



# Join Mark Carwardine and Wildlife Worldwide founder, Chris Breen For European Festival of Bears in Finland *22 - 30 August 2026*



We are delighted to launch a second, hugely popular European Festival of Bears, in the Finnish taiga forests, one of the last great wildernesses on the European continent. We've carefully chosen a first-class destination for viewing and photographing brown bears, wolverines and wolves, alongside a fabulous supporting cast of bird species.

## HIGHLIGHTS

- The long-awaited return of the popular and successful European Festival of Bears.
- Maximum time in specially built hides to observe and photograph European brown bears.
- Chances of observing and photographing wolverines and wolves.
- Wonderful chance to practise photography and get tips from Mark on how to improve your skills.
- Perfect for experienced and non-experienced photographers alike, and those with an interest in wildlife-viewing.
- Exclusive use of our lodge in the heart of the Finnish taiga forest.
- Other wildlife such as red squirrels, Ural owls, white-tailed eagles, and crested tits.



*This exclusive trip has been put together by Wildlife Worldwide*

To book, please contact Wildlife Worldwide: [sales@wildlifeworldwide.com](mailto:sales@wildlifeworldwide.com) tel: +44 (0)1962 302 086



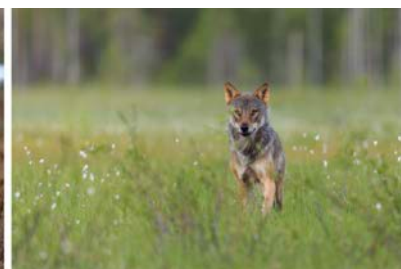


#### DESCRIPTION

With exclusive use of a wonderful, rustic lodge, this eight-night trip visits northern Finland's remote boreal forest in search of Europe's large predators. The European brown bear has lost much of its former range across the continent, but the wealth of untouched forest along the Finnish-Russian border is home to a healthy population of these impressive mammals, as well as other boreal predators. We also hopefully encounter wolverines and Eurasian wolves. Our evenings are spent in specialist hides where there are good chances of seeing wolverine (though sightings are by no means guaranteed, of course). The Eurasian wolf is also rather elusive, but there is still a reasonable

possibility of observing these charismatic and apex predators. In the afternoons, before we head out to the hides, there will be time to catch up on some sleep, observe the birds and other wildlife around the lodge, work with Mark on photographic techniques in the hides, and editing and processing – or simply have a sauna by the lake!

**Please note** that the wildlife is extremely wary around people, and patience is an absolute must – we can be in the hide for up to 14 hours each night. The exact itinerary may change depending on individual preferences and our success in the hides – if we are lucky with a particular species, individual group members may subsequently choose to spend time in whichever hide they like (depending on availability).



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## ITINERARY

**DAY 1:** Depart from London Heathrow to Helsinki Airport. Fly from Helsinki Airport to Kuopio Airport. Meet Mark and Chris and transfer to our lodge (below) in Kuhmo, by Kuikka Lake, which is a drive of between three and four hours. On arrival, we will settle down for a full night's rest at the lodge after our travels.

**DAY 2:** This morning we plan to have a briefing and familiarisation at the lodge before spending the rest of the day exploring the area around our accommodation. After an early dinner, we make our way to the hides to spend our first evening photographing brown bears and hopefully wolves and wolverines. The walk to the hides is short and not overly strenuous.

**DAY 3:** The schedule is the same as on Day 2, though after a long night in the hides, we return to the lodge for breakfast and rest. During the day at our lodge, we can enjoy the peace and serenity around Kuikka. Alternatively, you can also make the most of the

lakeside wood-fired sauna. Tonight, we will try our luck once again. Depending on activity, we may try out different locations. If we visit the hides situated in the heart of the forest, we are more likely to enjoy sightings of the elusive wolverine. These giant mustelids are always on the move and the most challenging of the three species to photograph from the hides. We may also be lucky enough to enjoy sightings and photographic opportunities of wolves from these hides, too.

**DAYS 4 - 8:** Depending on our success during previous evenings, we aim to spend the next six nights photographing from other hides or the hides providing the most consistent wildlife activity, and hope for other species, such as some of the region's raptors.

**DAY 9:** After our last night in the hides, we return to the lodge for breakfast and a chance to freshen up. We then transfer to the airport for our return flights. Fly from Kuopio Airport to Helsinki Airport. Depart from Helsinki Airport to London Heathrow.



## ACCOMMODATION

Base Camp Kuikka is a traditional Finnish log cabin situated on a promontory on Kuikka Lake, in the middle of the forest. With only nine rooms with shared facilities, hot showers and a sauna, the property can accommodate up to 30 guests in a convivial, rustic atmosphere, and features various hides nearby. Each room can accommodate from two to six guests in bunk or twin beds. Amenities include free Wi-Fi, a wood-burning lakeside sauna, rowing boats, canoe, four hot-water showers, three toilets, bedding, towels, washing machine, dryer and a small souvenir shop. Depending on the season, it is possible to see and photograph a variety of bird species in the lodge grounds, with red squirrels also attracted to the bird feeders.

Though it is the most rustic of the lodges that we offer in Finland, and the rooms are very basic, from our experience, it offers the best chance of seeing brown bear, wolverine and wolf. And that, after all, is why we are going! Indeed, previous guests have enjoyed sightings of all three species in the same evening. The lodge has 20 hides located in four different locations, with each hide accommodating between two and five guests. The toilets are typically located at the back of the hides, under a covered area. While some hides provide bunk beds, others only have a roll mat and chairs.

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## LEADERS

**Mark Carwardine** is a zoologist, an outspoken conservationist, an award-winning and bestselling author, a TV and radio presenter, a widely published photographer, a wildlife tour operator and leader, a lecturer, and a BBC Wildlife magazine columnist. He co-presented the BBC-TV series *Last Chance to See*, with the comedian and actor Stephen Fry, and the BBC-TV series *Museum of Life*. He also presented the weekly half-hour radio programme *Nature* on BBC Radio 4 for many years. He has written more than 60 books, including *Field Guide to Whales, Dolphins and Porpoises*, *The Shark Watcher's Handbook* and *The Guinness Book of Animal Records*. His latest is *How to Photograph Garden Birds*. He was Chairman of the Judging Panel of the prestigious Wildlife Photographer of the Year Competition for seven years (2005-2011) and was selected as one of the world's 40 most influential nature photographers in *Outdoor Photography* magazine.

**Chris Breen** is the founder of Wildlife Worldwide. He studied Geographical Sciences in Plymouth, however his first encounter with the wider world was in 1983, when he headed off to Zambia. Under the tutelage of the late Norman Carr, the pioneer of walking safaris, he worked as a wildlife guide and managed two wilderness camps.

On his return to the UK, he had a spell at a major travel agency in London before setting up Wildlife Worldwide in 1992. Since then, he has travelled the world in search of first-class wildlife experiences.

He devised the Festival of Wildlife concept, which has spawned the Festival of Bears and the Festival of Whales. An ardent conservationist, Chris has co-led each of these since their inception.



## WEATHER AND DAYLIGHT

Average temperatures range from 8°C to 25°C. With the long summer evenings, there should be plenty of light for photography, though by late August, there are a few hours of darkness in the evenings. While the light is good enough, we will take turns to be on watch throughout the night, allowing others to rest between periods of activity.

## GROUP SIZE

18 guests plus 2 leaders.

## PRICES PER PERSON

£5,495 including economy return flights from Heathrow to Kuopio (via Helsinki); £5,195 excluding flights. £600 single supplement.

**Price includes:** accommodation and meals at Base Camp Kuikka for eight nights; transfers; international and domestic flights if part of package; services of tour leaders Mark and Chris; services of local guide(s); conservation fund contribution.

**Price does not include:** transport to airport in UK; upgrade from economy if buying the flight package; international and domestic flights if not part of package; meals other than those at Base Camp Kuikka; single supplement; excess baggage charges; cancellation, baggage and travel insurance (compulsory); drinks; items of a personal nature; medical expenses; gratuities.

## PAYMENT SCHEDULE PER PERSON:

- Non-refundable deposit of £200 or 20% of the total value (whichever is the greater).
- Final balance due eight weeks prior to departure.

*Wolf photos © Bret Charman; all other photos by Mark*



MARK CARWARDINE

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