

Dragonfly Grand Tour Sweden

On this trip we focus almost entirely on the interesting Dragonfly-fauna of Central Sweden with specialities like **Blue/Scarce Chaser**, **Dark/ Eastern Whiteface** and the giants among Dragonflies; **Hawkers**. Among no less than 8 species of **Hawkers**, we find two among Europe's least distributed Aeshnids; **Baltic-** and **Green Hawker**. Add to that a potential list of 4 species of **Emeralds**, 5 **Sympetrids** and several **Leucorrhinias** as well as **Damselflies**.

Among the **Butterflies** that are still on their wings, **Camberwell Beauties** are newly hatched and as beautiful as they come, pleasing the cameras.

In combination with plenty of interesting **Moth-species** and leisurous as well as adventurous boat excursions on rivers and lakes, this is a great trip for any **Dragonfly-Butterfly-** or **Moth-freak**.

DAY 1

Arrival at Västerås airport. We go directly to nearby island Nature reserve Ängsö, where we enjoy a picnic in a deciduous, semiopen landscape with meadows and wetlands and a parklike setting near an old castle.

We explore a couple of different parts of this lovely island by foot, looking for **Butterflies** like **Niobe Fritillary** and **Silver-spotted Skipper** and dragonflies like **Small Pincertail** (*Onychogomphus forcipatus*) and several **Aeshnids**.

On the way up to the Black River Valley a short stop along a forest track could show some high-summer **Fritillaries**, like **Dark Green-** and **High Brown Fritillary** and (odd years) **Arran Browns**.

Night in the Black River Valley.

For those interested we do a **Moth-night** one or two of these nights, selecting an interesting site where a good selection of **Moths** are likely to appear. **Poplar-** and **Elephant Hawk Moth**, **Herald**, **Pine-tree Lappet**, **Light Crimson Underwing**, and colourful **Garden Tigers**, **Clifden Nonpareil** and unique Scandinavian "**Peat-bog Carpet**" (*Arichanna melanaria*) are just a couple of examples on what can be found in late summer.

DAY 2

On the west edge of the Black River Valley, lies a vast pineforest – Hälleskogen. With plenty of bogs and myres it is an interesting area to explore on a longer walk. Here we look for **Azure Hawk** (*Aeshna caerulea*), and getting close for pictures might open for the use of snowshoes (!) on the wet bogs.

Along – or in fact many times – on the gravel roads **Camberwell Beauties** often appear and this time of the year they are newly hatched and just as fresh as they get. Always challenging for pictures.

As the walk ends we reach a little forest lake were **Brilliant Emeralds** (*Somatocloria metallica*) fly and **Blue Hawk** (*Aeshna cyanea*) can be seen among everpresent **Brown Hawk** (*Aeshna grandis*).

This is also a good breeding site for **Black-throated Divers**.

A bit further north we find **Keeled Skimmers** (*Orthetrum coerulescens*) in oligotrof forest lakes of the Bergslagen area and maybe **Common Goldenrings** (*Cordulegaster boltonii*) are still flying, even if it is a bit late in the season.

In the evening we take a relaxed walk to explore the lakesides of Fläcksjön, one of the major lakes in the Black River Valley.

Here plenty of dragonflies, e.g. several *Sympetrum* species, **Northern Emerald** (*Somatochlora arctica*) **Brilliant Emerald** (*Somatochlora metallica*) and for that sake also birds, can be seen. We await dusk to experience the summerflocks of **Common Cranes** that roost in the north part of the lake.

Night in the Black River Valley.

DAY 3

Well hidden in the pineforests of Roslagen – Uppland, lies a remote, tiny boglake called Mårdsjön. This is a place where rare **Dark/ Eastern Whiteface** (*Leucorrhinia albifrons*) flies together with **Moorland Hawk** (*Aeshna juncea*) and **Ruby Whiteface** (*Leucorrhinia rubicundas*) and **Small whiteface** (*Leucorrhinia dubia*) also can be found.

Along the path several species of damselflies can be seen, e.g. **Arctic Bluet** (*Coenagrion johanssoni*), **Azure Bluet** (*Coenagrion puella*) and **Common Bluet** (*Enallagma cyathigerum*), to mention but a few.

Not far away we will go by boat up the narrow, slow flowing Kolamoraån to get close to rare **Blue/ Scarce Chasers** (*Libellula fulva*) – a species just recently encountered in this area.

Night in the Roslagen area.

DAY 4

Jälnan is a quite anonymous little, reed-fringed lake in central Uppland, but with a watersurface covered with watersoldier, it's an excellent site for **Green Hawk** (*Aeshna viridis*), and **Baltic Hawk** (*Aeshna serrata*). They are found together and in the blue border between reeds and meadow, it's possible to get close to them.

If we're lucky **Yellow-spotted Emeralds** (*Somatochlora flavomaculata*) are still flying on the site too.

Lake Angarn is another of Uppland's hotspots for Dragonflies and by a little forest pool we look for **Bog Hawker** (*Aeshna subarctica*), along with more plentiful **Moorland Hawk** (*Aeshna juncea*).

If we still have energy after our tasty picnic lunch, we explore the lakesides of the small, eutrof lake Angarn where five species of *Sympetrids* fly, including **Yellow-winged Darter** (*Sympetrum flavoleum*) and **Moustached Darter** (*Sympetrum vulgatum*)

Back in Svartådalen we check another lake for **Northern Emerald** and dine on a local speciality that is traditionally eaten just this time of the year – Crayfish!

Night in the Black River Valley.

DAY 5

Asköviken is a well-known birding site and also a good site for Dragonflies and Butterflies. An easy walk takes us to an abandoned garden where **Purple-, Brown- and White-letter hairstreaks** can be seen almost together. At the same time the air is patrolled by **Migrant Hawk** (*Aeshna grandis*) and probably Blue- and Brown Hawk as well.

We walk further down towards the well-grazed lakesides and look through the animals flying around us. Butterflies and Dragonflies are abundant here.

When the northern side of the lagoon is "covered" we move over to the south side where a boat will meet us and take us out for a tour on the big lake Mälaren.

In the archipelago **White-tailed Eagles** and **Ospreys** breed and in the reedbeds of the Asköviken lagoon Bittern and Marsh Harriers as well as **Bearded Readlings** are common birds.

We lean back on the upper deck, enjoy the view and a tasty picknick lunch as we gaze to the skies for Eagles and Ospreys. Maybe a short swim would appeal if the day is hot.

”Copa despedida” and Barbeque dinner in the hotel garden. Night in the Black River Valley.

DAY 6

The last day we dedicate to what’s on the doorstep, which is a lot of lovely nature in the Black River Valley, including open wetlands, floodplains and pine forests with bogs and many lakes. If there’s anything we would like to see again or if there are species left to see, we have the possibility to encounter Butterflies like **Scarce Copper** and plenty of Dragonflies in the nearby.

Departure for the airport, mid day.