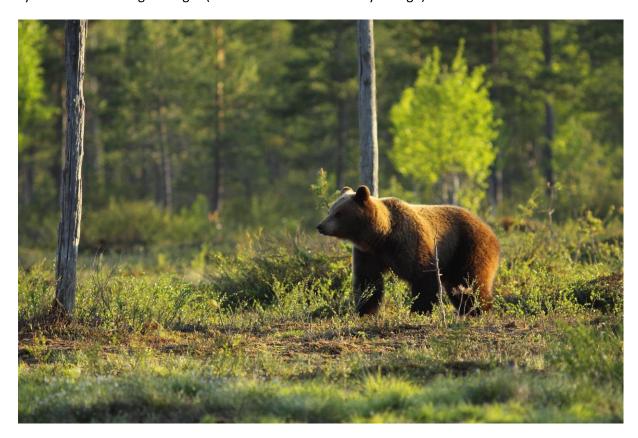
## Finland, May 28<sup>th</sup> 2014 - June 1<sup>st</sup> 2014

This trip was organized by Jan Kelchtermans from Europe's Big 5, the main target being large carnivores. Wolverine was the most- wanted species for me, but unfortunately we didn't see one... Luckily we had some great views of other nice animals.

#### Wednesday May 28th 2014

After flying to Helsinki the previous evening, we took a short flight to Kajaani, from where the trip would start. From Kajaani we drove towards Lieksa near the Russian border, to spend the night in a hide where we hoped to see bears and wolves. It didn't take too long before the first **Brown bears** showed up, a mother with 2 cubs. They were very shy, probably because of another bear that passed by a few times during the night (this one was even more shy though).



Female Brown bear, near Lieksa.

### Thursday May 29<sup>th</sup> 2014

The first part of the day we were still in the hide watching the **Brown bears**. After we left the hide, we saw some **Eurasian red squirrels** and a **Bank vole** at the feeders of the owners of the hide. The rest of the day was spent in the area, with three **Mountain hares** as the only mammals. In the evening we went to an aspen tree to look at some **Siberian flying squirrels**, and we were very lucky with at least four animals leaving the tree, with one of them giving great views.



**Brown bear** cubs, near Lieksa.



**Siberian flying squirrel**, near Lieksa.

Friday May 30<sup>th</sup> 2014

In the morning some more **Eurasian red squirrels**, after which we drove to the Wolverine-hide. Despite staying up all night, we didn't see any, and nothing else turned up either...



Saturday May 31<sup>st</sup> 2014

After not seeing the Wolverines the mood in the group was a bit down, but this soon changed once we were on the water in the Linnansaari N.P. to search for seals. It was a beautiful day, and after a while we found a young **Saimaa ringed seal** lying on a rock, giving great views. At least one other was seen swimming too. On the return, a **Common muskrat** swam past the boat.



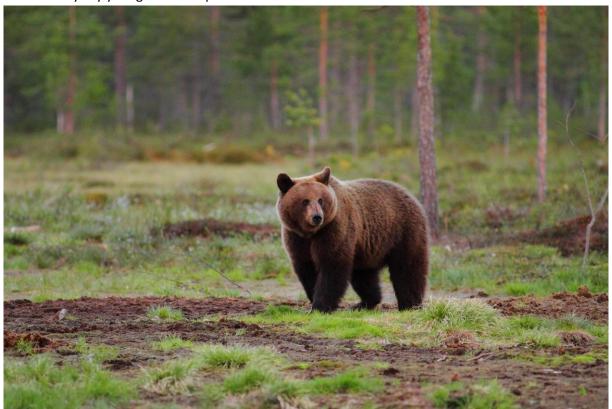
Saimaa ringed seal, Linnansaari N.P.

# Sunday June 1<sup>st</sup> 2014

Our last day in Finland, and this was to be an owl-day, so not many mammals were seen. On the drive from Linnansaari N.P. to Helsinki we saw another **Mountain hare**, and a roadkill **European badger**, but the highlight was a **Pine marten** crossing the road, a lifer for me!

### **Mammal list**

1. **Brown bear** *Ursus arctos arctos*: a mother and two cubs were seen at a hide near Lieksa. Another very shy young male was present here too.



2. **Saimaa ringed seal** *Pusa hispida saimensis*: at least two were seen from the boat in Linnansaari N.P.



- 3. **Pine marten** *Martes martes*: one crossed the road on our way to the airport.
- 4. **European badger** *Meles meles*: one roadkill on our way to Helsinki.
- 5. **Mountain hare** *Lepus timidus*: seen on several occasions.
- 6. **Siberian flying squirrel** *Pteromys volans*: four left their hole in a known tree, one of them giving great views.



- 7. **Eurasian red squirrel** *Sciurus vulgaris*: several were present at the birdfeeders of the owners of the bear-hide.
- 8. **Bank vole** *Myodes glareolus*: one was present at the birdfeeders of the owners of the bear-hide
- 9. **Common muskrat** *Ondatra zibethicus*: one swam past the boat in Linnansaari N.P.