# Finland

## Wolverine & Brown Bear



**Wolverines by Jari Peltomaki**

*The Wolverine and Brown Bear Extension takes us to central Finland, offering great mammal watching and photographic opportunities from specially built hides. The carefully selected sites provide almost daily sightings of both Wolverine and Brown Bear, whilst Eurasian Lynx and Gray Wolf are occasional visitors.*

## *Itinerary & Map*

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| **Day 1** | **Arrival in Oulu, transfer to Koli** |
| **Day 2** | **Koli to Lieksa** |
| **Day 3** | **Lieksa** |
| **Day 4** | **Lieksa to Viiksimo** |
| **Day 5** | **Viiksimo** |
| **Day 6** | **Viiksimo to Oulu & final departure** |



## *Sites in detail*



**Brown Bear by Jari Peltomaki**

**Oulu to Koli.** We have a fairly long drive of 350km (4 ½ hours) to Koli. Depending on our arrival time, we may have time to visit the Ukko Visitor Centre and explore the surrounds of Koli. We may find commoner species such as Fieldfare, Eurasian Siskin and Red Crossbill, or get lucky with Black Woodpecker or Hazel Grouse.

**Lieksa.** We will dinner in our hotel in the early afternoon, before making our way to the Wolverine hide near Kontiovaara. After some welcoming coffee and a briefing, we'll move to the Wolverine hides for the night. Outdoor snacks are provided for the hide stay, and there are bunk beds, sleeping bags and pillows for those who wish to rest during the night.

The Wolverine is a solitary and scarce animal that somewhat resembles the Honey Badger, or a small bear with a long tail. In Europe, Wolverines occupy only the northern regions of Finland, Sweden, Norway and Russia. There are between 270 and 300 Wolverines in Finland, with individuals crossing over the Russian border frequently. They have big territories and they can cover great distances each day, scavenging for anything edible. Voracious feeders, they can devour food quickly in big chunks – even their scientific name *Gulo* means glutton! Wolverines have a thick oily coat which is highly hydrophobic, making them resistant to frost.

Wolverine watching takes place during the light summer nights. By staying in comfortable hides overnight, you maximize the chances of seeing and photographing these beautiful animals. Wolverines can be seen all year round as they do not hibernate. However, we have timed our visit to optimise the length of light night to allow for the best visuals and photographic opportunities. Wolverine watching from comfortable log cabins and professional photography hides is an unforgettable experience within the animal's natural habitat. On occasion Brown Bear, Gray Wolf and Eurasian Lynx wander through.

We will depart the Wolverine Hide this morning and return to our hotel in Lieksa for breakfast and a rest. We'll have an early dinner again, before returning to the hide for a second night.

**Lieksa to Viiksimo.** We'll leave the Wolverine hide behind today and return to our hotel for breakfast and freshen up. Thereafter, we'll drive to Viiksimo, approximately 2 ½ hours away.

**Viiksimo.** We'll enjoy an early dinner at the Boreal Wildlife Centre in the mid-afternoon before heading over to the Brown Bear hides at around 16:00. The Brown bear hide is similar to the ones we've already experienced so far.

Brown Bears are the largest predators in Europe, feeding on nearly anything they can catch, from wild berries to fish and mammals. Males can weigh upwards of 300kg's (660lbs). Despite their large size,



**Viewing Hide by Erä-Eero**

Brown Bears are agile, and males can travel hundreds of kilometers in a short period of time whilst females and cubs stay on smaller territories.

Brown Bears are nocturnal, and like Wolverines - most active during light summer nights. Our stay in the comfortable hide designed for bear watching gives us excellent chances of spotting wild Brown Bears – sometimes just meters away from you! From spring to autumn, Brown Bears visit the viewing sites regularly and empty nights are very uncommon. Sometimes female Brown Bears will even bring their cubs to the hides.

We will depart the Brown Bear Hide and return to the Boreal Wildlife Centre for breakfast and a rest. After an early dinner, we'll return to the hide for our final night.

**Viiksimo to Oulu.** We'll depart the Brown Bear Hide for the final time today, return to the Boreal Wildlife Centre for breakfast. Thereafter we'll transfer to Oulu (approximately a 4 hour drive).

## *Tour Grading & Key*

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| **Overall Ease** | ■ ■ ■ | Suitable for all birding / wildlife interest levels. |
| **Birding Ease** | ■ ■ ■ | Moderate to undemanding. |
| **Accommodation** | ■ ■ ■ | Comfortable. |
| **Walking / Trails** | ■ ■ ■ | Reasonably easy. Most walks on flat ground, paved/gravel roads. Majority of time spent in hides. |
| **Vehicles / Roads** | ■ ■ ■ | Good quality sealed roads & unsealed dirt roads. |
| **Photography** | ■ ■ ■ | Excellent. |
| **Annoyances** | ■ ■ ■ | Weather is variable, shifting quickly from mild to cold, or very cold due to wind chill. Small biting insects can be numerous under the right weather conditions. |

## *Financial Arrangements and Important Notes*

**This tour is made available through our Tailor-made tours department. To explore this offering further for pricing, precise day to day itinerary, inclusions & exclusions, or to tailor the tour to your personal requirements, please contact our Tailor-made team on tailormade@rockjumper.com**

**Single Supplement**: The single supplement cost for this tour will be charged if you wish to have single accommodation. If RBL cannot provide you with a rooming partner for these nights although you choose to share, the single supplement will become applicable. We will make all reasonable efforts to ensure that a rooming partner is found if you do wish to share.

- **Due to constantly fluctuating exchange rates, we quote our tours in 4 currencies. The tour price is fixed only in the currency printed in bold, and the actual cost in the other currencies listed will be adjusted according to prevailing exchange rates at the time of final invoicing. The same applies to approximate flight and single supplement rates.**
- **Rates are based upon group tariffs; if the tour does not have sufficient registrations, a small group supplement will be offered to confirm the tour.**
- **Tour prices are subject to unforeseen increases in tour related costs and may have to be adjusted as a result.**
- **The designated tour leader/s may be changed at short due to unforeseen circumstances.**

- **The itinerary is indicative only. Changes may need to be made to the order in which the tour is conducted, or some of the venues we visit closer to departure. We will attempt to adhere as close to the original program as possible.**

- *Four nights are spent in specially built mammal watching hides. Outdoor snacks are provided for the hide stay. There are bunk beds, sleeping bags and pillows for those who wish to rest during the night. We will return to hotels in the morning for breakfast, showers, and a rest before returning to the hides in the early afternoon. There will be no birding/mammal watching during this time.*

## *Arrival and Departure Details*

The tour begins around mid-day on day 1 at Oulu Airport with a group transfer to Koli and will conclude at Oulu Airport in the mid-morning of day 6.

The above information in respect of arrivals and departures is a guide only. Precise arrival and departure information will be sent to you in your Tour Confirmation package once the tour has been officially confirmed. If you wish to arrive early and/or depart late and would like assistance in this regard, kindly contact the Rockjumper office.

Oulu Airport (IATA: OUL) is well connected to Helsinki International Airport (IATA: HEL), the main international port of entry into Finland for this tour.

Visa requirements differ by country, nationality of the traveller and duration and purpose of your intended stay. It may be necessary to obtain a visa or an electronic travel authorization in advance of your travel. It is therefore vitally important that you check with your travel agent/consulate/embassy for exact visa requirements.

**DO NOT book any flights until the Rockjumper Team have officially confirmed the tour.**