

Finland

Midsummer Boreal Mammals

July 20 to 31, 2026



Wolverine

SAFARI OVERVIEW

This adventure takes you deep into **Finland's remote wilderness** to witness some of Europe's most iconic and elusive wildlife. Spend five nights in comfortable blinds for unforgettable encounters with **brown bears** and the **rare wolverine**, while keeping watch for wolves, eagles, and ravens. Explore Kuhmo and Lieksa, where the dense forests are also home to forest reindeer, mountain hare, Common Crane, Western Capercaillie, and Black Grouse. Between wildlife sessions, enjoy peaceful lakeside settings, a walk in Patvinsuo National Park, one of Europe's most unique, raised bogs varied with great open mires and beautiful sandy beaches. Visit a luxurious spa resort near the idyllic Lake Saimaa in Linnansaari National Park. With Helsinki's charm, this itinerary offers the perfect blend of predator-focused photography, classic Nordic wildlife, and serene Finnish landscapes.

WHY CHOOSE THIS EXPEDITION?

- **Extraordinary predator encounters:** Photograph brown bears, elusive wolves, and rare wolverines from secluded blinds for five nights in Finland's remote forests.
- **Diverse Nordic wildlife:** Look for forest reindeer, Eurasian elk (moose), Siberian flying squirrel and a variety of northern birds.
- **Scenic landscapes & cultural charm:** Explore the wild beauty of Karelia and Lake Saimaa, framed by the relaxed atmosphere of Helsinki.

LEADERS: Scott Davis assisted by local naturalist guides.

DAYS: 12 days including estimated travel time. Includes 5 nights in blinds.

GROUP SIZE: 5.

COST: \$9,000 per person, double or single occupancy, not including international airfare. See the *Costs* section on page 4.

ACCOMMODATIONS: They range from nice to rustic. You'll stay in photography blinds for five nights, which have bunk or single beds and a pit toilet; during the day, you will have a double occupancy or single room. See the *Accommodations* section on page 6.

TRANSPORTATION: Heated 9-seater minibus.

Date	Description	Accommodation	Meals
Jul 20	Travel to Helsinki, Finland from our July Svalbard Trip or from home.		
Jul 21	Arrive in Helsinki. In the evening photograph European elk (moose).	Hotel Nuuksio, Nuuksio	L, D
Jul 22	Transfer to Lake Saimaa. Enjoy your evening at leisure.	Jarvisydan Spa resort, Rantasalmi	B, L, D
Jul 23-24	Drive to Lieksa. Discover wolverines, wolves and brown bears for two nights from photography/observation blinds.	Blinds at Erä Eero, Lieksa; Hotel Puustelli, Lieksa	B, L, D
Jul 25	Day of relaxation. In the evening hike in Patvinsuo National Park.	Hotel Puustelli, Lieksa	B, L, D
Jul 26-28	Transfer to Kuhmo. Enjoy three nights of close-up viewing of brown bears, wolves and possibly wolverines from photography/observation blinds near the Russian border.	Blinds at Kuhmo, Kuhmo; Hotel Kalevala, Kuhmo	B, L, D
Jul 29	Transfer to Vierumaki. Search for Siberian flying squirrel in the evening in a small nature reserve in Heinola.	Hotel Fennada, Vierumaki	B, L, D
Jul 30	Depart for Home.		B
Jul 31	Arrive Home.		

ENHANCE YOUR TRIP

- Begin your journey early on our Svalbard trip from [July 6 to 19, 2026](#).

LEADER



Scott Davis

Scott is a professional photographer specializing in wildlife, nature, and travel. Originally trained as a wildlife and marine biologist, his research and photo assignments have taken him to the far corners of the globe and all seven continents. National Geographic, BBC, Animal Planet, NY Times, and renowned magazines have used his photography. His patience for teaching and love of capturing the essence of his subjects make him one of our most popular tour leaders. He has extensive experience working in the polar regions having led expeditions and guided in both Antarctica and Svalbard for 15 seasons. His great fondness for these remote polar regions is evident in every expedition he leads, and he loves sharing this enthusiasm with all his guests.

DETAILED ITINERARY

Jul 20 ~ Travel to Helsinki, Finland

Depart for Helsinki.

Jul 21 ~ Arrive in Helsinki

Arrive in Helsinki, where you'll be met at the airport by our local transfer agent and taken to your hotel. The remainder of the day is free to relax and get ready for the adventure ahead. If you wish to arrive earlier, we can arrange extra nights. In the evening, set out on a 45-minute drive from the hotel in search of elk.

Jul 22 ~ Transfer to Lake Saimaa

After breakfast, transfer to Lake Saimaa, a 4-hour drive. This afternoon will be at your leisure to enjoy the resort and spa.

Jul 23–24 ~ Observe and photograph wolverines and bears in Lieksa

Travel about two hours to Lieksa, where you'll spend two nights in comfortable photography blinds observing and photographing wolverines, brown bears and members of a wolf pack roaming in the area. Just a few years ago, spotting a wolverine in the wild was nearly impossible anywhere in the world. Fortunately, Karelia, the province where Lieksa is located, has become one of the best places to witness and photograph this powerful member of the mustelid family.



Eurasian Jays
© Alain Verstraete



Wolverine
© Alain Verstraete

Jul 25 ~ Day of Relaxation and local excursions

Enjoy a hearty buffet breakfast at the hotel before spending the day at leisure or join your leader for an afternoon and evening excursion. In the late afternoon, gather around a bonfire by a nearby lake to roast sausages, then set out on a scenic walk (approximately 1 hour and 45 minutes one way) in Patvinsuo National Park. Follow a wooden boardwalk through the peat bog to a bird tower overlooking prime bear and wolverine habitat, where you can scan the vast mires that serve as nesting and feeding grounds for species such as the Common Crane, European Golden Plover, Whimbrel, Hobby, and Whooper Swan.

Jul 26–28 ~ Observe and photograph bears, wolves, and wolverines from blinds

Drive about 1.5 hours toward the border near the town of Kuhmo, situated among territories of brown bears and if lucky, you may see the elusive wolves of this region. The vast, remote character of nature here is impressive. Spend three nights in a photography/observation blind, while keeping your eyes peeled for White-tailed Eagles and Common Ravens suddenly abandoning carcasses, a sure sign that a carnivore is about to appear.



Brown Bear with Ravens
© Alain Verstraete

Jul 29 ~ Transfer to Vierumaki for Siberian flying squirrels

In the morning at your leisure and in the afternoon transfer to Vierumaki to photograph Siberian flying squirrel in a small nature reserve near Heinola.

Jul 30 ~ Depart for Home

Transfer to the airport for your flights home.

Jul 31 ~ Arrive Home

COSTS (ALL COSTS ARE IN US DOLLARS)

Cost

Type	Cost per Person
Trip Cost, double occupancy	\$9,000
Single Supplement	\$500

Costs are per person, double occupancy, not including airfare, singles extra. See *Included* and *Not Included* sections for more details.

Payment Schedule

Payment	Due Date	Amount per Person
Deposit	Due now to reserve your space	\$1,500

Final	February 10, 2026	Remaining Balance
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Payments are due based on the schedule above. All reservations require a deposit to confirm reservation of your space.

Cancellations

Until the Final Payment due date, deposits are refundable except for a cancellation fee of \$150 per person, which can be applied toward another trip if reserved within six months of the canceled trip's departure date. Cancellations are non-transferable. No refunds are given after the Final Payment due date.

Included

- Carbon offsets for the duration of this trip.
- All leaders, transport, park entry fees, landing fees, and permits for all activities unless described as optional.
- Accommodations for the nights of July 21 through July 29.
- Group photography/observation blinds for the nights of July 23–24 and 26–28.
- Meals from lunch on July 21 through breakfast on July 30.
- Transfer on July 21 between the Helsinki Airport and Hotel Nuuksio.
- Transfer on July 30 between Hotel Fennada and Helsinki Airport.
- Non-alcoholic beverages.
- Sleeping bags for time in blinds (if requested).
- Trip Planning Materials – information about entry requirements, flights, packing, gratuities, etc.

Not Included

- Carbon offsets for your flights to/from this trip.
- All airfare, airport and departure taxes, and excess baggage fees.
- Passport and visa fees.
- Gratuities – tipping is always discretionary. However, we suggest budgeting about \$50 per participant to distribute to local guides, drivers, housekeeping, and hotel staff.
- Mandatory [emergency evacuation insurance](#).
- Optional [trip cancellation insurance](#).
- Items of a personal nature such as laundry, telephone calls, medical costs or hospitalization, room service, alcoholic and other beverages, items not on the regular menu, etc. If you have special dietary needs, please indicate them on your Traveler Reservation Form.

SIGN UP

Please contact us first to check availability, reserve your space, and obtain a Traveler Form. To confirm your reservation, we require a deposit and signed form from each participant.

[Cheesemans' Ecology Safaris](#)

Email: info@cheesemans.com

WhatsApp: (408) 741-5330

Phone: (800) 527-5330 or (408) 741-5330

OTHER DETAILS

Climate

The weather should be mild, sunny, and warm. Of course, in the high Arctic you can always expect some clouds, rain, or cold weather. Average temperatures range from the low 40s°F (~5°C) at night to the upper 50s and 60s°F (~15-20°C) during the day.

Fitness Level

You spend five nights observing wildlife in blinds, which may lead to sleep deprivation, depending on your sleep needs and habits, which require patience and a positive attitude. Most hikes in Patvinsuo National Park are easy to moderate, with flat terrain across bogs, forests, and lakeshores. The main challenge comes from the length of some trails and the uneven or soft ground on boardwalks. The route to the watchtower overlooking bear and wolverine habitat is moderate—generally flat but several miles long, with sections over open peat bogs. It's suitable for anyone with average fitness who can walk several miles on natural terrain. Please contact us if you have any health concerns that may make this trip challenging.

Accommodations

You spend five nights in comfortable photography blinds with single beds or bunk beds with sleeping bags (if requested) and a pit toilet. You'll arrive in the blinds around 4:00pm and stay until around 7:00am the following morning. During the daytime and other nights, you will stay at comfortable lodges, with rest time after nights in the blinds.

Flights

Detailed logistical information is included in the Trip Planning Materials we will send you.

Please wait to book your flights until you receive confirmation from your Coordinator that the minimum number of participants has been met to operate the trip. If you choose to book flights before receiving this confirmation, we strongly recommend purchasing flight cancellation insurance to protect your investment.

Flights you book

- Arrive in Helsinki, Finland (HEL) by 1:00pm on July 21. **If you are arriving from our Svalbard trip [July 6 to 19, 2026](#)**, see the *Flights* section in its itinerary for arrival information.
- Depart from Helsinki, Finland (HEL) after 10:00am on July 30.

Terms and Conditions

Read our current [Terms and Conditions](#).

Conservation

Our company ethos has always regarded conservation as inseparable from responsible tourism. We struggle with the dilemma that traveling worldwide expends climate-changing carbon. However, we wholeheartedly believe that traveling with us will cultivate your passion for conserving our beautiful world while stimulating each destination's local economy. We encourage you to explore the various ways in which Cheesemans' operates within this context:

- **Cheesemans' Trips are Carbon Neutral.**
- **Offsetting your Travel to/from our Trip:** We ask you to pledge to offset the carbon emissions for your travel to and from our trips. You can purchase offsets with most airlines (Delta includes them

automatically), use our handy [carbon calculator](#) and donate to Sustainable Travel International, or contribute to your favorite offsetting organization.