

## **Birding in south-western Estonia (trip report 2-14 August 2009)**

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For sure the first half of August is not the perfect time for birdwatching in Estonia. However I was asked to join a fieldwork expedition in this period (no expenses for me!), so all of a sudden I found myself in Estonia from the 2nd until the 14th of August 2009. Of course my binoculars and camera came along and I did manage to find some time for birding. Although I searched for trip reports before I left, it proved difficult to find some general information about birding in Estonia in August. As I'm sure that other birders could also for some reason plan a trip to Estonia in August, I decided to write down some of my birding experiences so you will have an idea of what you might expect.



### The schedule

I visited Estonia as a member of a Dutch research team from the 2nd until the 14th of August 2009 for biological fieldwork in the coastal meadows north of Häädemeste in the south-western part of Estonia, the northern-most Baltic state. We stayed at the Nigula research station, some 20 km to the east, and visited the fieldwork locations at least twice every day. Besides the fieldwork locations, we also visited the Nigula bog, Soomaa National Park and the Matsalu Bay. Those visits were all in the afternoon (worse time of day for birdwatching!).

### The weather

The Estonian climate is rather stable with (very) cold winters and mild summers. In summer dry periods usually last a few weeks, but rainy periods can also last a while. Although we did not really experience it, Estonia is sometimes called Wetstonia for the large amount of rain. During the first week of our stay we were lucky to have blue skies most of the time. The sun was shining all day, there was hardly any wind and temperatures rose towards 25C. On the last two days we had a lot of rain and wind, keeping us inside most of the time. Fortunately we had already seen some very nice birds by then.

### Some general information

Although I have only visited the south-western part of the country, I am sure I can say that Estonia in general is a wonderful country for tourists with a great interest for nature. The (human) population density is extremely low and therefore the country seems rather 'empty'. Especially for tourists from overcrowded countries such as the Netherlands this is a very remarkable feature of Estonia. Thanks to the small population, which is mainly concentrated around the 3 or 4 larger cities, there is quite enough space left for nature. The natural areas of Estonia consist of large forests and even larger bogs inland and (restored) coastal meadows along the Baltic Sea. The forests and bogs are large enough to support viable populations of large mammals such as Brown Bear, Moose, Wolf, Wild Boar and Roe Deer, and numerous smaller mammals including Lynx, Raccoon Dog, Badger, Flying Squirrel and many others. Many nature areas are well accessible by walking trails and well maintained dirt roads. One of the great inventions of the Estonians are the board walks on which you can hike through the extremely wet bogs. Apparently Estonians are also great fans of observation towers, as these often huge wooden structures can be found along nearly every hiking trail. These towers provide wonderful views over the rather flat landscape.

### The Estonian people

Estonians have a Fennoscandinavian background, for which especially the many blond women are a clear indication. The long history of wars, invasions and suppression and probably also the climate have formed the Estonian people. They seem quite reserved towards other people and use few words if any. However

in their nature Estonians are nice and friendly, especially when you greet them in their own language (*hi!* is *tere!* in Estonian). A visit to the sauna is part of the daily routine after which men like a beer or two, or many. Birdwatchers are rather scarce in Estonia, which is not very surprising on a population of only 1.3 million. The good thing is that it's a small world in which it is easy to penetrate, the bad thing is that you have to search for all bird species yourself without help of an up-to-date website with recent observations. In the better times of the year the Estonian birding community is joined by many Finnish birders who like to come searching for rarities in Estonia.

### Birding in Estonia

As I mentioned before nature areas are usually well accessible by hiking trails. The boardwalks through bogs often lead you through different habitat types, increasing the number of species that you could find on a single hike. The observation towers I mentioned provide nice views and you should always check the horizon for raptors and Ravens. The observation towers along the coast are especially useful when water levels drop and sandbanks fall dry or when large flocks of waterbirds gather offshore in late summer. It is wise to collect some maps of good birding spots or hiking trails at the local visitor centre as some places or access roads are difficult to find. The birding itself is exciting but not very different from anywhere else in Europe in similar habitat. In the first half of August the forests and bogs are rather quiet and birds can be difficult to find. The 'key to success' is to listen for distant calls of songbirds or woodpeckers knocking on dead wood. In contrast birding along the coast is easier and more productive, although I should encourage the use of a telescope to search for interesting waders on the sandbanks when water levels are low. The landscape of the coastal meadows is quite open and early signs of autumn migration can be observed here in early August. With the incredible area of nature in Estonia a visiting birder will always find himself in a place where interesting birds can be found. Even agricultural fields and gardens often hold bird species that are rare in other parts of Europe.



Boardwalks through Nigula and Soomaa bogs

### **Birding in south-western Estonia in early August**

The following descriptions of birding in specific habitat types are based primarily on my own observations. They are valid at least for the first half of August but I can imagine that many of the bird species I mention can be found in the same areas in other seasons as well.

#### The Baltic Sea coastline

*Meadows and reed beds*: the coastline north of Hädemeeste consists mainly of coastal meadows and reed beds. This is where we did our fieldwork, so I visited these areas most frequently. When walking through the meadows, for instance towards the observation tower at Pulgoja, you encounter numerous **Meadow Pipits**, **Sky Larks** and **Yellow Wagtails**. **Northern Wheatears** are also common and often sitting on the large rocks that have been placed here by the glaciers of the last ice age. **Linnets**, **Goldfinches**, **Whinchats** and **Common Snipes** can be easily found in this habitat as well. **Red-backed Shrikes** nest here and we found a nice family with parents still feeding their young at Pulgoja. The skies above the meadows are full of **Barn Swallows**, **House Martins** and occasionally **Sand Martins**. **Eurasian Hobby** and **Merlin** are attracted by the high amount of songbirds and visit the area for a meal. A **Goshawk** often uses the observation tower to watch for the same birds as we do. The reed beds hold

many other species, of which **Bearded Tits** are the easiest because they call all the time. At Pulgoja we found the common species **Reed Warbler** and **Sedge Warbler** (some caught at the ringing station there), but also a **Savi's Warbler** and several times a calling **Penduline Tit**. **Penduline Tits** were also present in the reeds around the fishponds at Pikla, somewhat to the north, as was a **Great Reed Warbler** that even sang for a short moment. Here we were also happy to find a **Great Bittern** flying by several times. **Marsh Harriers** were hunting above the reed beds continuously. We found another nice species in a coastal meadow at Häädemeeste: two **Corncrakes** were calling here even though it was already August.

*Coastal ponds and inlets:* in early August waders have already started their autumn migration. Ponds and inlets with muddy shores are very attractive for them and especially at Võiste we found many **Wood Sandpipers** and other shorebirds, such as **Dunlins**, **Little Stints**, **Ruffs**, **Green Sandpipers**, **Common Ringed Plovers** and **Common Snipes**. The first few days of our trip a **Red-necked Phalarope** was present here and foraging in the same pond as where we were carrying out our fieldwork. Some **Temminck's Stints** turned up at the same spot. Other than waders numerous **White Wagtails** were also foraging on the shoreline of these ponds and inlets. Several duck species - mainly **Mallards**, **Teals** and some **Shelducks** and **Northern Pintails** - were foraging and sleeping on the ponds.

*Offshore:* the Baltic Sea is very shallow for hundreds of meters out of the coast. Many large rocks have their tops above the water surface and provide resting place for waterfowl and other birds. There is hardly any tide in the Baltic Sea and the water level is mainly influenced by wind. With offshore winds the water level can drop very fast and with inshore winds it can rise quickly. During the first week of our trip the water levels dropped dramatically and many sandbanks fell dry. This attracted numerous waders such as **Northern Lapwing**, **Wood Sandpiper**, **Greenshank**, **Common** and **Spotted Redshank**, **Ruff**, **Common Snipe** and some **Eurasian Curlews**. **Dunlins** and **Little Stints** were also rather abundant, **Temminck's Stint** and **Knot** were observed but scarce. Only once we found a **Red-necked Phalarope** offshore. The low water level was also nice for **Great Egrets** of which we saw a maximum of 20 individuals at Pulgoja. The rocks provided observation points for **White-tailed Sea-Eagles** that were flying very closely to the tower on several occasions. One morning we saw 6 individuals flying and 3 more sitting on a rock at the same time at Pulgoja. Another hunting species that we often saw here was the **Caspian Tern**. A few individuals were always present including some juveniles. Late June to early August is also the period that high numbers of waterbirds gather offshore to moult. Beside hundreds of **Teals**, **Mallards** and **Great Cormorants** we counted thousands of **Mute Swans** and even more **Goldeneyes**. It truly is a spectacular sight to see so many waterbirds together. **Great Crested Grebes**, **Widgeons**, **Gadwalls**, **Northern Shovelers**, **Garganeys**, **Greater Scaups**, **Tufted Ducks** and **Goosanders** were present in lower numbers. One morning a migrating **Osprey** made a short stop to hunt offshore at Pulgoja.



Coastal meadows at Pulgoja



#### Inland bogs and forests

*Bogs:* Estonia is well known for its unspoiled bogs and forests, which cover the highest percentage of the country's area. These landscape types provide a very typical and unique habitat for many bird species that are rare elsewhere in Europe. We visited the Nigula, Riisa and Soomaa bog which are somewhat alike and hold similar bird species. In the first half of August these bogs are very quiet and only few species can be found. **Tree Pipits** and **Ravens** are the most common species in this time of year and **Honey Buzzards** flew by several times. In the Nigula bog we also found a **Common Redshank**, a **Goldeneye** and two hovering **Common Kestrels**, but that was pretty much it. However I do not want to leave it with this because that could give a wrong impression of these bogs. Some birds live here but are rarely seen

such as **Black Grouse** and **European Nightjar**. Others live here only in spring when they are nesting. In late May and throughout June these bogs are populated by nesting **Wood Sandpipers**, **Golden Plovers**, **Common Goldeneyes**, **Common Cranes** and many other species. No doubt this is a very interesting ecosystem, but not very exciting for birdwatchers in the first two weeks of August.

*Forests:* all bogs are surrounded by forests and together they are often protected nature areas. Those forests are also rather quiet in August, but there are many more species to be found than in the bogs. The **European Robin** is probably the easiest species to find here, together with **Chaffinch**, **Nuthatch**, **Song Thrush**, **Common Blackbird** and **Hedge Accentor**. However some more interesting species can also be found without much effort. We saw and heard **Eurasian Treecreeper** in several forests and found that **White-backed Woodpecker** is nearly as common as **Great Spotted Woodpecker**. In the forest at Nigula and Soomaa we heard a calling **Little Spotted Woodpecker**. At Soomaa we were surprised by a subadult **Golden Eagle** soaring overhead and at Nigula I saw two **Hawfinches** and heard one **Golden Oriole** and some **Red Crossbills**. The best advice I can give for birding in these forests is to use your ears, listen for soft calls and woodpeckers knocking on wood. Also check the high canopies as many birds stay there most of the time. In fact this is no different than in any other forest.



Landscape of the Nigula bog

#### Agricultural areas

In Estonia agricultural fields are completely different from those in the Netherlands. In stead of intensively used fields, mown at least twice a year, looking more like golf courses than meadows, in Estonia the fields are much more natural. Hedge rows still separate the parcels, solitary trees are allowed to grow and only a fraction of the amount of fertilisers are used compared to the amount used in the Netherlands. Altogether this extensive land use results in a much higher biodiversity in plants, thus in insects, thus in bird species. **Sky Larks** are still common in Estonia and flocks of **Whinchats** can be found here. Most of my experience with agricultural fields I gained around Nigula. There were large flocks of **Greenfinches** foraging in the fields around the research centre and **Goldfinches** often joined in. Thanks to the large amount of large insects **Red-backed Shrikes** are still quite common in south-western Estonia. **White Storks** are so common that it is difficult to imagine that they are scarce in large parts of Western Europe and for me it was amazing to see so many **Common Cranes** in the fields. It was a great pleasure to listen to the calls of the cranes at dusk when they gathered for the night. This was also the time of day when **European Nightjars** appeared hunting for insects and often sitting on dirt roads. Some of the highlights were the sightings of two **Black Grouse** males and three **Lesser Spotted Eagles** at Nigula.

#### Nigula research station

During our fieldwork period we stayed at the Nigula Research Centre, some 20 km east of Häädemeeste. This centre is located in a thin band of agricultural fields between nature areas. In fact you can walk to the Nigula bog on a boardwalk within two minutes, so the research centre is not exactly located in the middle of an agricultural area. Therefore we could observe some interesting birds already on the grounds of the centre. **Common Nightjars** were hunting around the building in which we stayed while **Common Cranes** could be heard calling in a distance. The buildings of the centre provided housing to more **House Martins** than humans and a **European Hobby** was well aware of this. Some shrubs provided several songbirds such as **Chiffchaff**, **Willow Warbler**, **Common Whitethroat**, **Garden Warbler**, **Blackcap**, **Scarlet**

**Rosefinch** and **Yellowhammer**. Despite our efforts we could not find a much desired **Barred Warbler**. Somewhat higher in the trees both **Spotted** and **Pied Flycatcher** were present. A **Red-backed Shrike** family was hanging around as well. A very interesting discovery was that the numerous nest boxes around the research centre were used by **Common Swifts**. For me it was a big surprise to see a **Common Swift** apparently flying on high speed into a nest box hanging on a tree only 1.5 meters above the ground, whereas in the Netherlands they nest almost exclusively underneath tiles on the roofs of houses. However the best of the Nigula research centre was the regularly visiting **White-backed Woodpecker**. We saw the bird, a female, several days in her favourite tree, the first big dead tree on your right when you enter the grounds of the research centre.



White-backed Woodpecker and Common Swift at Nigula research station

#### Citrine Wagtail

On one of the first days of our stay we thought we had found a fantastic rarity for Estonia. While doing our fieldwork we heard a very suspicious flight call of a wagtail with two distinct white wing bars. The conclusion wasn't very hard to draw, we had seen a juvenile **Citrine Wagtail**. According to Mullaney's fieldguide to the birds of Europe, the Middle-East and north Africa this species doesn't occur anywhere near the Baltic states, so we decided to report our observation expecting to find a large crowd of birdwatchers searching for the bird the following day. However we faced a slight deception when things turned out a little different. We soon received a message that Citrine Wagtails are not that rare and even breeding in Estonia since the early 90's. Nowadays around 30-40 pairs breed in Estonia, largely concentrated along the Baltic Sea coastline. Despite this slight deception I was happy to have seen this unexpected species anyway and some more observations followed during the rest of our stay. Unfortunately I never had time to search for a bird on the ground so I didn't manage to get a picture of one. Be aware of the presence of this much desired species when birding in Estonia!

#### Species we did not see

How could we have added more species to our trip list? Of course that remains a bit of a speculation, but you should definitely: got out for birding earlier in the morning! We did most of our birding during midday when songbirds are quiet and other birds are more secretive. An early morning walk in the forests around Nigula or in suitable habitat at Soomaa should be able to produce much desired species like **Greenish Warbler**, **Red-breasted Flycatcher** and **Three-toed Woodpecker**. An early morning or late evening drive on some quiet dirt roads should result in **Hazel Grouse** and possible **Capercaillie**. For other species, such as **Grey-headed Woodpecker**, **Barred Warbler** and **Black Stork** it is especially a matter of searching a little harder in suitable habitat. I am not at all disappointed about our trip list, especially under the given circumstances, but the species mentioned here were very high on my 'wish-list'. I am determined to go back to Estonia some day for a visit in late May or early June when these species are much more easily found in their breeding habitat. I hope you now have a better idea of what you can expect to see when visiting Estonia in summer. Good luck and have fun!

## GPS coordinates of visited locations (also read by Google Maps)

### Nigula area

Nigula research station	N 58 00.939, E 24 43.185
Nigula bog parking lot	N 58 00.414, E 24 42.845
Nigula bog observation tower	N 58 00.688, E 24 42.523

### Häädemeeste

Observation tower	N 58 04.792, E 24 28.869
Cheap and fine restaurant!	N 58 04.749, E 24 29.981

### Pulgoja

Parking lot	N 58 05.903, E 24 28.632
Observation tower	N 58 06.094, E 24 28.220
Ringling station	N 58 06.306, E 24 28.395

### Pikla fish ponds

Observation tower fish ponds	N 58 10.883, E 24 27.983
Observation tower bay	N 58 10.449, E 24 27.282

### Võiste

Nature reserve	N 58 12.311, E 24 28.230
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### Matsalu Bay

Observation tower north	N 58 46.711, E 23 40.223
Observation tower south	N 58 44.719, E 23 40.512

### Soomaa National Park

Visitor centre ( <a href="http://www.soomaa.ee">www.soomaa.ee</a> )	N 58 25.850, E 25 01.838
Soomaa Bog	N 58 28.426, E 25 02.312
Riisa Bog	N 58 29.321, E 24 58.901

## Species list (systematic order)

Total: 135 species

**Great Crested Grebe**, Fuut, *Podiceps cristatus* – low numbers offshore

**Great Cormorant**, Aalscholver, *Phalacrocorax carbo* – abundant offshore

**Great Bittern**, Roerdomp, *Botaurus stellaris* – one at fish ponds

**Great Egret**, Grote Zilverreiger, *Ardea alba* – up to 20 individuals at Pulgoja

**Grey Heron**, Blauwe Reiger, *Ardea cinerea* – common near water

**White Stork**, Ooievaar, *Ciconia ciconia* – common on agricultural fields

**Mute Swan**, Knobbelzwaan, *Cygnus olor* – abundant offshore

**Whooper Swan**, Wilde Zwaan, *Cygnus cygnus* – several individuals in Matsalu Bay

**Greylag Goose**, Grauwe Gans, *Anser anser* – abundant in Matsalu Bay

**Shelduck**, Bergeend, *Tadorna tadorna* – rather common along the coast

**Mallard**, Wilde Eend, *Anas platyrhynchos* – common near water

**Gadwall**, Krakeend, *Anas strepera* – offshore

**Northern Pintail**, Pijlstaart, *Anas acuta* – few individuals at Võiste

**Northern Shoveler**, Slobeend, *Anas clypeata* – offshore  
**Widgeon**, Smient, *Mareca penelope* – offshore  
**Teal**, Wintertaling, *Anas crecca* – common near water  
**Garganey**, Zomertaling, *Anas querquedula* – few individuals at Pulgoja  
**Greater Scaup**, Topper, *Aythya marila* – offshore  
**Tufted Duck**, Kuifeend, *Aythya fuligula* – offshore  
**Goldeneye**, Brilduiker, *Bucephala clangula* – abundant offshore, one at Nigula bog  
**Goosander**, Grote Zaagbek, *Mergus merganser* – offshore  
**White-tailed Sea-Eagle**, Zeearend, *Hieraetus albicilla* – up to 9 individuals at Pulgoja  
**Osprey**, Visarend, *Pandion haliaetus* – one at Pulgoja  
**Golden Eagle**, Steenarend, *Aquila chrysaetos* – one at Soomaa National Park  
**Lesser Spotted Eagle**, Schreeuwarend, *Aquila pomarina* – three individuals at Nigula



Lesser Spotted Eagle at Nigula and White-tailed Sea-Eagle at Pulgoja

**Marsh Harrier**, Bruine Kiekendief, *Circus aeruginosus* – anywhere above reed beds  
**Common Buzzard**, Buizerd, *Buteo buteo* – rather common in agricultural areas  
**Honey Buzzard**, Wespendif, *Pernis apivorus* – rather common on forest edges  
**European Sparrowhawk**, Sperwer, *Accipiter nisus* – several individuals at Pulgoja  
**Goshawk**, Havik, *Accipiter gentilis* – several observations at Pulgoja  
**Common Kestrel**, Torenvalk, *Falco tinnunculus* – two individuals at Nigula bog  
**Eurasian Hobby**, Boomvalk, *Falco subbuteo* – several individuals  
**Merlin**, Smelleken, *Falco columbarius* – one juvenile at Pulgoja  
**Black Grouse**, Korhoen, *Tetrao tetrix* – two individuals (male) at Nigula  
**Corncrake**, Kwartelkoning, *Crex crex* – two individuals in coastal meadow at Häädemeeste  
**Water Rail**, Waterral, *Rallus aquaticus* – one calling at Pikla fish ponds  
**Common Coot**, Meerkoet, *Fulica atra* – Matsalu Bay and two on Pikla fish ponds  
**Common Crane**, Kraanvogel, *Grus grus* – common on agricultural fields  
**Common Ringed Plover**, Bontbekplevier, *Charadrius hiaticula* – common on sandbanks

**Golden Plover**, Goudplevier, *Pluvialis apricaria* – several individuals along the coast

**Northern Lapwing**, Kievit, *Vanellus vanellus* – common on sandbanks

**Knot**, Kanoet, *Calidris canutus* – one individual on sandbank at Haademeeste

**Dunlin**, Bonte Strandloper, *Calidris alpina* – common on sandbanks

**Temminck's Stint**, Temminck's Strandloper, *Calidris temminckii* – several individuals on sandbanks

**Little Stint**, Kleine Strandloper, *Calidris minuta* – rather common on sandbanks

**Wood Sandpiper**, Bosruiter, *Tringa glareola* – common near water

**Green Sandpiper**, Witgat, *Tringa ochropus* – several individuals at Vöiste

**Common Sandpiper**, Oeverloper, *Actitis hypoleucos* – one individual at Vöiste

**Common Redshank**, Tureluur, *Tringa totanus* – several individuals on sandbanks

**Spotted Redshank**, Zwarte Ruiter, *Tringa erythropus* – common on sandbanks offshore

**Greenshank**, Groenpootruiter, *Tringa nebularia* – common on sandbanks offshore

**Black-tailed Godwit**, Grutto, *Limosa limosa* – several individuals on sandbanks

**Eurasian Curlew**, Wulp, *Numenius arquata* – several individuals on sandbanks

**Whimbrel**, Regenwulp, *Numenius phaeopus* – scarce on migration

**Common Snipe**, Watersnip, *Gallinago gallinago* – common near water

**Red-necked Phalarope**, Grauwe Franjepoot, *Phalaropus lobatus* – one at Vöiste and Häädemeeste

**Ruff**, Kemphaan, *Philomachus pugnax* – common on sandbanks

**Black-headed Gull**, Kokmeeuw, *Larus ridibundis* – common offshore

**Common Gull**, Stormmeeuw, *Larus canus* – common

**Herring Gull**, Zilvermeeuw, *Larus argentatus* – common along the coast, also individuals with yellow legs

**Greater Black-backed Gull**, Grote Mantelmeeuw, *Larus marinus* – several individuals offshore

**Little Tern**, Dwergstern, *Sterna albifrons* – several individuals offshore

**Sandwich Tern**, Grote Stern, *Sterna sandvicensis* – several individuals offshore

**Common Tern**, Visdief, *Sterna hirundo* – common offshore

**Caspian Tern**, Reuzenster, *Sterna caspia* – common offshore

**Stock Dove**, Holenduif, *Columba oenas* – common on electricity wires in agricultural areas

**Wood Pigeon**, Houtduif, *Columba palumbus* – abundant

**Turtle Dove**, Zomertortel, *Streptopelia turtur* – several individuals on electricity wires and dirt roads

**Common Cuckoo**, Koekoek, *Cuculus canorus* – one at Vöiste

**European Nightjar**, Nachtzwaluw, *Caprimulgus europaeus* – common around Nigula research centre

**Common Swift**, Gierzwaluw, *Apus apus* – common

**Common Kingfisher**, IJsvogel, *Alcedo atthis* – one at Haademeeste and one in Soomaa

**Great Spotted Woodpecker**, Grote Bonte Specht, *Dendrocopus major* – common in forests

**White-backed Woodpecker**, Witrugspecht, *Dendrocopus leucotos* – several individuals at Nigula and one at Pikla fish ponds

**Lesser Spotted Woodpecker**, Kleine Bonte Specht, *Dendrocopus minor* – one at Nigula and Sooma

**Sky Lark**, Veldleeuwerik, *Alauda arvensis* – common in coastal meadows

**Sand Martin**, Oeverzwaluw, *Riparia riparia* – several individuals at Pulgoja

**Barn Swallow**, Boerenzwaluw, *Hirundo rustica* – common

**House Martin**, Huiszwaluw, *Delichon urbica* – abundant

**Meadow Pipit**, Graspieper, *Anthus pratensis* – common in coastal meadows

**Tree Pipit**, Boompieper, *Anthus trivialis* – common

**White Wagtail**, Witte Kwikstaart, *Motacilla alba* – common

**Yellow Wagtail**, Gele Kwikstaart, *Motacilla flava* – common in coastal meadows

**Citrine Wagtail**, Citroenkwikstaart, *Motacilla citreola* – several individuals in coastal meadows (Pulgoja and Vöiste)

**Wren**, Winterkoning, *Troglodytes troglodytes* – common in forests

**Hedge Accentor**, Heggenmus, *Prunella modularis* – common in forests

**European Robin**, Roodborst, *Erithacus rubecula* – common in forests

**Northern Wheatear**, Tapuit, *Oenanthe oenanthe* – common in coastal meadows

**Whinchat**, Paapje, *Saxicola rubetra* – common in coastal meadows and agricultural fields

**Song Thrush**, Zanglijster, *Turdus philomelos* – common

**Redwing**, Koperwiek, *Turdus iliacus* – several individuals at Nigula

**Common Blackbird**, Merel, *Turdus merula* – common in forests

**Garden Warbler**, Grasmus, *Sylvia borin* – several individuals at Nigula research centre

**Blackcap**, Zwartkop, *Sylvia atricapilla* – common at Nigula

**Lesser Whitethroat**, Braamsluiper, *Sylvia curruca* – several individuals at Matsalu and Nigula

**Whitethroat**, Grasmus, *Sylvia communis* – common

**Sedge Warbler**, Rietzanger, *Acrocephalus schoenobaenus* – common in reed beds

**Savi's Warbler**, Snor, *Locustella luscinioides* – one at Pulgoja

**Reed Warbler**, Kleine Karekiet, *Acrocephalus scirpaceus* – common in reed beds

**Great Reed Warbler**, Grote Karekiet, *Acrocephalus arundinaceus* – two individuals at Pikla fish ponds

**Willow Warbler**, Fitis, *Phylloscopus trochilus* – common

**Chiffchaff**, Tjiftjaf, *Phylloscopus collybita* – common

**Goldcrest**, Goudhaan, *Regulus regulus* – common in forests

**Spotted Flycatcher**, Grauwe Vliegenvanger, *Muscicapa striata* – common

**Pied Flycatcher**, Bonte Vliegenvanger, *Ficedula hypoleuca* – few at Nigula research centre

**Great Tit**, Koolmees, *Parus major* – common

**Blue Tit**, Pimpelmees, *Parus caeruleus* – common in forests

**Crested Tit**, Kuifmees, *Parus cristatus* – rather common in forests

**Willow Tit**, Matkop, *Parus montanus* – common in forests

**Long-tailed Tit**, Staartmees, *Aegithalos caudatus* – one flock heard at Soomaa

**Bearded Tit**, Baardman, *Panurus biarmicus* – common in reed beds

**Penduline Tit**, Buidelmees, *Remix pendulinus* – several individuals at Pulgoja and Pikla fish ponds

**Nuthatch**, Boomklever, *Sitta europaea* – common in forests

**Eurasian Treecreeper**, Boomkruiper, *Certhia familiaris* – several individuals around Soomaa and Nigula  
**Red-backed Shrike**, Grauwe Klauwier, *Lanius collurio* – common in coastal meadows and agricultural fields



Spotted Flycatcher at Nigula and Red-backed Shrikes at Pulgoja

**Magpie**, Ekster, *Pica pica* – common

**Eurasian Jay**, Gaai, *Garrulus glandarius* – common

**Jackdaw**, Kauw, *Corvus monedula* – several individuals in agricultural areas

**Rook**, Roek, *Corvus frugilegus* – rather common

**Hooded Crow**, Bonte Kraai, *Corvus cornix* – abundant

**Raven**, Raaf, *Corvus corax* – common

**Common Starling**, Spreeuw, *Sturnus vulgaris* – common

**Golden Oriole**, Wielewaal, *Oriolus oriolus* – one heard at Nigula research centre

**House Sparrow**, Huismus, *Passer domesticus* – common in human settlements

**Tree Sparrow**, Ringmus, *Passer montanus* – several individuals at Pulgoja

**Chaffinch**, Vink, *Fringilla coelebs* – common in forests

**Linnet**, Kneu, *Carduelis cannabina* – common in coastal meadows

**Goldfinch**, Putter, *Carduelis carduelis* – common

**Greenfinch**, Groenling, *Carduelis gloris* – abundant

**Eurasian Siskin**, Sijs, *Carduelis spinus* – common in (pine) forests

**Hawfinch**, Appelvink, *Coccothraustes coccothraustes* – two individuals at Nigula research centre

**Red Crossbill**, Kruisbek, *Loxia curvirostra* – once heard at Nigula research centre

**Scarlet Rosefinch**, Roodmus, *Carpodacus erythrinus* – one at Vöiste and two at Nigula research centre

**Reed Bunting**, Rietgors, *Emberiza schoeniclus* – common in reed beds

**Yellowhammer**, Geelgors, *Emberiza citrinella* – one male at Nigula research centre

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