

Birds and nests

Allowing black-throated loon, osprey, gulls and other birds to nest in peace and quiet is crucial for the continued diversity at Lake Helgasjön. Osprey nests are used year after year. Some seasons they remain empty, only to be used the following year. Even if you cannot see any birds at the nest, it may not be unoccupied. The chicks crouch deep down in the nest and are impossible to see from land or water. Gulls and terns make loud noises if you get too close to their nests or young. If they fly directly towards you, you should make a hasty retreat.

More birds at Lake Helgasjön



English name: **Hobby**

Latin name: *Falco subbuteo*

Number of pairs at Lake Helgasjön: **4–5**

With its long, pointed wings the hobby has the appearance of a large swift in flight. If you come too close to the breeding site, the birds will fly worriedly around, issuing agitated strings of ki, ki, ki. Move away immediately!

English name: **Great black-backed gull**

Latin name: *Larus marinus*

Number of pairs at Lake Helgasjön: **2–4**

Resembles a herring gull, but is larger and has blue-black wings and back.



English name: **Common sandpiper**

Latin name: *Actitis hypoleucos*

Number of pairs at Lake Helgasjön: **15–20**

Often stands swinging and bobbing its tail along stony shores, only to take off in a low flight over the water with rapid, shallow wing-beats. If the bird is protesting loudly, you have come too close to the nest or chicks. In the last few decades, the species has declined by 30 to 50 per cent in Sweden.

English name: **Black-headed gull**

Latin name: *Chroicocephalus ridibundus*

Number of pairs at Lake Helgasjön: **15–20**

A keystone species in the Swedish bird community. The ability to loudly raise the alarm when threats arise is made use of by many other birds seeking protective nesting near colonies of black-headed gulls. The species has dramatically declined in Sweden. Since the mid-1970s, almost 75 per cent of all black-headed gulls have disappeared.



English name: **Common gull**

Latin name: *Larus canus*

Number of pairs at Lake Helgasjön: **around 100**

Creamy white with grey wings and yellow beak. Lake Helgasjön is one of the bird's most important breeding sites in Kronoberg County.

English name: **Herring gull**

Latin name: *Larus argentatus*

Number of pairs at Lake Helgasjön: **60–80**

In many ways, a larger edition of a common gull. Since the 1990s, the herring gull has rapidly declined in Sweden. The population at Lake Helgasjön is among the very most important in Kronoberg County.



English name: **Common tern**

Latin name: *Sterna hirundo*

Number of pairs at Lake Helgasjön: **0–4**

Flies gracefully like a butterfly. The body is white, and the wings are greyish. Black cap and long tail streamers are characteristic.

Birdlife at LAKE HELGASJÖN



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Welcome to Lake Helgasjön!

People, boats, birds and fish. Lake Helgasjön has room for all. The lake's environments are teeming with life. To preserve the assets and the beauty, all visitors must show respect and consideration. In this way, we can enjoy the distinctive call of the black-throated loon and ospreys gliding overhead, even in the future.

Natural treasure of global interest

More than 100 species of birds are regularly found at Lake Helgasjön. The Swedish populations of black-throated loon and osprey are of great international importance. Calling loons and gliding ospreys also largely contribute to the experience at Lake Helgasjön.

Osprey (*Pandion haliaetus*)

Black, white and brown with an impressive wingspan. Osprey is the largest bird of prey in Sweden, after golden

eagle and white-tailed eagle. When hunting, ospreys often stop in mid-air and hover before plummeting to the water's surface.

Today, the majority of Europe's ospreys are found in Scandinavia, Finland and Russia. Disturbance of breeding sites is perhaps the largest threat to the species. Many places also lack old trees that are big enough to hold the raptor's bulky nest made from sticks.

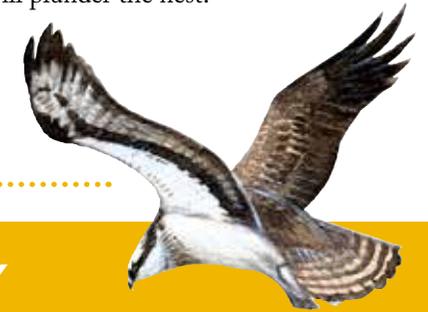
Between 13 and 17 osprey pairs nest at Lake Helgasjön. The birds arrive in early April. Shortly thereafter, nesting begins and lasts until the end of summer. During August and September, the ospreys leave Lake Helgasjön for their winter quarters, mainly in West Africa.

Black-throated loon (*Gavia arctica*)

Black-throated loon is adapted to life on the water. The plumage is so close to the body that it resembles a wetsuit.

Also, the feet are located at the back of the body and used like paddles. The call, with its strong wilderness sound, is heard mainly in the evenings and mornings.

Between 13 and 16 pairs nest at Lake Helgasjön. The birds arrive in late March or early April. Shortly thereafter, nesting begins. Since the birds have difficulties walking on land, the nest is placed as close as possible to the shore. At the same time, this constitutes a danger for the black-throated loon. Sudden rises in water level result in nests being flooded and breeding disturbed. The backwash from motorboats or personal watercrafts can drown eggs and chicks. If you come too close, the birds leave their nest. There is a great risk that the eggs become cold or that a crow or raven will plunder the nest.



BLACK-THROATED LOON

WHAT YOU CAN DO!

- Move away if the birds seem agitated.
- Do not go ashore on small islands or islets during the birds' breeding period, from the breaking up of the ice until mid-July.

YOU ARE IN THE WRONG PLACE WHEN ...

- the black-throated loon is sitting low in the water with its head stretched forward. This behaviour shows that the bird is worried. You are probably close to the nest.
- you can approach a black-throated loon which seems tame and remains in the same place. Again, there is a risk that you are close to the nest.



OSPREY

WHAT YOU CAN DO!

- Keep at least 100 metres from the osprey's nest.
- Move away if the birds seem disturbed or make an agitated alarm call.
- Avoid lying still with your boat near osprey nests.
- Never go ashore in places where you suspect there may be an osprey nest.

YOU ARE IN THE WRONG PLACE WHEN ...

- the osprey circles worriedly above you. If so, you are probably too close to the nest.
- the osprey makes loud, worried calls or whistles.