymnecryptes minimus*), Broad-billed sandpiper (*Limicola falcinellus*)
- Fjell bird species (e.g. Rock Ptarmigan (*Lagopus muta*), which in Finland nest only in Lapland
- Red-flanked Bluetail (*Tarsiger cyanurus*), probably Finland's most interesting bird species when considering birdlife tourism
- Significant gathering / stopover places of migratory birds (e.g. Whooper Swan (*Cygnus cygnus*), Arctic wader species)
- 312 recorded bird species, with 190 of these having nested in Lapland In the winter, there are 80 bird species to be encountered.

Additional information about places of birdlife interest in Finnish Lapland: www.ily.fi (Lintutorinit/P. Aalto), www.xenus.fi, www.tira.fi

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Graphics and layout: Mari Anteroinen Cover photo: Kuvalliteri / Markus Varesvuo



Capercaillie (*Tetrao urogallus*)

Kuvalliteri / Jorma Luhta

Spotted Redshank (*Tringa erythropus*)



Esa Huhta



Velvet Scoter (*Melanitta fusca*)

Markus Varesvuo

Red-necked Phalarope (*Phalaropus lobatus*)



Markus Varesvuo

Smew (*Mergellus albellus*)



Kuvalliteri / Markus Varesvuo

