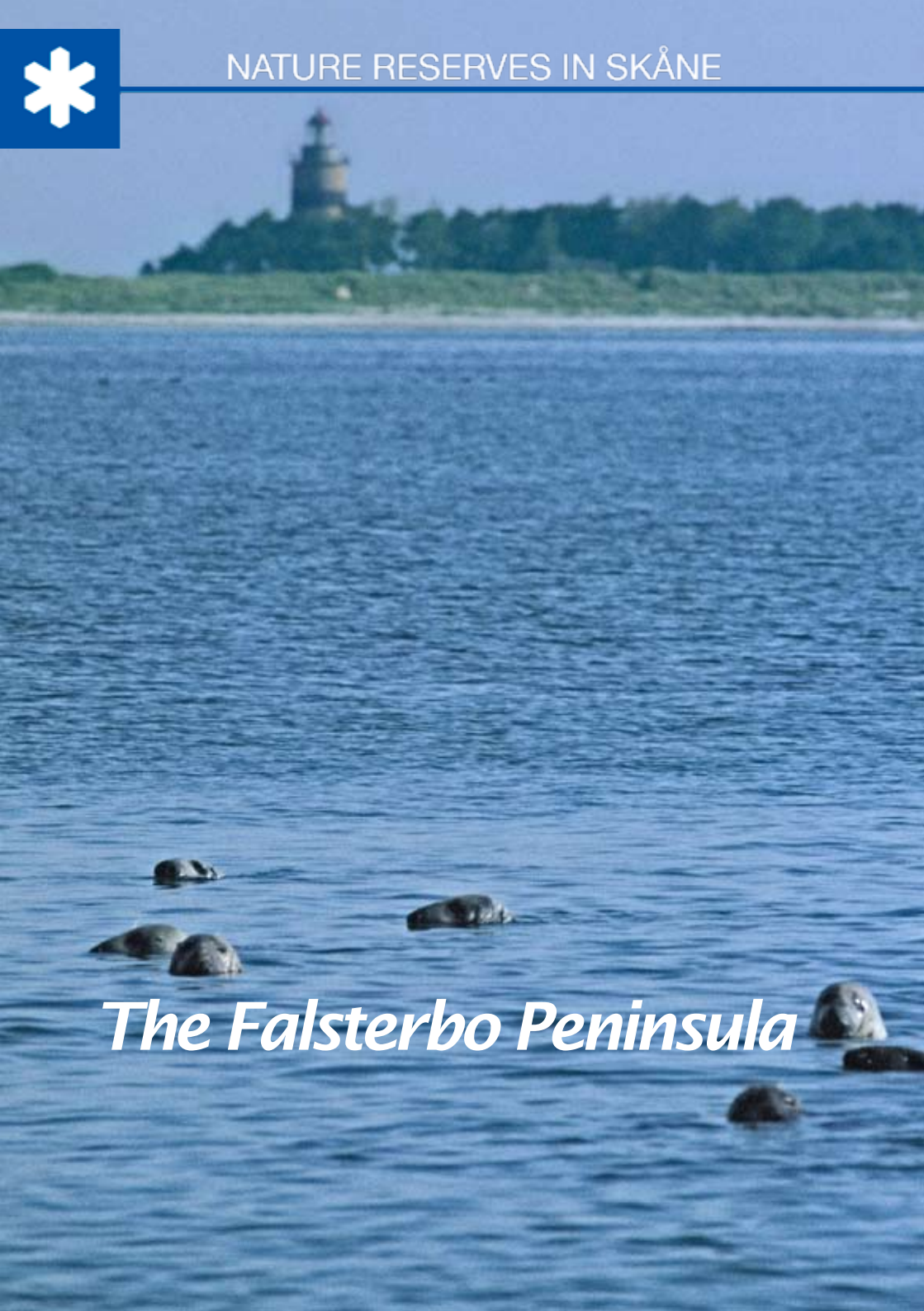
NATURE RESERVES IN SKÅNE



The Falsterbo Peninsula

Every year the Falsterbo Peninsula attracts a large number of visitors. Sandy beaches for bathing and recreation and unique natural environments together with the settlements of Skanör and Falsterbo with their medieval traditions and other relics of cultural history make for an area with features unique from a national and European perspective. The natural and cultural values of the peninsula are without equal in Sweden, and are of interest nationally for the conservation of their natural and cultural environments. The Falsterbo Peninsula is also of national interest for outdoor life. The entire coastline has been declared a wetland area worthy of international protection. The sea area and large parts of the land area are nature reserves and Natura 2000 areas.

The ocean currents have built up the Falsterbo Peninsula by means of a system of sandbanks but the landscape is still changing. Protected inlets and bays, wet heaths and shoreline wet grasslands, grassy heaths and other natural environments here in the south-west corner of Sweden have created the conditions for an unusually rich variety of species of flora and fauna.

This promontory projecting into the Baltic Sea towards the continent of Europe also acts as a springboard towards the south-west for birds migrating in autumn, which makes the area one of the richest in the world for bird life in late summer and autumn.

We hope that a greater knowledge of the landscape and its character will provide an understanding, feeling and concern for its authentic and fundamental values. There is a great deal to see and experience here.

Welcome!

Country Administrative Board of Skåne

Content

Between ocean and mainland

PHOTO: ARNE SCHMITZ/N

The Falsterbo Peninsula, in the south-west corner of Sweden, rose above sea level in association with the elevation of the land after the Ice Age and has subsequently – through wind and wave action – been built up from sand, which here, beyond the clay plains of south-western Skåne, comprises the only soil type. The remarkable shape of the peninsula has been formed around morainic ridges south of Falsterbo, north of Skanör and at Ljunghusen. Around these cores of more solid material the sand on the ocean floor has accumulated and has gradually spread into the surrounding areas. This is a never-ending process – the mobile sand has migrated continuously and has both been deposited and eroded along the coast – a development that is still ongoing.

The low-lying peninsula, consisting of sandbanks that have been thrown up with intercalated stretches of water, hardly tempted early settlement on a large scale. The "Great Age of the Herring" in the 13th and 14th centuries attracted a large number of people to the area; the twin towns were founded then with their centres located on the driest parts of the outer promontories. As a protection against flooding, available materials had to be employed: peat and eelgrass for their "dikes", i.e. embankments of seaweed. These run round the settlements and between what were once infields and outfields.

When the fishing boom ended towards the end of the Middle Ages and the trade ebbed away, the opportunities for providing a living declined, and with it the area's importance for its surroundings. Separated from the mainland by a broad and desolate heather-covered moor, Skanör and Falsterbo lay like small and somewhat isolated islands. The advent of summer guests at the beginning of the 20th century caused the area once again to become interesting in the eyes of its surroundings. The real upswing came only in the last half of the last century. Settlement has today expanded from the older town centres out across fields and pastures. A corresponding development has taken place in the eastern parts of the peninsula, where summer cottages were first established in the heathy forest and then all-year round houses.

The settlements are still surrounded by valuable countryside, ocean and sandy beaches, wet grasslands and heather moor and protected in order to preserve the peninsula's character for the foreseeable future.

PHOTO: ARNE SCHMITZ/N

Geology before our very eyes

PHOTO: ARNE SCHMITZ/N

The Falsterbo Peninsula literally rests on shifting sands. Quartz grains with smaller quantities of feldspar and magnetite and a few grains of hornblende and garnet and an average grain size of 0.27 mm – this is the factual content of the white sand on and round the peninsula. The beaches change every day and are constantly affected by waves and currents, high and low tide and winds that take charge of and carry the washed-up sand farther up the beach. The mobility of the sand can best be seen during autumn storms, when the ocean waves make the greatest inroads into the beaches. The steep, high erosion scarps are mostly healed quickly when the wind brings with it new material from the beach level and rebuilds the sand dunes.

PHOTO: ARNE SCHMITZ/N

Cartographical material from recent centuries shows how the peninsula has gradually grown out of the sea. Sandbank has been added to sandbank and little by little they have been built up, acquired ground cover and become permanent tongues of land between the ocean inlets. These have in their turn become silted up by the sand, whereupon they too have been invaded by vegetation. This process is still going on and at a rapid pace.

On the higher ground, too, the changes have been rapid. In the 20th century sand dunes were formed south of Skanör harbour and near Falsterbo Golf Club. The most beautiful sand dune landscape extends along the south coast beyond Strandbaden at Falsterbo.

PHOTO: ARNE SCHMITZ/N

The combination of shallow beaches and a relatively high water temperature in summer and, of course, the vicinity of population centres has resulted in the Falsterbo Peninsula accommodating some of Sweden's most popular bathing resorts.
The white sand is attractive not merely to humans. A large number of coastal birds seek out these beaches to nest, but of course require peace and quiet, which is nowadays difficult to find. Islands and remote sandbanks are the natural places of refuge for these species.

Coastal Reserves

The countryside is protected on and around almost the entire Falsterbo Peninsula beyond the built-up area. The reserve system has been instituted for reasons of geology, marine biology, zoology, botany as well as historical land-use. This corresponds with the international protection the area has been given by being included in the Ramsar CW List (Convention on Wetlands) – wetlands that Sweden has undertaken to protect.
The nature reserves are subject to largely the same regulations. Some of them, seal and bird conservation areas, have prohibited access at certain times of the year. Generally speaking, one should neither destroy nor disturb; look but not touch (e.g. flowers) and not leave any traces behind. In all of the nature reserves it is prohibited to pick or dig up plants. What applies to the various reserves is clear from the signs erected at car parks and on the most frequented access roads. The reserves and certain other areas are now also Natura 2000 areas.

Grasslands

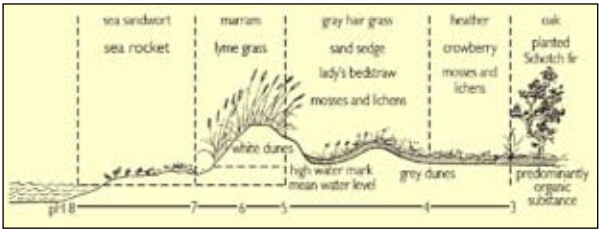
PHOTO: ARNE SCHMITZ/N

The green fringes within the beaches are landscapes with a cultural character but at the same time comprise a natural marshland formed in the zone between sea and land, washed by fresh and salt water alternately. Muzzles have pruned back the vegetation and kept the tussocky, short-cropped grass cover intact down the ages. A continuation of the work of grazing is a condition for the preservation of the natural values.

Salt marshes, the more descriptive term, characterise the salt-tolerance of the flora. Grass and sedge dominate the plant community with, primarily, species of fescue grass and meadow grass, whilst denser carpets of thrift, silverweed and sea plantain at different elevations provide striking features, as in places do the silver-grey clumps of sea wormwood.

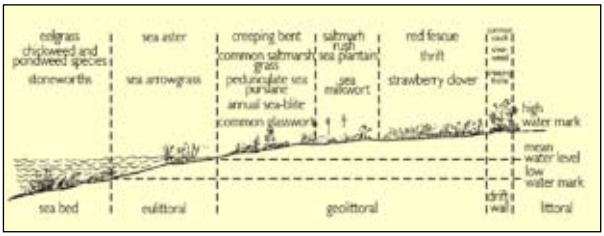
This type of terrain is very attractive to birds, primarily waders but also ducks and gulls. Some rare species for Sweden have their only or main breeding sites here: the Kentish plover (now not annually), southern dunlin, avocet and little tern.

Wet grasslands frame almost the entire Falsterbo Peninsula, but are best represented at Flommen, round Foteviken Inlet and at Ängsnäset Point at the southern edge of Skanörs Ljung.



SKETCH: PETER ELFMAN

Generalised sketch of vegetation zones in a Skåne sandy beach.



SKETCH: PETER ELFMAN

Generalised sketch of vegetation zones in a grazed wet grassland on the Öresund coast.

PHOTO: J-Å HILLARP/N

European green toad.

PHOTO: J-Å HILLARP/N

Natterjack toad.

Threatened amphibians and reptiles

The wet grasslands and sandy beaches are home to some of the rarest animal species among Sweden's fauna. On mild and windless nights in May or early June one can hear an almost tropical sound from the chorus of European green toads at Eskilstorps ängar (Eskilstorp meadows). The meadows are one of only three original habitats for the species and the only wet grassland habitat, which makes it extremely important from a national perspective.

At Flommen and at the Ljunghusen Golf Club there are natterjack toads, a species restricted to sandy areas. Outside the breeding season they can be seen scurrying between the lyme grass and the blades of marram grass in the dunes or down on the banks of seaweed in their hunt for food. After spawning, the toads move inland and are often to be found hiding under, among other things, piles of timber in gardens.

Both the natterjack and the green toad are sensitive to acidification and changes in the biotope. Both species of toad are, like all of Sweden's amphibians and reptiles, protected by law and may not be harmed or disturbed. For this reason the retrieval of lost golf balls is prohibited in the wet areas during the breeding season in May and June.

On the Falsterbo Peninsula there is also a small population of the heat-loving, egg-laying sand lizard. During the mating season the males are a beautiful green colour with a pale brown back, whilst the females may be more difficult to distinguish from their common smaller relative, the common lizard. In the deeper pools in the wet grasslands spawns the rare great crested newt. Apart from these species the common frog, moor frog, common toad and common newt occur generally.

The grass snake and adder have in recent years only been recorded a few times.

Flommen

The meadows and wetlands along the shore west of Falsterbo have since time immemorial been called Flommen. They consist of more or less dry meadows with intervening elongated lagoons – initially inlets formed when the sandbanks grew out and cut them off from the sea.

The contact with Öresund was earlier maintained northwards through Lake Ålasjön and Bakdjupet, whereby the flow could occur almost unimpeded concurrently with high and low water through the entire system all the way to Falsterbo lighthouse. The construction of roads, in-filling and embankments have reduced the water supply to the inner parts of Flommen. The water has become more stagnant, which in its turn has accelerated the natural grow-back of vegetation.

The grazing of cattle ceased in the mid 20th century and reeds have to a great extent invaded the wetland areas. The restoration of the wetlands is today going on in certain parts of the reserve through grazing to reduce the reeds, shorten the grass cover and recreate the earlier tussocky quality, all to the benefit of wading birds.

Lapwing, redshank, oystercatcher and even avocet have for this reason resumed their old breeding habitats. The zone above the shore has to a great extent been occupied by copses of rosa rugosa bushes, which smother other vegetation. The two species, sea holly and blue iris, are particularly vulnerable.

The concentration of migratory birds in this the south-western point of Sweden makes the Flommen nature reserve significant for resting birds and waders. The latter like to be in the open, grazed areas, whilst geese and other water birds also like the reed-dominated lagoons. Different species of geese feed in autumn up on the grassy areas, as well as in the cattle pastures and on the golf courses.

The sandbanks north of Skanör Harbour have long been a habitat for terns and waders. The permanent part of the Northern Reef continues far to the north with a sandy bottom sometimes below and sometimes above sea level – an unusual type of landscape which in late summer is appreciated by resting flocks of waders.

The dry moor on Hovbacken, north of the harbour road in Skanör used to be the location of the temporary houses for the fishing season. Excavations have brought to light e.g. remains of booths and fish waste. The Bakdjupet Inlet was at that time sailable. The cultural historical remains of the high prestige dwellings, Skanör Castle ruin and Falsterbohus Castle, rise up in the reserve as a grassy mound and restored ruined walls with moats respectively. Most striking is Falsterbo Lighthouse, which has recently reached the ripe old age of 200. Kolabacken Hill, the location of the earlier lighthouse which was in use until 1796, is also a historic monument within the reserve.

Sea holly.

Barnacle geese.

PHOTO: ARNE SCHMITZ/N

Skanörs ljung

PHOTO: ARNE SCHMITZ/N

During the golden age of the Falsterbo Peninsula the trees, which presumably consisted of oak thickets, were felled so that the timber could be used for booths, boats, barrels, tools and fuel. When this clear-felling had taken place, turf – for want of something better – was used as fuel and also seaweed banks; the heather began to establish itself. At the same time the land was left open to wind erosion. Tree planting was initiated in the 19th century to bind together the sand, primarily to protect the settlements but then was also carried out on the open moor. 150 years ago the heather moor covered half the peninsula apart from the built-up area in Skanör-Falsterbo with its associated fields on Knävången and Falsterbo vång. As late as the early 1940s the view from the road across Ljungen (Road 100) was open to the sea on both sides.

After the decision to make it into a reserve, the present-day open heather moor may not be reduced in area, and must be preserved as a type of landscape unique in Sweden, a mosaic of wet and dry moor with bell-heather and common heather as dominant features. We are given reminders of the past by, for example, bog myrtle and birch. Scottish Highland cattle are used to help prevent the area from becoming overgrown: they graze so efficiently that the heather moor with its vegetation of herbs and grasses can be maintained. Even if the dominance of heather is not threatened other than possibly by the wide white fields of cotton grass during the early summer, a number of rare plants are to be found out among the tussocks, e.g. bog-hair grass, marsh clubmoss, northern eyebright and marsh gentian.

The heather grows on poor soils, and in this environment only carefully adapted species exist. Among the birds the meadow pipit is regarded as the signature species, while the lapwing, skylark and whinchat are among the birds nesting regularly and the curlew and short-eared owl have temporary nest sites there. Ljungen is, however, most famous for its migrating birds of prey.

Ängsnäset, stretching the length of the shore zone south of Skanörs ljung, is a wetland area of the Flommen type, with tussocky, wet grassland as well as dry sandy sections together with stretches of water with a more or less muddy bottom. The sand spit which used to jut out into the sea is now becoming attached to the mainland and is an attractive habitat for birds.

Waders in particular, most celebrated among them the Kentish plover, have bred here, and in summer and autumn a multiplicity of species, not least Arctic species, rest here on their way south.

PHOTO: BJÖRN HILLARP

PHOTO: ARNE SCHMITZ/N

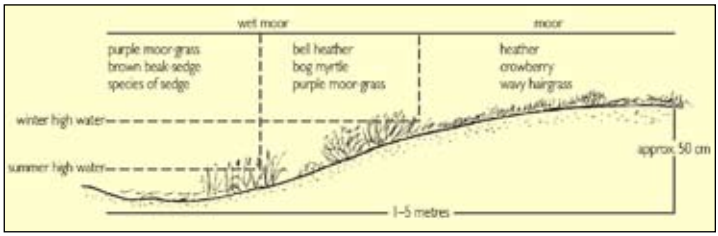
Northern eyebright

The plantations of Scotch pine, which have gradually spread out over large parts of the old heather moor, have of course brought with them their own species. Kestrel, long-eared owl and even sparrow hawk have taken up residence in both the Ljungen nature reserve and the developed areas of the heather forest, just as have a number of small birds in gardens, among others the tree pipit and chiffchaff. The Scotch pine forest has for several decades been replaced by oaks in an attempt to recreate something of the landscape before the golden age of the herring.

In the south-eastern corner of the Ljungen reserve there is an earth bank, the so-called Skyttsie hage, dating from the Middle Ages. The remains of buildings from the early Iron Age have also been excavated. Circular hollows out on the open moor are relics of the days of peat-digging, drainage pits around stacks of drying peat. Apart from its use as fuel, peat was also used to form enclosures.

Ammerännan runs straight through Ljungen, a stream that today is not much more than a metre wide. During the Middle Ages it is said to have been navigable at least by small boats. Whether this waterway is natural or whether it is entirely or partially excavated is not clear.

In order to facilitate shipping around this corner of Skåne during the Second World War, with its mined shipping lanes, excavation began in 1940 on the Falsterbo Canal, and as early as August 1941 ships passed through it for the first time. During icy winters large numbers of sea birds gather here in the fairway kept open by ships. Flocks of tufted duck regularly shelter in the lee behind the moles, and in these flocks can be seen a number of other sea ducks: pochard, scaup, goldeneye, goosander and red-breasted merganser. Smew also appear between the ice floes, sometimes in their hundreds in harder winters.



SKETCH: PETER ELFMAN

Diagrammatic sketch of vegetation zones on Skanörs ljung. Partly after Mattiasson 1974.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Gessie villastad
NR Eskiltorps ängar
Eskiltorps holmar
NR Falsterbohalvöns havsområde marine reserve
Fote-viken Inlet
NR Lilla Hammarsnäs
NR Flommen
Bakdjupet Inlet
NR Skanör Höll
Höllviken Bay
NR Norra Ljunghusen
Skanör Harbour
Skanör
Lake Alasjön
Höllviken
Falsterbo
NR Skanörs Ljung (The Heath)
Ljunghusen
NR Kämpinge strandbad
Falsterbo Lighthouse
Bird Observatory
Angsnäset Point
Kämpingebukten
Nabben
Falsterbobukten
NR Ljungskogen & Ljunghusens strandbad
NR Falsterbohalvöns havsområde marine reserve
NR Måkläppen
0
3 km

Prohibited access

applies in certain areas to protect the fauna from disturbance.

- *The sandbanks north of Skanör Harbour* have prohibited access during the breeding season (1 April–15 July).
- *Ängsnäset Point* has prohibited access during the breeding season (1 April–15 July).
- *Lilla Hammarsnäs Point* and all the islands at the mouth of Foteviken Inlet have prohibited access during the breeding season (15 April–15 July).
- *The former island of Måkläppen,* now a spit of land, has prohibited access during the period 1 February–31 October. The prohibition also applies to the waters around Måkläppen, where no vessels may approach, marked by the buoys put out annually.

The wet grasslands around the shallow Foteviken Inlet are low and flat, which means that they can become partially inundated even at moderate high water – particularly the winding mud channels between the grassy islands and tussocks. Beside them there are also excavated hollows, water-filled holes, which bear witness to ancient peat diggings for fuel, material for seaweed embankments etc. In these holes the water evaporates more slowly and gives rise to a certain salinity, which in its turn favours particularly salt-tolerant plants.

Further up towards the land on some rather drier areas extend sparse fields of round grass tussocks, the work of ants. The yellow ant is interesting both as a builder and as a link in the ecosystem, because it lives in symbiosis with both a root aphid and a beetle. The tussocks also carry a botanical rarity, the meadow violet, which here has its only habitat on the Swedish mainland.

The grazing animals have kept the grass short and intact over the millennia, which thereby reflects an ancient land use. Apart from the grass, plants resistant to grazing flourish such as Danish scurvy-grass, which in spring forms extensive mats, or a species such as dune gentian, whose rich population is explained by its bitter taste, carefully avoided by the sensitive muzzles of the cattle.

PHOTO: J-Å HILLARP/N

Ant-hill

Lapwing. PHOTO: ARNE SCHMITZ/N

Large numbers of waders breed out on the open. Avocet, lapwing, redshank and oystercatcher can be spotted a long way off, whilst the ringed plover and the two celebrities, the (southern) dunlin and Kentish plover, move more discretely between the tussocks.

Islands have a special power of attraction for nesting birds, which seem to have a good sense of where they can feel secure from predators and disturbances. Gulls and ducks to a great extent nest on the grassy islets outside the entrance to Foteviken Inlet, and on the small islands of Eskilstorps holmar in recent years colonies of cormorant have become established. The meadows of Eskilstorp and Vellinge are bird-rich habitats which can be reached by roads west from Vellinge.

The Fotevik area is, however, also a very important resting area for migrating birds, and some more hardy species regularly overwinter here. Most spectacular are the great flocks of geese (greylag goose, Canada goose, barnacle goose, white-fronted goose, bean goose) which spend the night on the small islets, but which in the morning come ashore to their grazing areas and at dusk return to the islands. Over a month or so in late autumn each year golden plover in swarms of many thousands visit the meadows with almost as many lapwing. Ducks have in Foteviken a place of refuge as nutritious as it is secure, and they can be seen in an impressive richness of species and individuals. Raptors follow their prey: buzzard and rough-legged buzzard hunt small rodents from their posts, whilst the peregrine falcon, and sometimes the gyr falcon, sweep across the fields, prepared to sink their claws into whatever emerges.

Landscape historians consider that the grassy areas which have been grazed from time immemorial are as worthy of protection as other ancient monuments. The fact that the land has been used since earliest times is demonstrated by the Eskilstorp dolmen at the edge of fields and meadows. It was erected as early as the Stone Age and dates human activity here to 5,000 years ago. On the meadows beyond there is a circular embankment, approximately 30 m in diameter, 400 to 500-year-olds remains of a presumed enclosure for oxen awaiting export to the continent.

There is a proposal to make the entire Fotevik area into a nature reserve.

The sea areas of the Falsterbo Peninsula

The Falsterbo Peninsula is surrounded by a marine reserve. This stretches out to a depth of 15 metres, which means practically right out to the limits of Swedish territorial waters. The shifting sand makes this whole area geologically interesting and the character of the sea bed and turnover in the water creates the prerequisites for a rich composition of marine flora and fauna.

Common eelgrass which occurs across large areas at moderate depth plays an important role as the haunt of small animals in a considerable variety of species – prawns, polychaetes, snails and mussels. The prawn catch was for a long period a lucrative occupation on the shallow grounds of Höllviken and at Kämpinge.

A number of fish species – among them lumpfish and garpike – spawn in these underwater beds; herring in both spring and autumn spawnings and both their and others' fry gain protection and sustenance in this environment. Swan, duck and coot, which primarily live on vegetable matter, can reach the bottom in the shallow inlets and graze on this vegetation. The flock of mute swans inside and off Höllviken Bay, known for several centuries, is explained primarily by this food source.

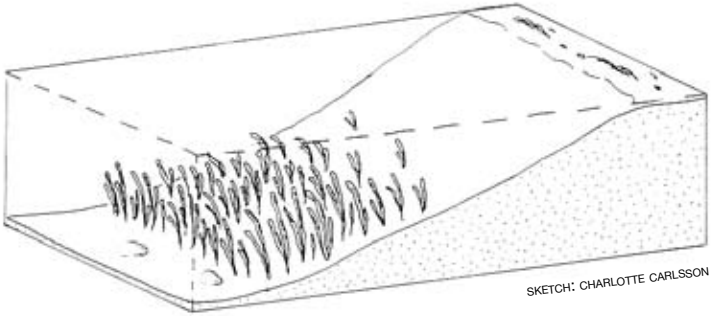
During the 1930s the eelgrass was hit by an epidemic which spread along the entire coastline of Europe. It was an ecological catastrophe with repercussions through the food chains. The small animals living in the protective eelgrass beds declined drastically. Certain species of fish were stricken in the same way, and the Brent goose, among others, had problems when the eelgrass disappeared. The eelgrass beds have returned and are now spreading out primarily in Höllviken Bay and northwards.

Even the barer sandy bottoms have their fish fauna, with flatfish as the main representative. Turbot has Sweden's most important spawning ground in the waters off Måkläppen. Seals, which are at the top of the food chain, are entirely dependent on the supply of fish in their habitat.

Large numbers of seabirds are to be found in the sea around the Falsterbo Peninsula all

PHOTO: ARNE SCHMITZ/N

Common eider on the nest.



Profile of sea bottom with eelgrass.

year round. Eider rest in impressive flocks, and south of Måkläppen red-breasted merganser number into the thousands during the moulting season in the autumn. Cormorants, which in recent years have become increasingly common along the entire coast, get a great deal of their sustenance from the bottom vegetation.

The marine reserve has, what is more, significant cultural values. Falsterbo Reef has for centuries been a feared area of water, and many boats lie buried in its sands. Only a few have been salvaged or studied more closely, but at present people are working on studying the wrecks around the Falsterbo Peninsula.

Amber was a significant commodity in the Middle Ages and is undergoing something of a renaissance today. Around the peninsula it appears to drift ashore more than anywhere else, and many people today look for the 40–50 million year old fossilised pieces of resin.

Måkläppen

Furthest out in the south-west, the Skåne quadrilateral ends in a strange sand formation, a 5 km long, narrow island arc, best known for its rich bird life. Måkläppen is in principle the country's oldest nature reserve, as it was placed under protection as early as 1902. In the 1930s Måkläppen, then an island, had an area of only 50x100 metres and lay about 1 km off Nabben. With the continuous shifting of sand, Måkläppen has since increased in size and attached itself to the mainland and is moving northwards. The previously so rich birdlife, with 20 or so nesting species – gulls, terns, ducks and waders – has changed substantially over the years and is currently at a very low level.

The protection of the water was lost when contact was made with the shore, which opened up a wonderful larder to fox and mink.

Måkläppen has the country's only colony of both harbour seals and grey seals. For the grey seal this is its only fixed abode in the entire southern Baltic. Both species pup (give birth to young) on the island.

In March the white grey seal pups are born. After 14 days their mother stops nursing them and they have then gained in weight from approx. 10 kg to almost 50 kg. During the week that follows the pup sheds its white fur and enters the water to fend for itself there. For the adult seals the mating season has already begun, and when it is over they start to shed their fur. This continues to the beginning of June, and the seals then like to lie up on the land. Around 100 grey seals live on Måkläppen, but in recent years only one pup

PHOTO: BJÖRN HILLARP

Grey seal pup.

PHOTO: J-Å HILLARP/N

Harbour seal, 6-8 weeks.

has been born each year. This is mostly due to disturbances during the period when the females are looking for a quiet place to pup.

Throughout the Baltic there are scarcely 900 harbour seals, of which approximately 120 live on Måkläppen. The pups are born here around midsummer, 10–15 in number. They often go into the water directly after birth and follow their mother for 5–6 weeks. In August mating takes place, and directly after that they shed their fur. Just over 100 harbour seals rest on the sandbanks in the bay at Måkläppen. They are also to be found on Segelskären south of Ljunghusen and Blacks Reef in Höllviken Bay. They can often be studied with binoculars from the shore, e.g. at Nabben.

Threats to the seals, primarily to the pups in surrounding waters include substances toxic to the environment, oil and fishing gear. In recent years foxes have gone out and taken their toll among the new-born pups.

Migratory birds across Falsterbo

Falsterbo has long been renowned as one of the best places in Europe for watching the autumn passage of migrating birds. Above all, the migration of raptors has made the place famous. The reason that so many migrating birds choose this route is that most of the migrants from Northern Europe fly in a south-westerly direction in autumn. Thus, the Falsterbo Peninsula becomes a "bottleneck" where the birds concentrate after flying over land or following the coastlines. At Falsterbo they are finally forced to cross the sea, which normally discourages species that live inland.

The "autumn migration" actually starts during mid-summer, when many gulls, terns and waders are seen, but even the newly fledged broods of starling gather in large flocks and go south on early mornings at Nabben. During early August the long-distance migrants start their journey from the Nordic countries to the tropical regions of Africa. Many species of warblers, flycatchers and swallows belong to this category. During late August the raptors appear, primarily the honey-buzzard, osprey and marsh harrier, which are all wintering south of the Sahara.

In September, medium- and short-distance migrants increasingly take over, i.e. those species which have their winter quarters in Europe or North Africa. In mid-September the mighty finch migration starts. This is dominated by the chaffinch, of which more than half a million may pass at Nabben on a good day.

During September, you also have the opportunity of seeing most Nordic raptor species and even some from more easterly parts of Europe. Most numerous is sparrowhawk, which also has the longest migration period of all raptors, from August to mid-November.

In October the buzzard is the predominant raptor, sometimes several thousands can be seen in the same day. Nowadays, the red kite also appears in impressive numbers. Many red kites winter in Skåne but around 2,000 migrants pass at Falsterbo. Just a couple of decades ago it was regarded as seriously endangered but has recovered at an amazing speed.

Large picture: Linnet. PHOTO BJÖRN HILLARP

Buzzard.

Rough-legged buzzard.

PHOTO: J-Å HILLARP/N

The migration of medium- and short-distance migrants continues through October, with many different species of finches, thrushes and enormous flocks of wood pigeon. In some years, irruptions of woodpeckers, tits, jays, nutcrackers and crossbills occur. These birds are normally not migrants, but shortage of food in their usual habitats and/or a large population force them to migrate.

Since the late 1940s ringing of birds has been carried out at Falsterbo Bird Observatory. Birds are trapped in mist nets in the Lighthouse Garden and in the reedbed at Flommen. On average 25,000 birds are ringed every year, most of them (80%) during autumn. Since 1980, the ringing programme at Falsterbo Bird Observatory is standardised, which makes it a useful tool for monitoring bird populations, as the totals are fully comparable between years. The monitoring shows significant long-term decreases in many long-distance migrants, while some medium- and short distance migrants are increasing. Additionally, the recoveries of ringed birds still help to determine flight paths, breeding and wintering areas of migrants. Monitoring and recoveries provide very important data in relation to the on-going global climate change.

PHOTO: P-G BENTZ

Falsterbo Bird Observatory also carries out local monitoring of breeding coastal birds in Vellinge Municipality, providing basic data for the status and future protection of shorebirds. In fact, protection actions are already very urgent, since the general trend for the breeding coastal birds is all negative, mainly as a consequence of predation and increasing disturbances connected with the urbanization of the whole region. During ringing seasons, Falsterbo Bird Observatory offers guiding for pre-booked groups (school children, birdwatchers and many others). The guidings take place at the Falsterbo Lighthouse and include ringing of recently trapped birds. Please visit the Falsterbo Bird Observatory web site www.skof.se/fbo for all kinds of detailed information.

A botanical garden

Forest, primarily Scotch pine, has been planted on the Falsterbo Peninsula to prevent large movements of sand. Over the past 100 years the forest and built-up areas have spread at the cost of the heather moorland. The two town parks, in Skanör and Falsterbo, were created during the 19th century. The species composition differed from that out on the moor, perhaps because town-dwellers themselves were encouraged to protect their house and home by planting trees. The elm grove near Falsterbo Church appeared presumably out of a desire to protect the shrine, whilst the rest of Falsterbo plantation, which the park is really called, seems to have been the fruit of independent initiative. The result has in any case been a nature park with a multiplicity of tree species – almost all the Swedish deciduous trees are represented here.

* * *

Scientific names

Plants	
Annual Sea-blite	*Suaeda maritima*
Autumn Hawbit	*Leontodon autumnalis*
Blue Iris	*Iris spuria*
Bog Myrtle	*Myrica gale*
Bog-hair Grass	*Deschampsia setacea*
Brown Beak-sedge	*Rhynchospora fusca*
Common Couch	*Elytrigia repens*
Common Glasswort	*Salicornia europaea*
Common saltmarsh grass	*Puccinellia maritima*
Cotton Grass	*Eriophorum angustifolium*
Creeping Bent	*Agrostis stolonifera*
Creeping Thistle	*Cirsium arvense*
Cross-leaved Heath	*Erica tetralix*
Crowberry	*Empetrum nigrum*
Danish Scurvygrass	*Cochlearia officinalis*
Dune Gentian	*Gentianella uliginosa*
Eel Grass	*Zostera marina*
Grey Hair Grass	*Corynephorus canescens*
Heather	*Erica cinerea*
Lady´s Bedstraw	*Galium verum*

Lyme Grass	*Leymus arenarius*
Marram	*Ammophila arenaria*
Marsh Clubmoss	*Lycopodellia inundata*
Marsh Gentian	*Gentiana pneumonanthe*
Meadow Violet	*Viola pumila*
Northern Eyebright	*Euphrasia micrantha*
Oak	*Quercus robur*
Pedunculate Sea-purslane	*Atriplex pedunculata*
Purple Moor-grass	*Molinina caerulea*
Red Fescue	*Festuca rubra*
Rosa rugosa	*Rosa rugosa*
Saltmarsh Rush	*Juncus gerardii*
Sand Sedge	*Carex arenaria*
Scots Pine	*Pinus sylvestris*
Sea Arrowgrass	*Triglochin maritimum*
Sea Aster	*Tripolium vulgare*
Sea Holly	*Eryngium maritimum*
Sea Milkwort	*Glaux maritima*
Sea Plantain	*Plantago maritima*
Sea Rocket	*Cakile maritima*
Sea Sandwort	*Honckenya peploides*
Silver Weed	*Potentilla anserina*
Strawberry Clover	*Trifolium fragiferum*
Thrift	*Armeria maritima*
Wavy Hair-grass	*Deschampsia flexuosa*
Wormwood	*Seriphidium maritimum*

Birds

Pied Avocet*	*Recurvirostra avosetta*
Barnacle Goose	*Branta leucopsis*
Bean Goose	*Anser fabalis*
Brent Goose	*Branta bernicla*
Canada Goose	*Branta canadensis*
Common Buzzard*	*Buteo buteo*
Chaffinch	*Fringilla coelebs*
Common Chiffchaff*	*Phylloscopus collybita*
Common Coot*	*Fulica atra*
Great Cormorant*	*Phalacrocorax carbo sinensis*

Eurasian Curlew*	*Numerius arquata*
Dunlin	*Calidris alpina schintzii*
Common Eider*	*Somateria mollissima*
European Golden Plover*	*Pluvialis apricaria*
Common Goldeneye*	*Bucephala clangula*
Goosander	*Mergus merganser*
Greylag Goose	*Anser anser*
Gyr Falcon	*Falco rusticolus*
European Honey-buzzard*	*Pernis apivorus*
Eurasian Jay*	*Garrulus glandarius*
Kentish Plover	*Charadrius alexandrinus*
Common Kestrel*	*Falco tinunnculus*
Common Linnet*	*Carduelis cannabina*
Little Tern	*Sterna albifrons*
Long-eared Owl	*Asio otus*
Eurasian Marsh Harrier*	*Circus aeruginosus*
Meadow Pipit	*Anthus pratensis*
Mute Swan	*Cygnus olor*
Northern Lapving*	*Vanellus vanellus*
Spotted Nutcracker*	*Nucifraga caryocatactes*
Osprey	*Pandion haliaetus*
Eurasian Oystercatcher*	*Haematopus ostralegus*
Peregrine Falcon	*Falco peregrinus*
Common Pochard*	*Aythya ferina*
Red Kite	*Milvus milvus*
Red-breasted Merganser	*Mergus serrator*
Common Redshank*	*Tringa totanus*
Ringed Plover	*Charadrius hiaticula*
Rough-legged Buzzard	*Buteo lagopus*
Greater Scaup*	*Aythya marila*
Short-eared Owl	*Asio flammeus*
Skylark	*Alauda arvensis*
Smew	*Mergus albellus*
Eurasian Sparrowhawk*	*Accipiter nisus*
Common Starling*	*Sturnus vulgaris*
Tree Pipit	*Anthus trivialis*
Tufted Duck	*Aythya fuligula*
Whinchat	*Saxicola rubetra*

Greater White-fronted Goose*	*Anser albifrons*
Willow Warbler	*Phylloscopus trochilus*
Common Wood Pigeon*	*Columba palumbus*

*In the list we have used the nowadays complete names of these birds although in the text the traditional names are used.

Other species

Adder	*Vipera berus*
Common Frog	*Rana temporaria*
Common Newt	*Triturus vulgaris*
Common Toad	*Bufo bufo*
European Green Toad	*Bufo viridis*
Fox	*Vulpes vulpes*
Garpike	*Belone belone*
Grass Snake	*Natrix natrix*
Grey Seal	*Halichoerus grypus*
Harbour Seal	*Phoca vitulina*
Herring	*Clupea harengus*
Lumpfish	*Cyclopterus lumpus*
Mink	*Mustela vison*
Moor Frog	*Rana arvalis*
Natterjack Toad	*Bufo calamita*
Sand Lizard	*Lacerta agilis*
Turbot	*Psetta maxima*
Yellow Ant	*Lasius flavus*

The Falsterbo Peninsula Nature Conservation Society (Falsterbonäsets naturvårdsförening, FNF) has produced the information for the text and images in this informative pamphlet. The society is a branch of the Swedish Society for Nature Conservation and works on a non-profit basis for nature conservation in Vellinge Municipality. FNF wishes to achieve a broad understanding and feeling for the unique landscape of the Falsterbo Peninsula.
www.falsterbonaset.snf.se

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Avocet.

Blue iris.

European green toad.

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I SKÅNE LÄN