

We recently visited Finland twice and each time during the spring season (May) in order to combine our chances to see not only mammals but also some iconic birds like capercaillie, black grouse, white-tailed eagle and great grey owl. For these trips we spent in Karelia in the Kajaani/Kuhmo area, we used two different local operations: Taiga Spirit ([www.taigaspirit.com](http://www.taigaspirit.com)) owned by a French lady who has 3 nice and comfortable hides in the woods and ArticMedia ([www.articmedia.fi](http://www.articmedia.fi)) owned by Lassi and Sami Rautiainen who are more or less the guys who started the wildlife safaris business in Finland. They have several but more basic hides located in 4 different areas (woods, lakes and tundra) near the Russian border. Historically speaking, the no man's land area near the Russian border has always had very scarce human occupation, which led to a high wildlife concentration including large mammal predators. Our prime target for our visits there was to see grey wolves and wolverines. We were very happy to see several wolverines in very good conditions and a few wolves as well but during the darker period of the night (although it never gets 100% dark there in May). On the other hand, we were not so lucky with bears as during our two trips we only saw one, briefly and in poor light conditions. Well, that's nature and this just implies we will have to go back there specifically for nicer bear watching ☺. Besides predators that we always saw from the hides, we did not see much other mammals except for mountain hares, red squirrels and reindeers that are quite common in Finland.

Below is the small list of mammals we saw during those trips:

<b>Mammals with photos or well seen</b>				
<b>Species</b>	<b>Espèces</b>	<b>Latin Name</b>	<b>Where seen</b>	<b>Pic</b>
Wolverine	Glouton	Gulo gulo	5-6 individuals seen from hides	X
Gray wolf	Loup gris	Canis lupus	3 individuals seen from hides	X
Brown Bear	Ours Brun d'Europe	Ursus arctos	1 guy seen from hides	X
Reindeer	Renne d'Europe	Rangifer tarandus	Several seen from the road	X
Eurasian red squirrel	Ecureuil roux	Sciurus vulgaris	Common around lodges/camps	X
Mountain Hare	Lièvre variable	Lepus timidus	Common in the fields around roads	
Stoat	Hermine	Mustela erminea	1 seen crossing the road in front of our car	
<b>Total Species Recorded = 7</b>				

I'm adding to this report a few pictures of some of the iconic species we observed during that trip or that were new to me.



Wolverine

Wolverine

Gray Wolf

Brown Bear



Red squirrel



Reindeer