

# OUT AND ABOUT

Nature and culture excursions in  
Gästrikland and Hälsingland



Länsstyrelsen  
Gävleborg



Haller's Apple-Moss



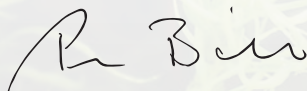
## Foreword

The countryside offers us something for all the senses; aromas, sounds, beauty, the feeling of the wind on the skin and – not least – movement for the body. Relaxation and recuperation or action and adrenalin! Regardless of whether you are picking mushrooms, hiking, canoeing or cycling.

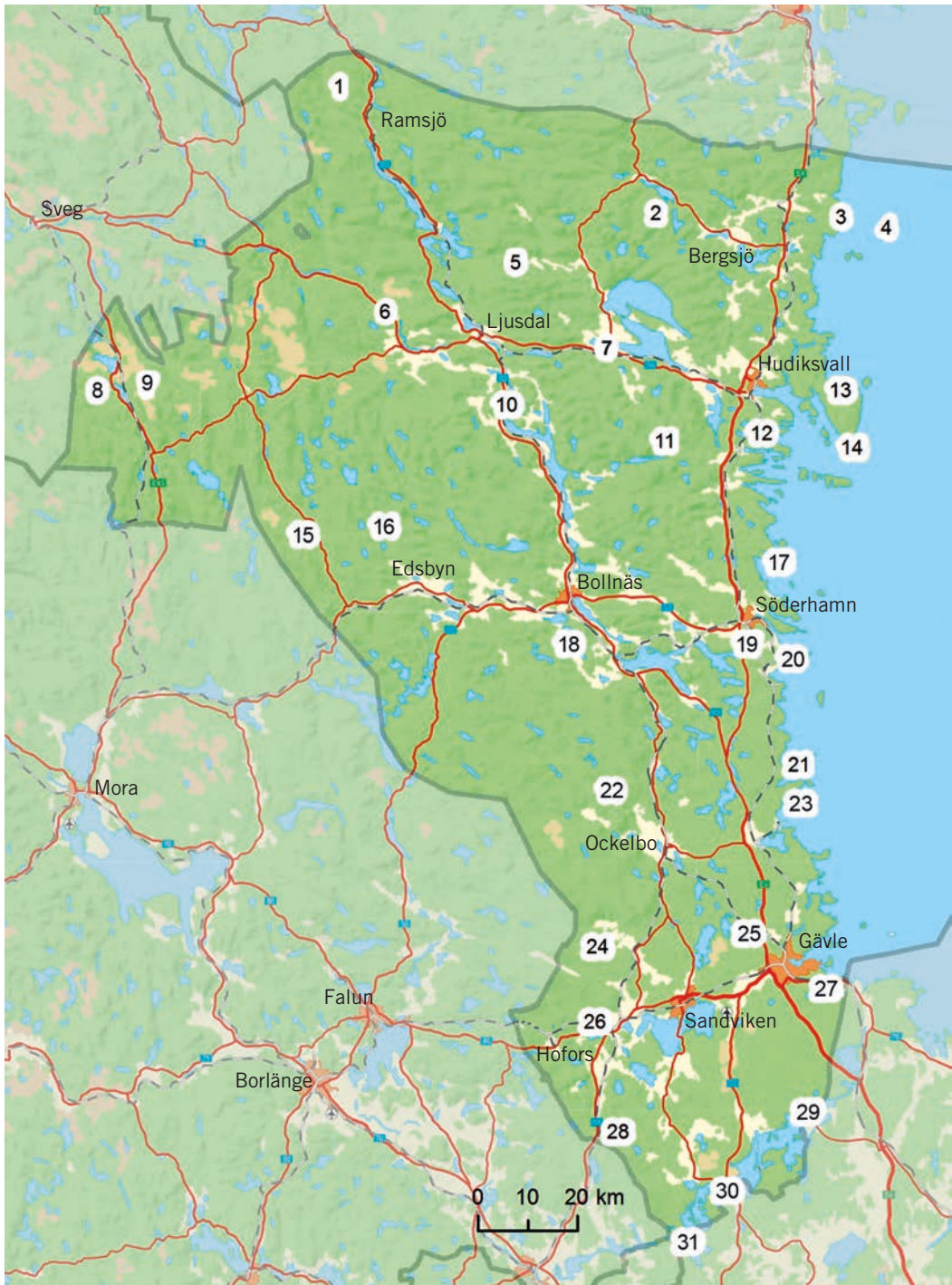
The county of Gävleborg offers an exciting natural environment with primeval forests, impressive mountains and twittering lake bird habitats. A glimpse of the sea in the distance. And our cultural offering is just as varied with hospitable Hälsingland farming villages, iron age burial sites and rustic industrial areas.

Our county houses more than 200 nature and culture reserves and two national parks. We have made a selection from these and tried to find the most special excursions. Most of the excursions in this guide are adapted for visitors. So if you are a nature novice you can begin with visits to areas with signposted trails, ready-made shelter from the elements and rest areas.

With OUT AND ABOUT we want to show that there are many excellent areas to encounter nature, very close to where you are. So, pack your lunch box and get out there tomorrow! Hopefully you will have a day filled with experiences you will remember for a long time.



Per Bill  
County Governor, Gävleborg County



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## Accessibility

The protected natural and cultural environments in the county have different degrees of accessibility.

If you are a visitor who needs help to get out into nature then the following areas are best organised for greater accessibility:

- Färnebofjärden National Park
- Hamra National Park
- Naturum in Gysinge
- Granön in Gysinge Nature Reserve
- Ålsjön Nature Reserve
- Gröntjärn
- Axmar Nature and Culture Reserve
- Österbergsmuren

**Read more** in this guide and on the County Council website.

The municipalities also manage other nature reserves with improved access. Contact the respective municipalities for more information

If you require more in-depth information about accessibility or facilities for the disabled in the areas please call us on

**010-225 10 00**

There are descriptions of all the reserves and national parks in the County on the county Council website:

**[www.lansstyrelsen.se/gavleborg](http://www.lansstyrelsen.se/gavleborg)** and on  
**[www.sverigesnationalparker.se](http://www.sverigesnationalparker.se)**



## Explanation of terms

GPS coordinates for each destination are given in the Getting there box.

 Jetty	 Rest cabin	 Forest
 Cafe	 Geological feature	 Water
 Fireplace	 Attraction	 Open ground
 Entrance point	 Refuse disposal	 Built up area
 Birdwatching	 Dry toilet	 Marshland
 Disabled access	 Easy hiking	 Nature-/Culture reserve National Park
 Swimming Area	 Difficult Hiking	 Animal Conservation Area
 Information	 Canoeing	 Track
 Natural Harbour	 Viewpoint	 Roadway
 Food	 Viewing tower	 Minor Road
 Car park	 Shelter	 Major Road
 Rest Area	 WC	

# The Right of Public Access to the countryside

Thanks to the law known as "Allemansrätten" we have the freedom to roam in the countryside and to feel at home there. But this is a freedom with responsibility. We may not harm animals or the natural environment and we must show consideration to the landowners and other people.

## **The Right of Public Access allows us to:**

- Make a fire on ground that will not be damaged, when a fire ban is not in place.
- Camp for the occasional day if we are not close to a building/buildings
- Ride and cycle on land that will not be damaged and is not someone's personal land.
- Pick berries, mushrooms and flowers, but not break branches or pick protected species of plant.
- Take a dog, preferably on a leash. During the period March 1 to August 20 it is absolutely obligatory to use a leash.

**You can read more about Sweden's Right of Public Access laws at [www.naturvardsverket.se](http://www.naturvardsverket.se)**

There are special rules in the nature reserves and national parks. It might be that it is only allowed to have a fire in the grill areas provided and there might be rules against horse riding or camping in the whole reserve. Each nature reserve has its own bye laws that you can read on the County Council website or on the information boards on the various reserves.





Heath Spotted Orchid

## Interesting species

Certain nature reserves and national parks have characteristic species or varieties of particular interest to nature lovers. They could be anything from beetles, insects, vascular plants to lichens, mushrooms and mosses.

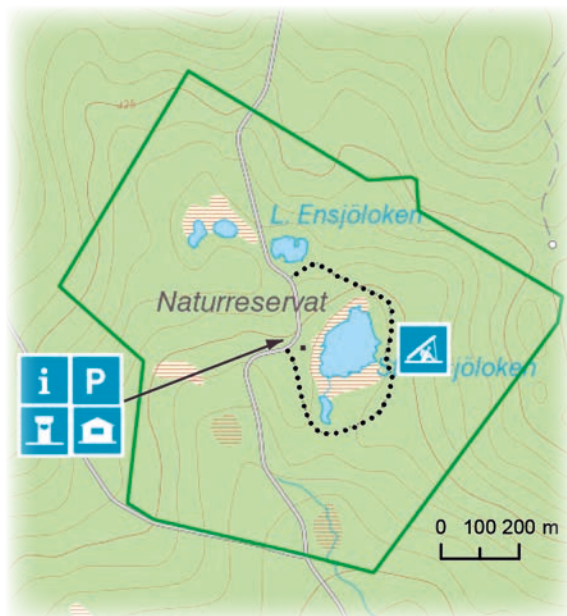
Watch out for **Interesting species** in the "Don't miss this" box where they are mentioned!

# 1. Ensjölokarna

– forest of giants and the Lady of the forest



Ensjölokarnas five small lakes reflect the primeval forest surrounding them. No tree has ever been felled here, which is extremely unusual. The track round the lakes leads you into another era, over thick moss carpets under fallen trees and past spruces that you have to be two people to get round.



Several hundred years ago virtually the whole of northern Sweden was covered in endless forest. Ensjölokarna is a little relic of these incredible old forestscapes which makes this reserve extremely important. For us humans and for all the mushrooms, lichens, mosses, plants, insects and birds which need old, dead trees. For example you might come across the talkative Northern Shrike that need to have lichen clad trees to hide their winter stores.

Even from a distance it is evident that this is a special forest- the outline is old dry straggly treetops and 500 year old pine trees with completely flat crowns.

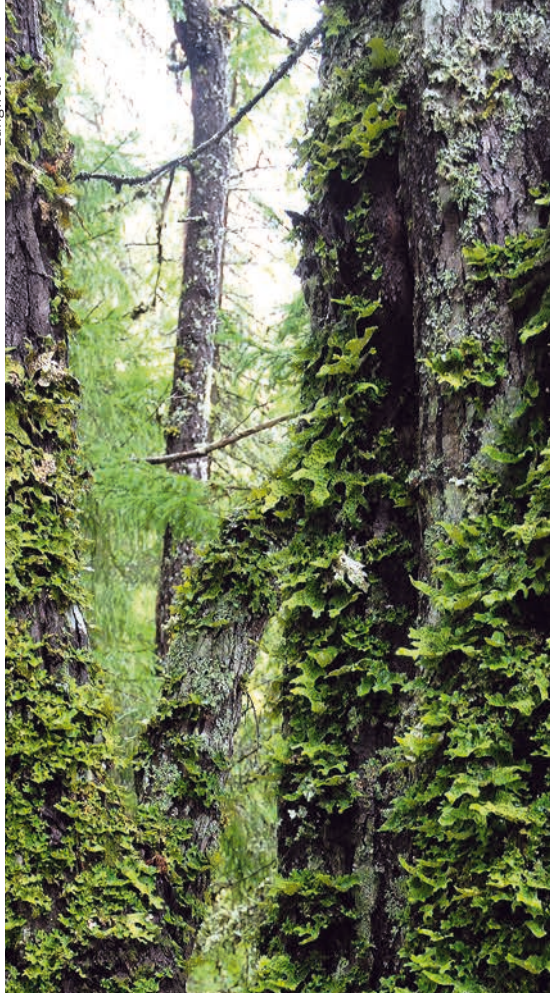
Half the remaining primeval forest in Hälsingland is in Ensjölokarna. Thanks to a dedicated civil servant in and old government department Ensjölokarna became protected as far back as 1924.

The gleaming eyes of the tarns give this nature reserve its name “Ensjölokarna”. “Loke” is an old word from north-west Hälsingland meaning small collection of water ways. These “Loke” are connected down to Utloppsloken or “Outlet Loke” though there is no visible outlet! The water levels here vary enormously, creating a very particular and richly varied environment, with dense Aspen, Jelly Lichens, Baneberry and Dwarf marsh violet.

Sometime in the late summer you might come across the mysterious Lady of the forest. This is a small white and yellow orchid which lacks chlorophyll, gaining its nutrition from fungi. It can spend many years under the earth before suddenly appearing once again among the moss.

Ensjölokarna is very hospitable nature reserve. By the car park there is an old woodcutter's lodge where you can relax or spend the night on simple wooden bunks. There is also an outdoor toilet and a spring with fresh clear water.

Lungwort



## Getting there

### Co-ordinates (WGS84)

Lat: 62.2936 Long: 15.5389

**From Ljusdal:** Take route 83 northward, about 6 km north of Ramsjö turn off to the right, towards Ensjölokarna Nature Reserve (Ensjölokarnas naturreservat). Then follow the signs.

**From Ånge:** Take route 83 south, about 8 km south of Mellansjö turn off to the right, towards Ensjölokarna Nature Reserve (Ensjölokarnas naturreservat). Then follow the signs.

**Size:** 96 hectares

## Don't miss this

- Hugging a giant spruce.
- Utloppsloken, the southernmost of the “loke”, regularly overflows. For this reason it is surrounded by dense aspens which tolerate submersion better than other types of tree.
- Lungwort, *Fomitopsis rosea* a fungi with a pink underside growing from fallen trees, and the Lady of the Forest orchid in July- August.

### Interesting species

Here you can find *Amylocystis lapponicus*, Lungwort, Heller's notchwort, Lady of the Forest, *Nothorhina muricata*, *Tragosoma depsarium*, Northern Shrike, Eurasian three-toed woodpecker, Tengmalm's owl.

## 2. Älvåsen

– high mountains and flower lined streams



Methuselah's beard lichen

Älvåsen is a mountain range with tree covered peaks passing rising steeply over Hasselasjön. Here you can take long walks through the spruce forest shrouded in mist and Methuselah's beard lichen, along a babbling river ravine among remarkable plant life.





Northern Shrike

The view from the wind shelter at Stuthällan is dreamlike, over glittering lakes and blue tinged mountains stretching into eternity. Here you can stretch out by the fire and gaze out over the cliff.

The highest peak in the reserve goes up to 475 meters. The fact that Älvåsen is located so close to the sea often makes the air humid and the mist shrouds often linger. This humid air means that Methuselah's beard thrives here, winding around the spruce branches like Christmas tinsel.

The trail to Fagnäs follows Älvåsbäcken. At its source in lake Älvsjön the river is calm and peaceful. After a while, the ladder divides into two branches. One that follows the old freeway road and one which is a base road from the time when timber transports were made by horse and sleigh. Outside the nature reserve, the enchantment is broken and the ladder disappears almost completely. One tip is to instead take the second ladder back up on the mountain for a round trip. But further down the slope the water flows

## Getting there

### Co-ordinates (WGS84)

Lat: 62.0548 Long: 17.7334

Follow Route 307 between Jättedal and Hassela. About 10 km south of Hassela there is a sign for Älvåsen Nature Reserve (Älvåsens naturreservat). The signs continue along the gravel road.

**Size:** 435 hectares

## Don't miss this

- Along the magical Älvåsbäcken there are botanical surprises like Wonder Violet, Enchanter's nightshade, and Drooping Woodreed.
- Älvåsen is great to visit in the winter too. There are several ski trails running through the reserve, which are maintained by Hassela Sports & Conference Centre.

### Interesting species

Here there are Methuselah's beard lichen, Drooping woodreed, Alpine Lady-fern, Waved Silk moss.

more rapidly, bubbling and swirling over mossy rocks and fallen trees. The river spreads its life giving energy up along the sides of the ravine where ferns and Alpine Sow-thistle grow high.

Älvåsen offers great contrasts. Along the river ravine and southern cliffs deciduous trees grow such as Small-leaved linden and Maple but near the tops there are mountain forest varieties such as Alpine Lady-fern. On the mountain slopes there are trees which are nearly 500 years old.



### 3. Vattingsmalarna Nature Reserve

– rugged rocky coastline for long treks



This is the place to blow away the cobwebs and feast your eyes on grand views, out over the sea and over one of Sweden's biggest shingle landscapes.



Pine, rock and sea. Plus lichen, Bearberries and small Spruce trees. This is the essence of Vattingsmalarna. It is also the place to take long hikes on the kind of trail where you can let your feet and your mind wander free. Here and there a beach of pure white sand stretches out. After a trail of about one kilometre coming from the south the great shingle terrain begins, an eternity of light,

Turnstone





polished stone, that here and there reaches half a kilometre inland. Old shorefronts create terraces in the stone terrain that continue in long poetic strips. Nowhere along the Gävleborg coastline are there such long and clear marine terraces. They remain pretty much as the sea has left them when the waters suddenly dropped to a lower level and the waves began to form a new shoreline of rounded rocks.

There are plenty of resting places with tables and benches along the way. Here you can sit down and watch the Ringed Plovers, Common and Little. And there are plenty of other seabirds that will make themselves heard non-stop. During the long summer twilight you can hear the Nightjars singing in amongst the pines.

## Getting there

### Coordinates (WGS84)

North car park: Lat: 62.0524 Long: 15.4537

South car park: Lat: 62.0320 Long: 17.4297

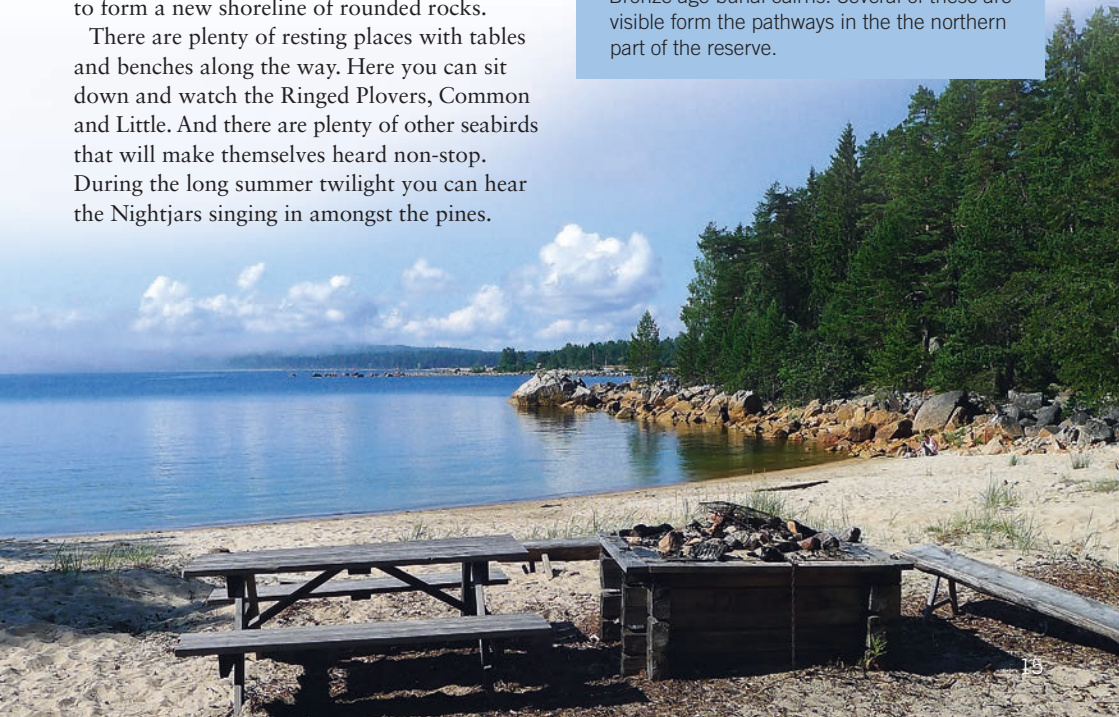
To get to the northern end of the reserve: Turn off the E4 towards Norrfjärden. Take the road to the right just before Norrfjärden and then a left in towards Vattingen. In Vattingen there is a car park with signs towards the nature reserve.

From the south: Follow the E4 towards Gnarp and turn off towards Sörfjärden. Take a left at the crossroads in the centre of Sörfjärden and follow the road straight all the way to the reserve signs.

**Size:** 228 hectares

## Don't miss this

- Stor-Hartsskär. This small peninsular is not so different from the rest of the reserve, but you come as close to the sea as it is possible to get and the pines are thick and hoary. The shingle terrain begins here and continues up to the boundary of the reserve in the north. There is no path out there, just turn off shortly after the path to Hartskär, towards the next promontory.
- Bronze age burial cairns. Several of these are visible from the pathways in the the northern part of the reserve.



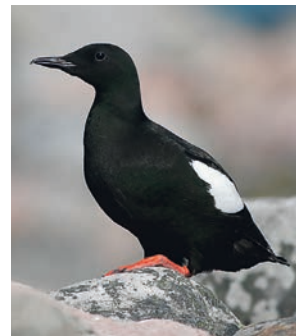
## 4. Gran – secluded outpost toward the horizon



If you want to come face to face with the Bothnian Sea, to hear the seals singing and the screech of the razorbills then you should make your way to Gran, the outermost island, formed by land rise and wild winds.

Strolling over the grey wooden footbridge along the shingle beaches afford a deep rest for the eyes. In every direction there are only long gentle lines, and light blue or grey expanses. The beach is clean and the water around Gran is as unspoilt as it can be in the Bothnian sea. The natural belt of different algae on the cliffs continues down to the billowing rockweed forests.

There are no permanent residents on the island and not many visitors make their way out here. The last lighthouse keeper left Gran in 1967 and the old fishing station in the harbour is only used as a holiday home. However, there are plenty of migratory birds who stop to take a breather and sea birds with nests on the rocks. One of the biggest colonies of Black



Black Guillemot



Guillemot in Sweden breeds here as do countless Razorbills. The Razorbills have made this their home since at least the 17th century.

In the old days people would come here in the summer to fish, hunt seals and collect seabird eggs. You can still see furrows in the shingle made by seal hunters in the old times. They would crawl along on their stomachs in the trenches to get within shooting distance of the seals who were basking on the low rocks by the waters edge.

Nowadays the grey seals and ringed seals bask in the sun largely undisturbed on the rocks around the island. The northern part of Gran and the offshore waters are protected areas for seals and birds. Access is not permitted between April 15th and July 31st. But you can hear the wistful song of the seals blowing in for the rocks when the wind is right.

On the southern part of the island there is virginal spruce forest that has never been used for timber, beyond some household use. The spruces have narrow tops and broad lower branches of needles that creep out over the shingle. In this way these squat spruces lay low under the snow when the winter storms rage. Higher up many spruces have a part with no needles at all, sticking up out of the snow, the effects of hard ice crystals.

## Getting there

### Co-ordinates (WGS84)

Lat: 62.0142 Long: 17.6361

Gran is about 10 km off the coast. You can get there with your own boat or you can book a boat trip. With your own boat you can moor in the harbour on the eastern side of the island.

For information about boat trips contact Nordanstig tourist office tel 0652-161 75.

**Size:** 450 hectares of which 63 land

## Don't miss this

- On the open grassland around the bay grows the rare and peculiar fern, the Triangle Moonwort. Gran consists mainly of primary rock but the last ice age left some chalk which gives the flora a few surprises such as the One-flowered Wintergreen and the Lesser butterfly-orchid
- All that can be seen of Gammelhamnen now is a water filled basin, south of the harbour today. It is separated from the sea by a great bank of shingle. The land rise also left behind it some sea walls that wind along where the waterline once reached, for example between Sörudden and the lighthouse.

### Interesting species

Here you can find Razorbill, Black Guillemot, Skua and Grey Seal.



## 5. Gröntjärn

– mystical groundwater “riviera”



A dip in the Gröntjärn? At first it might feel like climbing down into the Troll’s shimmering green cauldron. But the fact is that this is one of the cleanest places for a swim you can find. The whole tarn is a gigantic ground water area.



Arctic Violet



It's not surprising that Gröntjärn is a popular place to visit in the summer. After swimming you can have a coffee on the sand beach and then take a walk, round the lake, about 1.5 kilometres. If you want to keep going, the path continues along the Stråsjö-Långtjärn, another enigmatic lake.

The turquoise green colour of Gröntjärn is due to the fact that the water is unusually free from particles so it reflects the colours of the lake bed and the sky. The small humus particles which usually colour forest lakes brown have long ago been filtered away in thick layers of glacial deposit.

The lake is a kettle lake, where the melting inland ice left behind it thick layers of gravel along the bottom and edges. As the water runs easily through the gravel the water level in the lake rises and fall in direct relation with the ground water. It becomes a sort of adjustment store for water flowing in the ground, when it rains a lot the level may rise very rapidly. Gröntjärn may well have the record for the difference between high water level and low water level. 14 meters! There is no inlet or outlet to the lake. All the water comes from the ground water. The water is clean since it has passed through an underwater gravel filter.

The whole lake is bordered by sandy beach making a little "riviera" in the middle of the forest. Gröntjärn's varying water level means only very hardy plants can grow along the banks. Only a few varieties can survive the seesawing

## Getting there

### Coordinates (WGS84)

Lat: 62.9736 Long: 16.1889

**From Hudiksvall:** Take Route 84 to Delsbo and turn off northward onto Route 305, towards Hassela. Then follow the signs.

**From Ljusdal:** Take Bjuråkersvägen (Route 727) and then turn off northwards onto Svartsjövägen. Then follow the signs.

**Size:** 150 hectares

## Don't miss this

- bathe in the groundwater
- take in the view along the beach of the enormous differences in the water level of Gröntjärn.
- Arctic Violet in May or Alpine catchfly in July.

### Interesting species

Here you will find Arctic Violet, Alpine Catchfly, Knotted Pearlwort, Kidney Vetch.

from being on a sandy beach to being submerged deep under the water and then back again. One of the few survivors is the Alpine catchfly which otherwise usually enjoys life on the mountainsides or the sunny soils of Öland. Beneath the pines around the lake there are also some other rare sights, such as Arctic Violet, a very downy flower that appears in May.



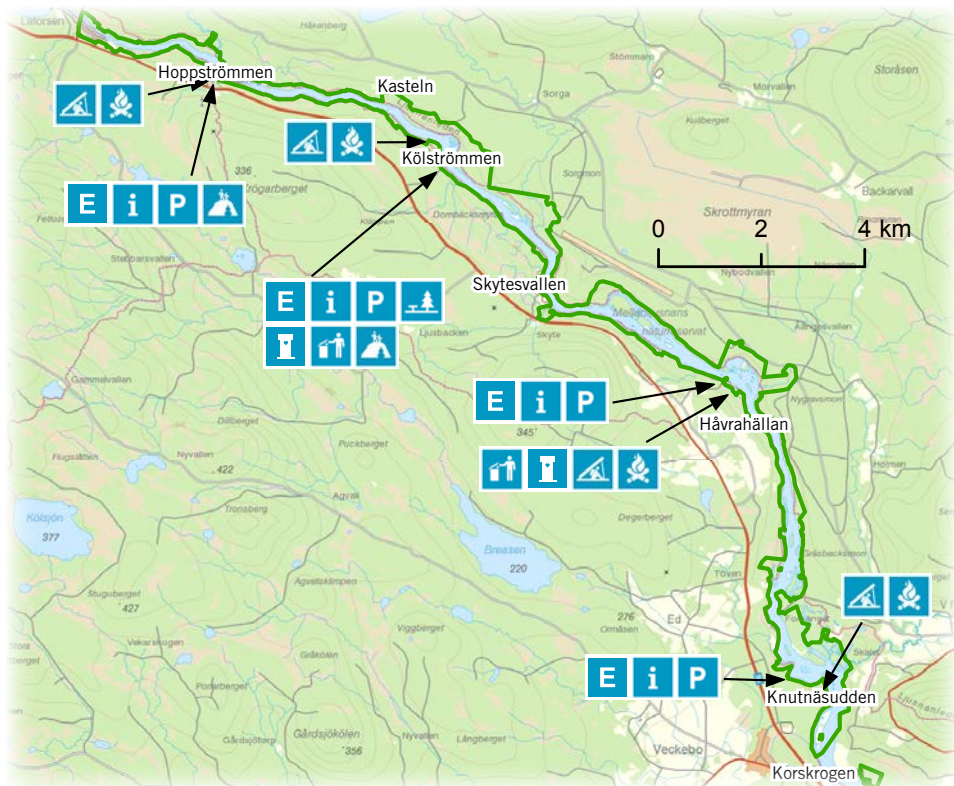
# 6. Mellanljusnan

– Fifty miles of hiking along the banks of a wild river



Hävrähällan

There is space here to walk far, if you want to. Along rapids and calm waters, over steep riverbanks and smoothly polished rocks. Into the kingdom of the otter, the freshwater pearl mussel and the witches cauldron.



There are 25 kilometre-long hiking trails on both the north and the south side of the river where you can roam for a long time without bumping into either other people or any settlements. On the north side, the trail goes up and down sheer, high sandy banks and sometimes you need to wade. The trail is easier going on the south side of the river.

There are four good starting points with car parks, wind shelters and places to build a fire. One of them is Hoppströmmen, where you can get close to the river with buggies and wheel-chairs. You can sit down on a wooden balcony and look for otters or jumping trout among the swirling rapids. Another starting point is Kølströmmen, where the picnic area is located high up on a sandy bank with a long view out over the river. From here you can see, for example, a floatway branch made of stone that is more than one hundred metres long. Up until 1968, the floatway workers balanced on logs out in the river Ljusnan in order to transport the timber to the sawmills. They built various arrangements of stones the purpose of which was to prevent the logs from getting stuck or ending up askew, and many of these are still there in the middle stretches of the Ljusnan.

Otherwise the river is relatively unaffected by people. In the 1970s, there were plans to expand hydro-electric power in this part of the Ljusnan, but this came up against strong, vocal opposition. The free-flowing water is very valuable for many species, among them spawning trout and the rare freshwater pearl mussel.

The smooth ice-cut riverbanks are home to hardy plants such as red Alpine catchfly and Alpine yellow-violet. Early in spring, the Arctic violet blooms in the clearings in Scots pine forest, for example at Kasteln. In the ravines on the north-eastern side of the river, you can find the secretive ghost orchid. The little charmer of the mushroom world is found along the southern bank; the witches cauldron. Just after the snow melts, they lie there scattered around in the moss like soft, chocolate tarts.



## Getting there

### Coordinates (WGS84)

Hoppströmmen: Lat: 61,9329 Lon: 15,5561

Kølströmmen: Lat: 61,9152 Lon: 15,6401

Hovahällan: Lat: 61,8776 Lon: 15,7439

Knutnäsudden: Lat: 61,8383 Lon: 15,7592

There are road signs along road 84 north of Ljusdal to four of the nature reserve's entrances. When the ground is thawing and during winter, the minor roads may be kept closed or left unploughed.

**Size:** 1 041 hectares

## Don't miss this

- Wade out to the small island of Olsholmen at low water and discover the old cultivated landscape in the middle of the river.
- Check out the steep sandy banks along the river at Gammelgrav and Nygrav. You can see here that the sandy fields are still moving a little, despite the flow of water being controlled further up the river Ljusnan.
- There are several nice beats for those who want to try their luck at fishing. Remember that you need a fishing license!
- If you are here at the end of May or beginning of June – don't miss hunting for the remarkable fungus witches cauldron. Small wooden signs are used to mark places where they grow on the southern side of the river, for example at Håvraentrén.

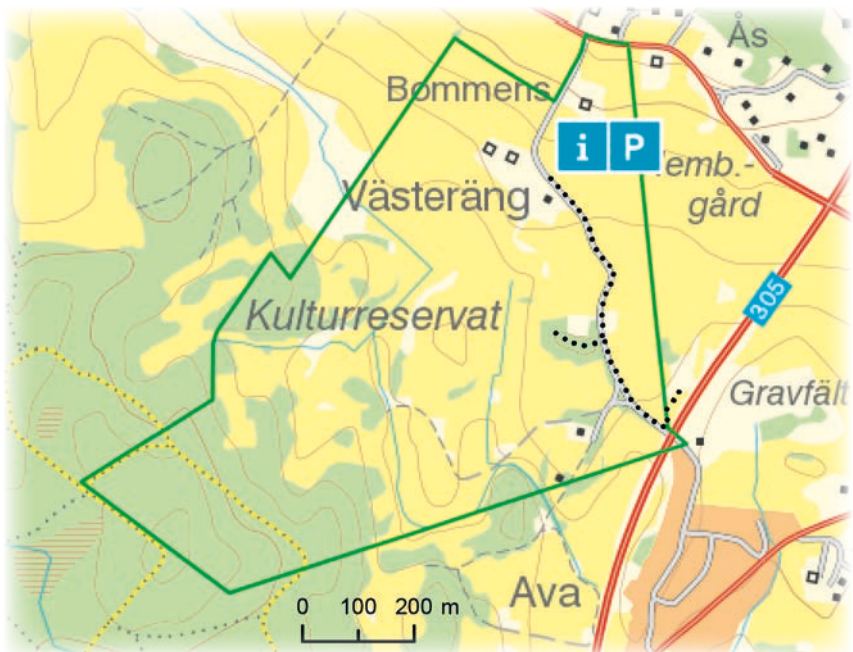


# 7. Västeräng

– time travel in an old Hälsingland village



Here you can stroll around a Hälsingland farming village where the same families have been cultivating the land for at least 500 years. Between the red timbered farm buildings, the cereal crops, and the grey barns there is a lot to discover, such as iron age burial sites, old meadow plants, apple trees from the 19th century and a deep wolf pit.



It is like walking around a history book, but history and the present day are closely entwined. The farms are actively working in village landscapes that look more or less the same as they have done since the end of the 19th century. The buildings are privately owned and inhabited but visitors are welcome to walk around.

The first farmers settled here in the Iron Age. Their ten thousand-year-old tombs are located close to the village. Experience the beautiful surroundings of the oldest farm. Another beautiful place on the trail is the oldest farmstead, Ol-Ers, dating from 1846. The garden follows the ideal that prevailed at the end of the 19th century with arc shaped pathways and flower beds in symmetry with the manor house. Here they grow apple varieties that were popular in the 19th century and the first half of the twentieth and on the farm there are apple trees that might be from the first planting.

Here is also the old-fashioned Gubbåkerssladan which has been used by at least 14 generations farmers. The timber frame is from 1580. The meadow land around the barn has been cut with the scythe for hundreds of years and old meadow flowers grow here, like Salad Burnet, Harebell, Buffalo Grass and Catsfoot.

Keep in mind that Västeräng is a living farm and not a museum. Be aware of animals and nature during your visit. Keep dogs connected. Respect the privacy of the owners, do not go into houses or on private land.

## Getting there

### Coordinates (WGS84)

Lat: 61.8148 Long: 16.5517

**From the E4 at Hudiksvall:** Drive along Route 84 towards Ljusdal. When you reach Delsbo, turn right to Bjuråker. After two kilometres you will see the sign for Västeräng. Immediately after the first farm, Ol-Ers, there are two granite gateposts. You can turn in here and park on the grass on the right.

**From Route 83 at Ljusdal:** Drive along Route 84 towards Hudiksvall. When you reach Delsbo, turn right to Bjuråker.

See above

**Size:** 430 hectares

## Don't miss this

- The wolf pit that was in use up to 1865. Go down and see how it might have felt to sit there, before it had caved in so much. In the middle ages the farmers were obliged by law to hunt wolves.
- Enjoy the symmetry and the beautiful architecture of Ol Ers farmstead. B&B is available in the reserve all year round. Guided tours and accommodation can be booked by telephone on 070-244 41 96. [www.olders.nu](http://www.olders.nu).
- See past ages in the small scale landscape with its villages huddle upon high and the meandering village tracks with the beaten ditch edges.

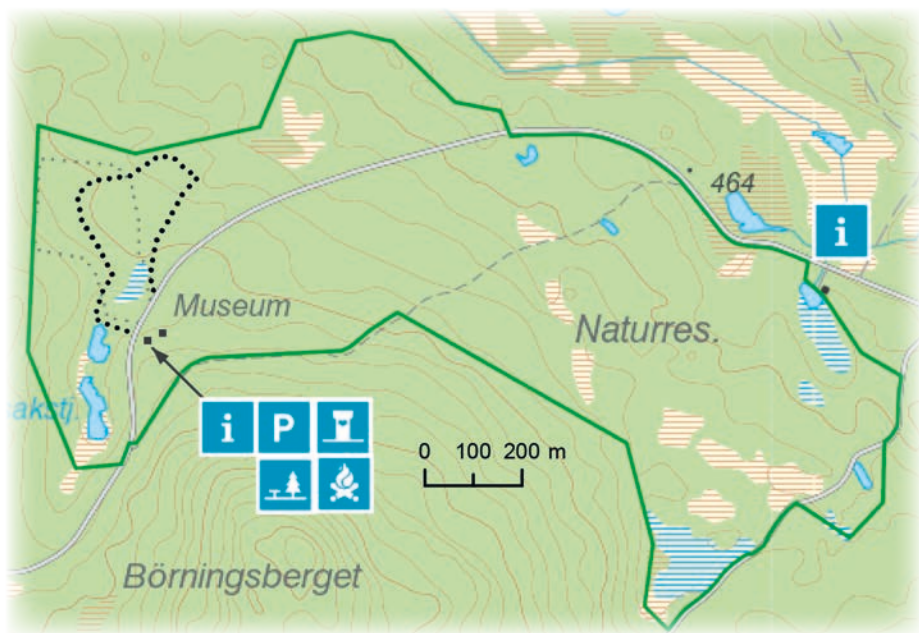


## 8. Börningsberget

– museum in the middle of the moss



Börningsberget Nature Reserve is an intense forest experience. Here you find primeval forest with titanic trees and a forestry museum where history becomes real among roots and uprooted trees.





Along the path in the western part of the reserve everything conveyed by the concept of primitive forest can be found in a small area. The trees are so big a visitor feels like one of the little people. Many of the trees are over 40 metres high and approaching 400 years old. Such untouched forest on such fertile land is something very rare.

The forest feels unusually three-dimensional. It sticks out and comes close, you have to clamber over giant logs, through curtains of spruce, and under long beards of lichen. The moss carpet is thick and the pine tops are straggly. Virgin forest species thrive here, such as the Northern Shrike, Eurasian three-toed woodpecker and *Amylocystis lapponicus*.

At the end of the path is Börningsberget forestry museum. The line between the forest and the museum is not always so clear. The display areas are small canopies held up by lichen covered Scots Pines, right out in the moss among the roots and stubble. Some are also dovetailed log huts, such as the forest stable. In this are three stalls, old harnesses and a haystack with marsh hay. Up until the 1950s the foresters were building temporary stables in the forest. When you step inside one of these you get an idea of how important the horse was and what toil lay behind forestry in the old times.

Under the small canopies there are also many kinds of sled fully laden with timber and special horse shoes for moving in the wet marshland. Here there are many things that once were life essentials which few people nowadays even now know what they are, log hook, angle square, skidding tongs, dray jack and so on.

## Getting there

### Coordinates (WGS84)

Lat: 61.7448 Long: 14.5967

Follow Route 45 between Orsa and Sveg. About ten kilometres south of Fågelsjö there is a sign for the road to Börningsberget Nature Reserve, which is about two km from Route 45 Continue along the road and soon you will see the big car park and the forest museum. There is a disabled toilet and picnic area.

**Size:** 102 hectares

## Don't miss this

- In the newly renovated forest museum you will experience how it was to work in the forest in the past.
- The gigantic timber load that comes from a single tree, 9.57 cubic metres of timber. This gives an idea of just how big the trees could be in the olden days forest.
- In the furthest corner of the hike trail you go around a rise in the ground. This is an old charcoal kiln and if you scrape a little with your shoe shiny bits of charcoal come out.

### Interesting species

Here you can find *Fomitopsis rosea*, *Amylocystis lapponicus*, *Junghuhnia collabens*, *Bryoria nadvornikiana*, Grey-headed woodpecker.

*Fomitopsis rosea*



# 9. Hamra National Park

– shaggy “beardy” forest, extensive marshland, and wild rapids



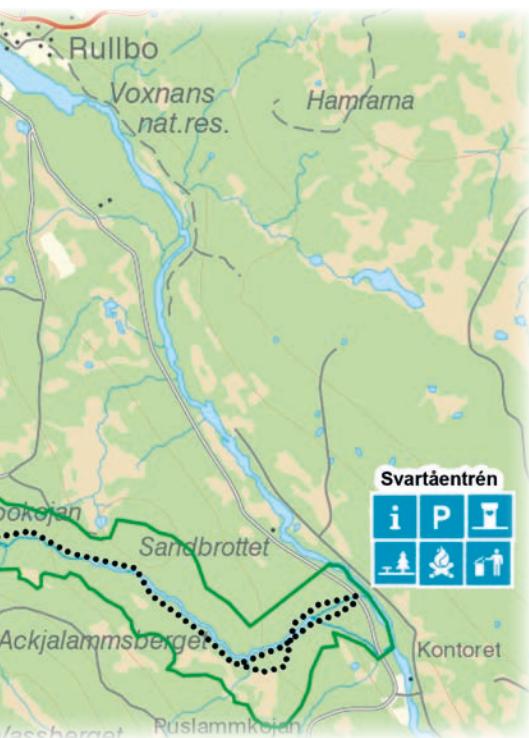
The oldest part of Hamra National Park stands like an ancient island, surrounded by marshland. The path from the main entrance is like a crash course on the meaning of the expression primeval forest.



Here there rise coarse pines with traces of several centuries of forest fires and silver grey Scots Pine where bears have sharpened their claws. Fallen trees are everywhere, forming an important underlay for many of the old forest's mushrooms and insects. You might detect a faint aroma of aniseed in the air. This comes from the fungus *Haploporus odorus*, which grows on old Sallow trees.

Hamra National Park was founded in 1909, one of the first National Parks Sweden and in Europe. It was chosen to be a representative of Sweden's coniferous Primeval Forest where researchers could come to study how everything once looked. Nowadays its not just researchers who flock here to experience untouched nature.

The main entrance is a good place to begin a visit. There is a barbecue area, a rest cabin, and an exhibition about the National Park and the primeval forest. The Myrentén (Marsh entrance) and the Svartåentrén (Svartå Entrance) are attractive and interesting places too. If you have a lot of time and energy you can follow



Bear tracks





Wolf Lichen

Hamraleden, a trail that is 10 kilometres long, running through the whole national park. There are also plenty of shorter hiking trails with different degrees of difficulty. The very easiest to manage is the path from the main entrance to Svansjön which can easily be reached with wheel chair or with baby stroller.

It is allowed to camp everywhere in the national park with the exception of the oldest part, nearest the main entrance. In addition your tent should not be visible from the walking trails or from the entrances.

The National park is most well-known for its primeval forest, but nearly half the park consists of marshland. On the great Svartåmyran you can wander for hours over mosses, marshes, streams, small tarns, and pine covered islands. The water from Svartåmyran continues out into Svartån with its particularly wild flowing water. It has never been cleared for log driving and all the stones that remain produce oxygen rich eddies and shelter for aquatic life. The path along the creek passes over highly polished stones, just made for a food stop.

**For more information visit**  
[www.sverigesnationalparker.se](http://www.sverigesnationalparker.se)

## Getting there

### Coordinates (WGS84)

Main Entrance: Lat: 61.7670 Long: 14.7650

Myrentrén (Entrance):

Lat: 61.7449 Long: 14.8309

Svartåentrén (Entrance):

Lat: 61.7410 Long: 14.9262

Follow National Route E45 between Orsa and Sveg.

Turn off at Fågelsjö, following the sign for "Hamra National Park". You are about 5km away.

**Size:** 1383 hectares (since 2011 expansion)



## Don't miss this

- Viewpoints at Svansjön and Svartåmyran
- Svartå's polished rocks and pools
- Listening to the sounds of the primeval forest.  
The wind groans and murmurs differently than in a planted forest.

### Interesting species

Here you can find bears, Wolf Lichen, Haploporus odorus fungus, Eurasian three-toed woodpecker, Northern Shrike, Bius thoracicus beetle, Tragosoma depsarium beetle, Kidney Vetch.

# 10. Kyrkön

– at the heart of the river, heaven and history



The island of Kyrkön stands stretched out in the river Ljusnan like a green pebble dragon. From here, you can glance out over the world from a slightly raised vantage point, surrounded by age-old Scots pine, flowing water and the wisdom of the runes.

Perhaps it was the raised position of this ridge, a little closer to heaven that inspired people to build a church in precisely this spot in the Middle Ages. It probably also had something to do with the old route that went over Kyrkön, from the coast of Hälsingland and on towards Trondheim. The rune stone in the graveyard is evidence that this place has been special to people for a long time.

The first stone church was built on Kyrkön in around 1200, but there was probably a wooden church here even earlier than that. Despite the fact that the stone church was expanded and had a capacity of 1,700 people, by the end of the 18th century it was deemed to be too small. There were 3,400 people living in the parish of Järvsö. That is why a new church was built on the foundations of the old one. This was



completed in 1838 and stands to this day; one of Sweden's largest provincial churches.

Kyrkön is located in the middle of Järvsö and people have been here for more than one thousand years. There are knotty Scots pine trees here that have survived since the reign of King Gustav I. The island was owned collectively by the parishioners and they appear to have looked after their forefathers' burial site well. At the end of the 19th century, a priest wanted to fell the forest, but they had him up in court for this.

You can find real old-growth forest on the eastern slope. There are a large number of old and dead trees here that are of vital importance to many owls, woodpeckers and beetles. Lichens hang tangled in the branches and on many of the trunks you can see the caps of *Phellinus pini*, a wood fungus that rarely appears on Scots pine trees that are younger than 150 years old.

## Getting there

### Koordinater (WGS84 DD)

Lat: 61.70987 Lon: 16.17807

Kyrkön is 1 km east of the railway station in Järvsö. It is possible to walk here from the railway station or to park just after you cross the bridge.

**Storlek:** 6 hectares

## Don't miss this

- The wolf pit. There have not been any wolves in the pit since the 19th century and it has become shallower as the years have passed, but it is still dizzying to think about the scenes that have been played out here. One Sunday in January of 1729, the priest of Kyrkön fell down to the wolves in the pit (but was saved and was able to hold his sermon).
- The nature trail. A trail with signs that tell you about the nature and history of Kyrkön begins close to the parish hall at the north-westerly tip of the island. This is also a fine walk of a couple of kilometres.
- The path on the west side is not fully accessible to visitors in the wheelbarrow. Some parts of the path are narrow and steep.



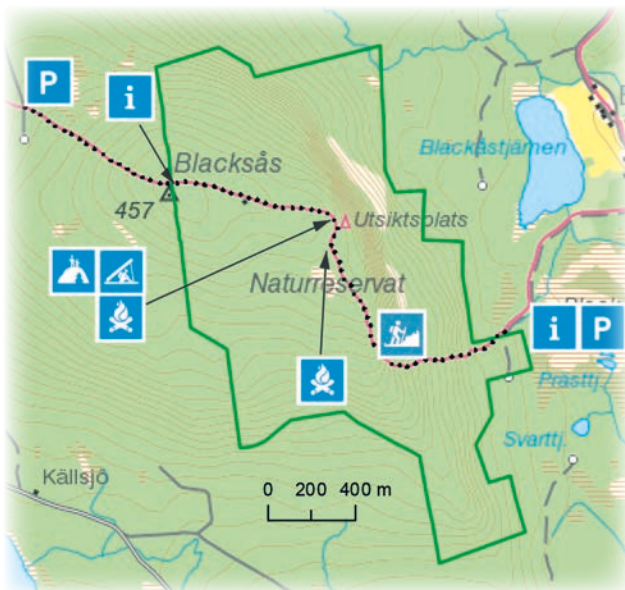
# 11. Blacksås – slopes steeped in myth



From Blacksås you can see Hälsingland from above – 457 metres up. Nils Holgersson is just one of the legendary figures who visited this enchanted mountain where the ravens call from the rocky cliff sides.

The way up to Blacksås from the east is sometimes more of a climb than a trek. But it's a good idea to take the steep track slowly as there is a lot to look at. Entrances to fox dens under the roots and stones, caves under big boulders and authentic old enchanted forest

Alpine Sow-thistle





with fallen, fungus covered trees. The forest is completely untouched due to its ruggedness.

In the higher reaches you get the feeling that Hälsingland goes on forever, that the gentle mountains and lakes cover the whole earth. On a clear day the sea appears like a blue streak to the east.

At the top, the mountain takes an almost sheer plunge down 150 metres. The cliff rock and the old flat crowned pines make the mountain ideal as a habitat for varieties such as the Raven and the Rough-legged buzzard. At the foot of the precipice spreads out a large rocky area with boulders as big as houses.

If you want to keep the feeling of wilderness it is best to take a turn at the wind shelter rather than continue to the top, because at the top there are signs of modern forestry. Or continue past the summit at Sjuvallsleden along old track which passes seven hill farms. If you want to take the easy way up Blacksås this trail from the west is recommended.

Nils Holgersson visited Blacksås on his voyage around Sweden, Sverigeresa, and was told that the local animals gathered there on new year's eve at night so that the Lady of the Forest might decide which of them would fall to the ravage of the beasts of prey that year. Another myth that has become widespread is that of the rich Lady of Blacksås. Many farmers have met ruin in the search for copper in the mountain, even though it is made entirely of grey rock.

## Don't miss this

- The wind shelter just south of the summit, with grand views. Make a downward turn by the benches of the upper rest area.
- The small hillside Aspen groves. The leaves of the Aspen make the soil richer so that Liverworts, Baneberry and Alpine Sow-thistle flourish.
- The two routes to the summit of Blacksås. Aneasy trail from the west and a steep yet spectacular route from the east.

### Interesting species

Here there are Small-leaved linden, Highland Rush, Rock Campion, White Bluegrass, Wood Fescue.



## Getting there

### To the east car park:

#### Coordinates (WGS84)

Lat: 61.6425 Long: 16.7777

**From Hudiksvall:** Follow Route 84 towards Ljusdal. At Hillsta, Sörhoga take the turning for Näsvisken, but then keep right so that you drive over Route 84 and continue south. In Nansta drive towards Storberget and Blaxås tea room. After about 7 km take the turning for Blaxås and Kåxbo. Then follow the signs for the nature reserve (about 6 km further on).

**From Söderhamn:** Take the E4:north to Njutånger, where you take a left towards Nianfors. After about 14 km turn right towards Blacksås.

Then follow the signs for the nature reserve (about 5 km further on).

### Getting there To the west car park:

#### Coordinates (WGS84)

Lat: 61.6508 Long: 16.7361

**From Hudiksvall:** Take the E4:south to Njutånger, and turn right towards Nianfors. Follow the road for about 16 km, and just before you arrive at Nianfors take a right for Delsbo and Bobbygden. After about 7 km there is a small sign marked Naturreservat, where you turn right and follow until it ends at a turning area.

**From Söderhamn:** Take the E4:north to Njutånger, where you take a left towards Nianfors. See above for the remainder

The last road up to the reserve is not ploughed in the winter and in the spring it is barricaded off until it is passable.

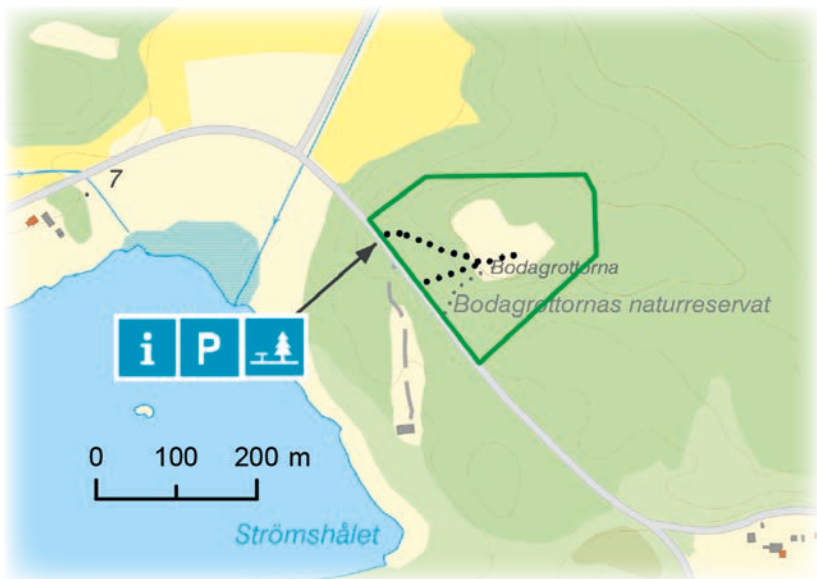
**Size:** 219 hectares

## 12. Bodagrottorna

– the longest primary rock caves in Europe



Here you can explore inside the primary rock and maybe inside yourself too. Caving is a way to explore your limits. How far can you keep going with several tons of stone over your head.



After a walking for a few minutes walking through stony primeval forest you find yourself before a huge sea of boulders. It is as if the children of the giants have turned over their whole box of building blocks. The geological explanation is that the land rise was very extensive when the inland ice melted here, it created enormous strains in the bedrock. 9,000 years ago these strains became so great that there was an earthquake as if an enormous bomb had been set off in the mountain. The rock split and the boulders were shaken out, falling willy-nilly as they are now. The spaces between the rock created the huge cave system where the longest cave is nearly three kilometres long.

Follow the coloured markings on the stones to the various cave openings. The large entrance to the cave system where the fence is leads to Fläckgrottan with a large hall that can be accessed by most people. There is rope running as a guide through the tunnels but a lamp is a must, maybe two. You should explore the caves in groups of at least two people. If you want to go deep into the cave you need good caving skills, safety helmet, and the right frame of mind. In the winter and spring the caves are icy and wet so the best time to explore the caves is July–October.

All year round there is a particular coolness and silence down in the caves. Coming up to see big boulders in the sunshine again is like waking from a dream.

## Getting there

### Coordinates (WGS84)

Lat: 61.6538 Long: 17.1246

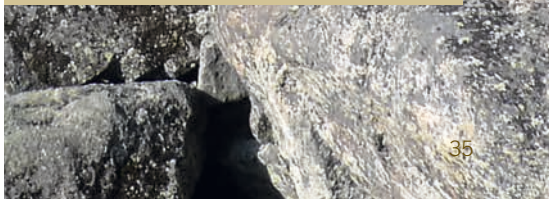
.....  
Turn off from Croute E4 towards Iggesund and follow the signs towards Bodagrottorna. Keep an eye open for the information board on the right when you get close, otherwise you can easily drive past the car park.  
.....

**Size:** 4 hectares



## Don't miss this

- For guided viewing of the cave, contact the tourist office Visit Glada Hudik.
- There is actually life to see in the caves. The European cave spider and the Long-eared bat thrive in the darkness.



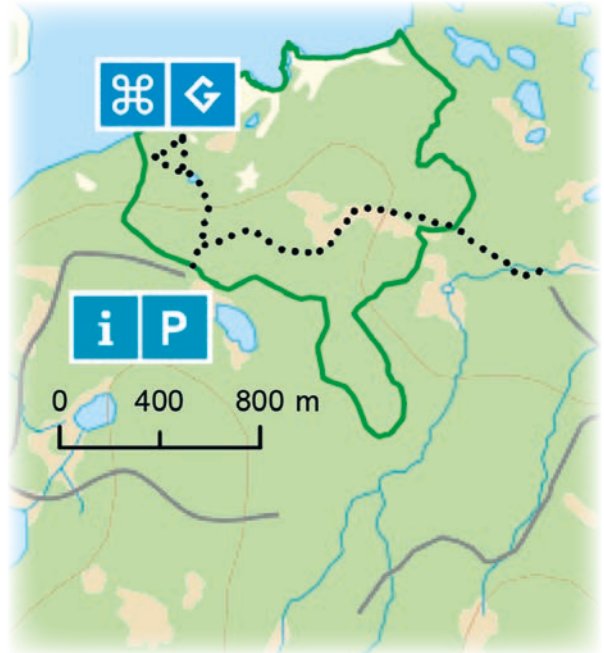


## 13. Norra Hornslandet Nature Reserve

– where the oldest pine in Sweden look out towards the horizon



The coastline of Hornslandet is well known and well frequented, but Norra Hornslandet Nature Reserve is slightly out of the way and is easy to miss. Here you can stroll along in your own world, along lengthy shingle beaches or in the forest where large Aspens sigh.



The area was clearly formed by a big fire in 1888 that left leafy forests in its wake. In the spring Liverworts gleam in the lush Aspen and Birch groves and Woodpeckers drum all around. A part of the forest was cleared in the 20th century, but a lot has remained untouched since the fire so there are a lot of places for tree hole nesting birds.

At the car park two easy trails begin, but the reserve beckons you in. Sparse pines spread out over endless stony ground. After walking for a while here you can get a deeper understanding of the great extent of the land rise, and get a feeling in your bones of how big an area was once beach. The rocks were weathered smooth by the waves but since then the sea has slowly crept out of sight and colourful Crustose Lichen have spread out over the rocks.

One character who has see the water slip away is the oldest pine in Sweden, who has been gazing out towards the horizon here for over 760 years. From the car park there is a signposted path leading to the pine, and much further along there is a sign that points it out. Which is fortunate, since it is not immediately evident which it is. The oldest pine is no whopper, but its bark is more coarse than that of the pines around it, and it is cosily leaning on a cliff. These rocks behind the pine are a good place for a coffee break, you can settle down by the bowed crown and ponder over the last 760 years.



The oldest pine in Sweden

## Getting there

### Coordinates (WGS84)

West car park: Lat: 61.7225 Long: 17.4278

East car park: Lat: 61.7217 Long: 17.4556

**From Highway E4:** take Route 778 towards Hornslandet. After about twenty kilometres turn off to Kuggöarna. Immediately there will be a sign for Norra Hornslandet Nature Reserve. Then take a left towards Norra Hornslandet Nature Reserve V and follow the road until it ends at a turning place.

**Size:** 109 hectares

## Don't miss this

- The oldest pine in Sweden
- Nicklas tea house, a cave with a huge boulder as a roof, where you can lay back and gaze out over the sea to the horizon. Niklas was an American geologist who studied Hornslandet but the old fishermen used to call the rock Osten (the Cheese) because it looked like a round cheese when approaching the coast. Nicklas tea house is signposted as a detour from the main path to the old pine.

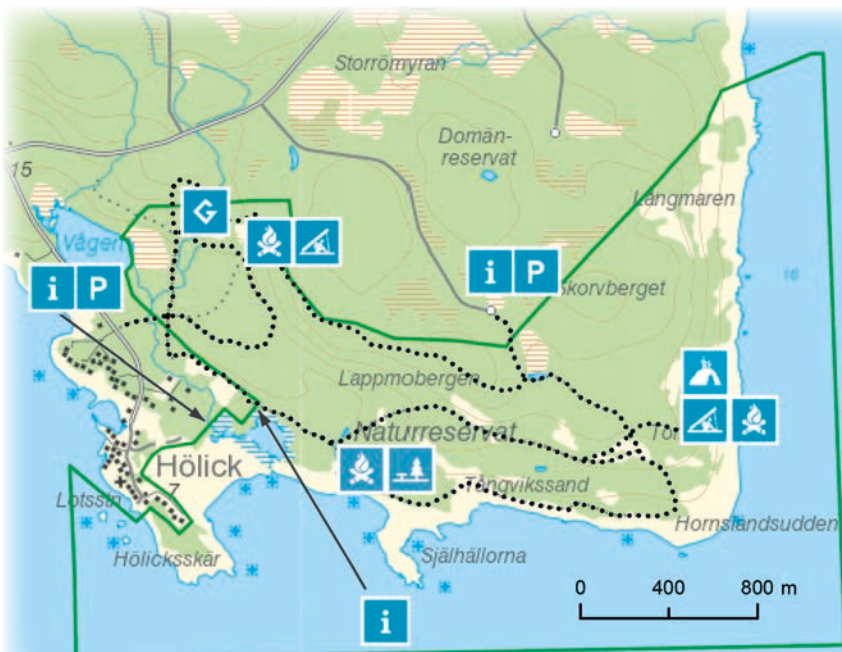


# 14. Hölicks Nature Reserve

– a place for lovers of life



Hölick has everything of the Hälsingland coast and more, endless shingle beaches, sand beaches, sand dunes, small windswept pines, primeval forest, and even a major cave system.



On a warm sunny day the beaches at Hölick make you feel you are not in Sweden. The question is, where then? For the pines, the grey rock, and the rich blue sea are as quintessentially Swedish as can be. Hölick is easy to love, and many do. But there is still plenty of chance to be alone especially if you are visiting the reserve any time other than high summer, of if you head out to the remoter parts. Many visitors are content to visit the fishing station and the sandy beaches around it.

You can walk as far as you can manage along the beaches in the north and sunbathe while shielded by sand ryegrass. For those who have had enough of the sea wind and the broad horizons the underground world beckons, in the west corner of the reserve. Here begins a network of primary rock caves, with small entrances demanding more courage than Bodagrottorna to dare to go in. But the courageous and well-equipped adventurer can walk and crawl for up to a kilometre through the twisting and turning caves. Even if you dare do no more than peek in through dark entrances the butterflies will flutter in your stomach. There is also a fine hike from the car park, especially if you choose the trail through the forest on the way back, through the primeval forest and over babbling forest streams. This is one of the many well signposted hiking trails in the nature reserve.

## Getting there

### Coordinates (WGS84)

Lat: 61.6293 Long: 17.4367

From the E4 take the 778 towards Hornsladet. After about twenty kilometres turn right at the sign for Hölick. After another ten kilometres you are there.

**Size:** 598 hectares

## Don't miss this

- Primary rock caves.
- Sand dunes with the thrilling Antlion and other interesting sand insects.
- If you have plenty of time and energy follow one of the hiking trails to Hornslandsuddsberget. From there you have majestic views out over the islands, Bålsön, Kuggörarna, Agön, Drakön and Kråkön.



Antlion



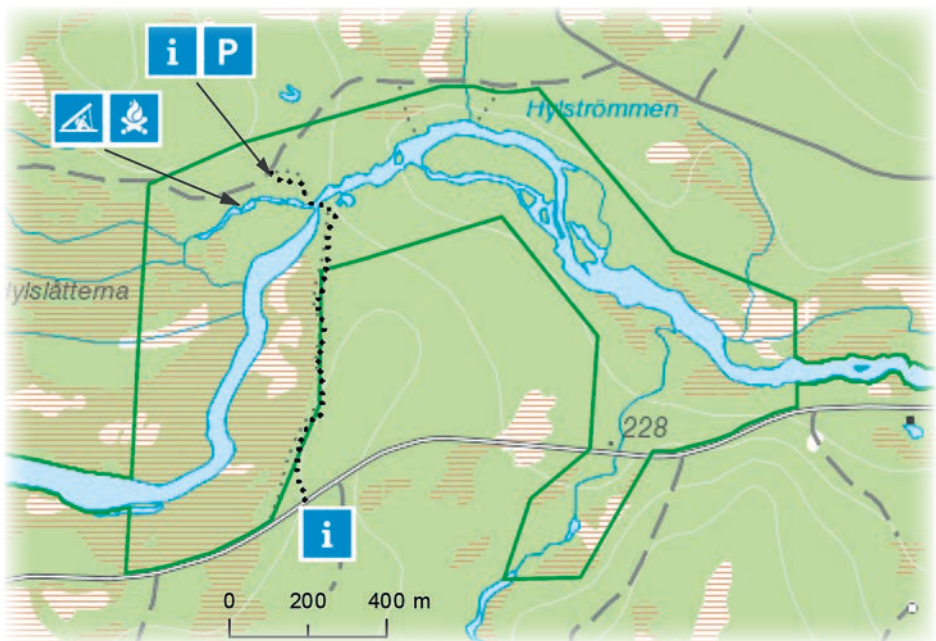


## 15. Hylströmmen

– Entrance to the ferocious heart of the Voxnan



The foaming thundering swirls of Hylströmmen form the biggest waterfall in south Norrland. It is also an entrance to the untamed flow of the Voxnan water.





Standing on the bridge suspended over the Hylströmmen gives an enticing feeling in the feet of the enormous power pouring forth. On the little island in the middle of the rapids thin, aged pines huddle together below the thunderous 23 meter drop. The banks worn smooth by the waters are just perfect for a food break but beware the rocks closest to the water, they can be treacherously slippery.

The path further south of the waterfall is easy to walk but of no interest for those seeking untouched nature. It passes over changing terrain from cleared forest to young forest to older forest, and marshland.

Voxnans nature conservation area surrounds the river for about 10 miles. The best way to explore the area is by canoeing. Along the part of Voxnan downstream Hylström, the rapids stop and gentle Voxnan takes over with long meanderings almost tangling with themselves. Here you can glide along and watch out for otters and Freshwater pearl mussels or swim at the many lovely beaches which border the river.

Voxnan is the longest stretch of undeveloped river in south Norrland, the river regularly floods in the spring, forming sandbanks along the beach. The wild progress of the water means that many small rare plants follow it, like Moor-kings, *Carex ornithopoda* and Selkirk's violet.

Voxnan is also well known to sports anglers, for its natural populations of Grayling, Whitefish, Perch and Pike.

**Fishing permits for the upper reaches of the Voxnan may be bought in Los, Hamra and Rullbo. For the lower reaches get your permit in Voxna, Voxnabruk or Lövriset.**

## Getting there

### Coordinates (WGS84)

Lat: 61.5075 Long: 15.2978

Follow Route 296 between Voxnabruk and Los. Just south of Lobonäs the signs for Hylströmmen begin. Follow the first car roads until the reserve signs and don't be confused by the fishing signs you will see before that

**Size:** Hylströmmen is a part of Voxnan nature conservation area which has an area of 773 hectares and is 100 km long.



## Don't miss this

- Frostkilen, 1.5 miles south of Hylströmmen where the Voxnan makes a circle and only a narrow isthmus connects the peninsula with the mainland. Wide beaches giving a Mediterranean feel in the middle of the pine forest.
- The wall of stone that stops the water getting into a tributary. It can be seen from the bridge above Hylströmmen. These constructions were built during the log driving times so as not to lose timber. Voxnan was an important log driving channel until 1960.
- In the stream, 10 miles downstream of Hylströmmen, you can swim and it is a good place to go in the canoe.

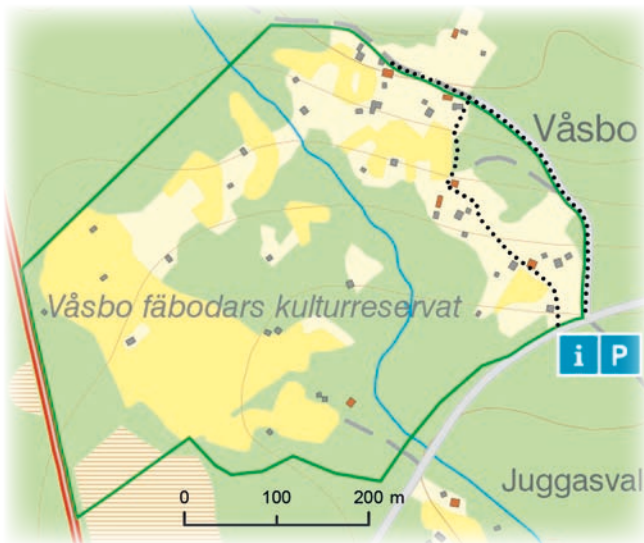
### Interesting species

Here you can find otters, Moor-king, Alpine Woodsia.



## 16. Våsbo fäbodar – a living folktale

The first thing you hear is the jangling of the animals bells. All the tales about mountain farm life suddenly come to life when you walk around among the small grey buildings, that have the odour of sheep droppings and old tarred wood.



In the forests of Ovanåker you can find some of the best preserved hill farm environments in Sweden. Våsbo fäbodar consists of four farming areas that have been in use since at least the beginning of the 18th century. Every farmstead in the village of Västra Roteberg had its own hill farm area, where the women would spend the summer. The grand Hälsingegårdarna farms would not have grown so large without the hill farms, where they took advantage of the riches of the forest and the grasses of the pastures. Everything is

made of grey, lichen covered wood and looks pretty much as it did at the end of the 19th century. The dovetailed timber huts stand strong and the gates along the hiking trail are a true joy to open.

It is still difficult to understand all the activity that once took place here and how many people's fates were played out here between the buildings. Some of it can be read from the signs along the way, and often you can be lucky enough to meet people who live here in the summer months. You can also book a guided tour at [www.vasbofabodar.se](http://www.vasbofabodar.se).

Våsbo fåbodar has been operating for at least 270 years, with animals who used to graze in the forest until 1967. The land is kept open by cutting and grazing. The wild plants have adapted to the scythe and hooves. On the land live many of the farmers old sidekicks such as Alpine bistort, Mat grass and Grass-of-Parnassus.



## Getting there

### Coordinates (WGS84)

Lat: 61.5010 Long: 15.6968

From the E4 take Route 50 towards Bollnäs and Edsbyn. In Edsbyn take the road north towards Färila for about 10 km. The turn off to the right to Våsbo fåbodar is signposted, and after about 200 m there is a car park on the right.

**Size:** 22 hectares

## Don't miss this

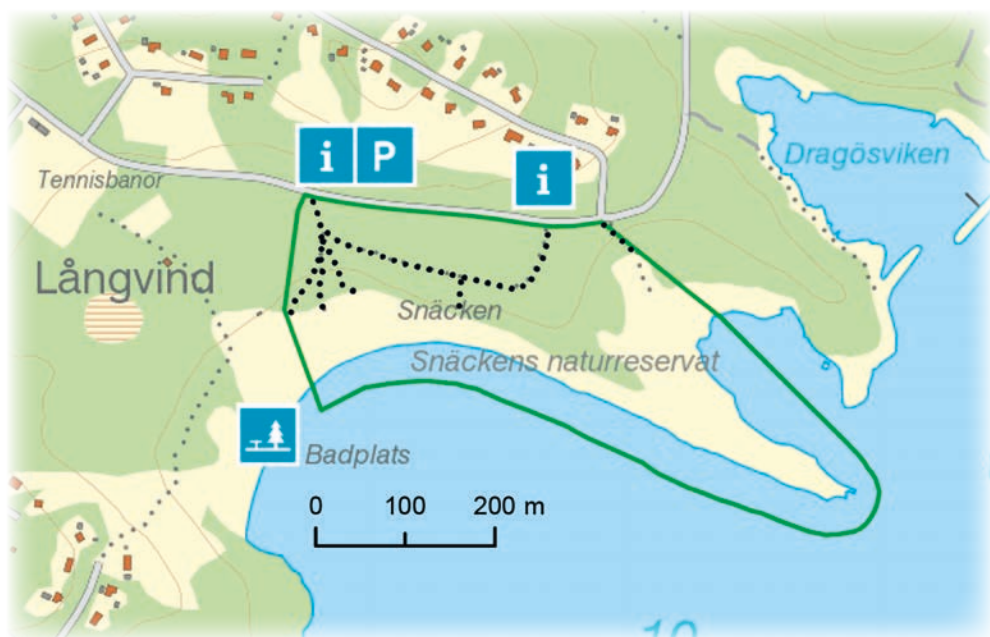
- Getfäxet, a small cattle barn that is the oldest building in Våsbolite, dating back to the middle of the 16th century. It takes you breath away to touch and smell something so old. Forest Finnsa are said to have moved the building early in the 17th century.
- The many "snehagarna" as they are called here, meaning the round pole fences, mark the boundaries between the four farms, the pasture, crops, and cattle lanes. The height and proximity of the fences can vary from parish to parish, depending on local traditions. In Våsbo today the landowners still still put up their "snehagar" as they have always done.
- For those interested in lichen there is a lot to discover on the the old wood on the farms, for example the rare Soot Lichens, which leave black streaks on the finger if you touch them carefully. On Olols outhouse grow bright yellow Xanthoria candelaria lichen, that used to be used to colour tallow candles.



## 17. Snäcken Nature Reserve

– as close to the sea as you can get

Snäcken Nature Reserve is a small shingle promontory with gnarled, windswept pines. It is like walking around in a water-colour painting, where the light constantly shifts across the sea.



The promontory lifted out of the sea in the 17th century, as the final part of an esker. The light shingle forms sea walls at different levels where the sea once pounded in. There is some sandy beach too making Snäckén the perfect place for an excursion. It is not for those who want a long hike, but it is big enough for you to find your own little hollow to lay down and listen to the waves. Furthest out on the promontory you are as close to the sea as it is possible to be without a boat.

The 300 year old pines a little way up from the beach were the first trees ever to stand on this land after it emerged from the sea. Covering windswept trees form a largely untouched primeval forest. Here and there low spruces extend their limbs like carpets. The tracks through the forest are like gravel pathways with small white stone as if in a garden. This is what the ground looks like here, when the Crowberries, Bearberries and Lichen don't cover it up. To protect the thin lichen carpet from all the visitors' feet the pathways are fenced off.



## Getting there

### Coordinates (WGS84)

Lat: 61.4223 Long: 17.1668

Follow the signs along Långvind from the E4 and then towards Snäckén.

**Size:** 12.5 hectares

## Don't miss this

- The old pines that were the first trees ever to grow on this land since it emerged from the sea.
- The Sea Pea, a small flowering pea variety that grows along the beaches of Östersjön and flowers the whole summer through. In August you can actually eat the sweet peas, although it is not permitted to pick them in the Nature Reserve.
- The sea walls that show where the beach used to be.
- Going right out to the end of the promontory and getting your fill of sea air.



# 18. Tjuvberget – the robbers’ and flowers’ cliff



Enjoy the gentle rocky terrain with view for tens of kilometres, or climb down the downy slopes of the primeval forest. At the foot of the mountain grows lush deciduous forest with many botanical surprises.

The path towards the summit of Tjuvberget begins among young planted pine forest but soon continues over bare mountain rock with old greying pines. From the top the view is like a “Welcome to Hälsingland” postcard, with gentle forest covered mountains, local farms and lakes.

Here there is a dovetailed timber shelter with a hearth and benches where you can gaze out over the drop that runs through the whole reserve. It is easy to feel like Ronja rövardotter

Haller's Apple-Moss



(Ronja Robber's daughter) with all the gnarled robber pines with their lichen beards climbing among the great boulders. It goes with the name too. Tjuvberget, or "Thief Mountain" was once a lawless place. Near the Hålsingeleden trail there is a rock called "vilsten", or "rest rock", where travellers would take a break. According to legend it was also a spot for thieves who would rob said travellers. Eventually the thieves were captured outside the cave where they lived, in the eastern part of the mountain.

The forest high up in the mountain was felled about 100 years ago so there are not many old or fallen trees. Those looking for the primeval forest feeling have to go out onto the slopes with their three hundred year old pines and old forest mushrooms such as *Perenniporia subacida*, *Junghuhnia collabens*, and *Postia mappa*. Here you need to use hands and feet to clamber about.

Further down, approaching the water's edge there are plant varieties typical of "sydväxtberg" such as Fragrant bedstraw A "sydväxtberg" is a mountain that has a steep side that faces towards the south, the east or the west where the mountain rock stores the heat of the sun and creates a warmer, microclimate. In addition the land at the foot of the mountain becomes extra fertile due to all the water running down the slopes.

## Getting there

### Coordinates (WGS84)

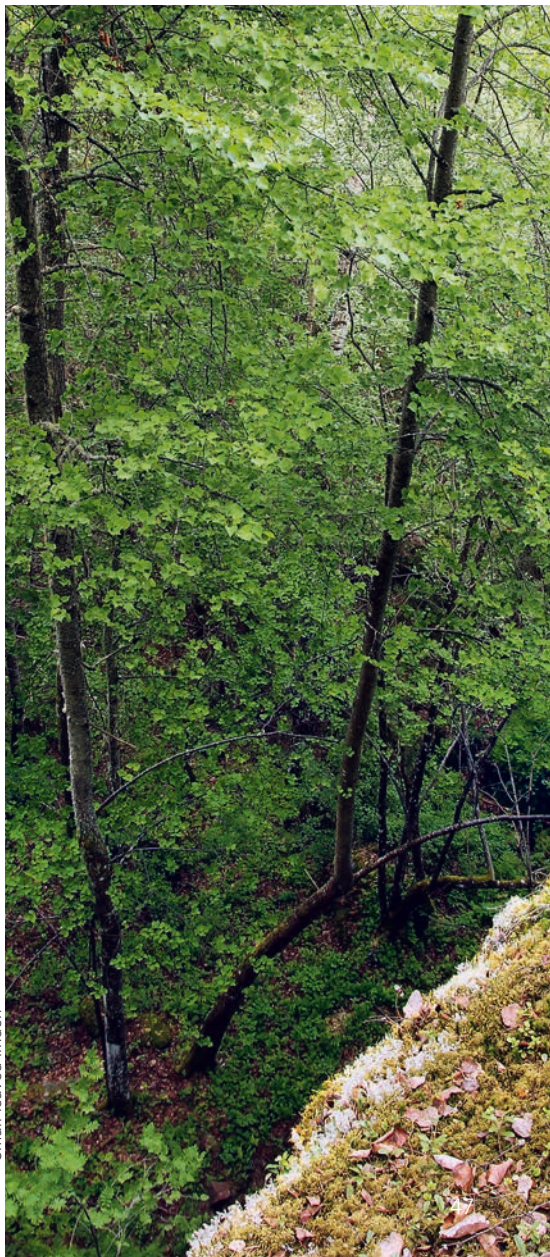
Lat: 61.2874 Long: 16.3625

From Bollnäs: Follow Anneforsvägen south from the church to Hertsjö. There turn off towards Storbyn and on to Norrsämnet. Drive until you spot the sign for the reserve at the car park on the left.

**Size:** 91 hectares

## Don't miss this

- The Aspen forest below the southern slopes is a must for botany enthusiasts. Spring sees the flowering of :Liverworts, and Spurge laurel and later woodland plants like scented Solomon's seal, Touch-me-not balsam, and Baneberry. Those who like to clamber along can find the path beneath the slopes, otherwise, follow the beach from the east.



Small-leaved linden

## 19. Ålsjön – an accessible bird paradise



Here you can enjoy the most renowned bird lake in the county without having to get your feet wet. Prams or wheelchairs don't stop you getting close to nature in Ålsjön.

Over 60 species of bird breed in the Nature Reserve and over 200 species have been spotted. In the 1960s the rich bird life of the lake became well-known but Ålsjön lake was growing again after the levels had dropped several times. Since then the water surface has risen and expanded so that many ducks and wading birds have returned. The ground water of the lake is nutritious





and full of water plants and small animals that migratory birds need to store up on.

Right from the thaw Ålsjön is a bustling hive of activity. Large flocks of Cranes and Whooper Swans are some of the first guests you will hear in the spring. Western yellow wagtails run back and forth hunting insects and the brown Marsh harrier patrols above the reeds. From inside the reeds the Sedge warbler and the sing, seemingly without ever pausing for breath. With a little luck you can also hear the pig-like squealing call of the Water rail.

Besides the typical birds making up the cultural landscape, and the water birds, the reserve is also home to the birds of the old forest thank to Ålsjöskogen, the forest lining the southern shores of the lake. After walking for a while east, alongside the lake the trees start to become older, the Aspen become more ragged and and dead fallen trees lie hither and thither. If you dint want to wander through a giant game of Pick up Sticks you can take the convenient path. Along a babbling ravine there are many luscious, light green plants burgeoning, like the Alternate-leaved golden-saxifrage and the Ostrich fern.

The eastern bird tower is comfortably decked out by the local conservation group, Söderhamns Naturskyddsförening. From here you can look out over the lake, well protected from bad weather and far from the din of the E4 highway.

## Getting there

### Coordinates (WGS84)

Lat: 61.2796 Long: 17.0282

Follow the E4 and just south of Söderhamn you will see a sign for Ålsjön Nature Reserve. The car park is visible from the turn off from the E4.

**Size:** 157 hectares

## Don't miss this

- Old forest trail east of the eastern bird tower. It is a surprise to find somewhere so peaceful, undisturbed and moss-covered so close to the E4 highway.
- To the west of the E\$ there is a bird tower with disabled access, where you can look out over the old expanse of Ålsjön which became cultivated land in the 18th and 19th centuries. Since 1995 teh County Council has recreated something akin to the old meadows and fields. Above the open land the Skylarks sing and the Curlews play in the twilight.

### Interesting species

Here you can find the Western marsh harrier, Hobby, Red-necked grebe, Garganey, Northern shoveler.

Horned grebe



# 20. Stenöörn Nature Reserve

– the classy headland for birdwatching



Redshank

Stenöörn's sandy promontory is one of the best places for birds in the country and at the same time one of the most accessible and convenient. Maybe the most beautiful too.



Like an almost treeless savannah Stenöörn sticks right out into Söderhamnsfjärden. The winds move around freely and the sky is very large. The weather is very close the whole time, but in the luxurious three story bird tower there is cover from the rain and wind cover in every direction. From April to August it is only allowed to walk along the sandy path out to the tower. In the rest of the reserve the birds are allowed to rest during their journey or look after their young in peace.

Stenöörn is the best resting place on the Gävleborg coast for wading birds. Virtually all the wading species seen in Sweden have visited Stenöörn The Ruff, the Bar-tailed godwit, and the Dunlin are some of the ones that pass through in the spring and autumn.

On the shore meadows around the promontory and on the sandbank near the bird tower the waders walk happily around on their long legs finding insects and other things to eat. The shore meadows flood regularly and that makes them rich in different species including plants. For example you can find Baltic rush Adder's-tongue Fern and Seaside Centaury here.

## Getting there

### Coordinates (WGS84)

Lat: 61.2479 Long: 17.1995

Follow the signs from the E4 and then towards Stenö. Park where the road ends and continue in the same direction on the footpath until you see the signs for the reserve.

**Size:** 56 hectares

## Don't miss this

- Take binoculars if you have some. Otherwise you might have to make do with looking at birds on lovely wallcharts or through borrowed binoculars.
- Talk to other birdwatchers in the tower. Here professionals, keen amateurs and picnickers meet and maybe learn from each other.
- If you get bored with the birds there is an ice-cream kiosk and bathing beach very close by, outside the reserve.

### Interesting species

Here you can find Sanderling, Whimbrel, Caspian Tern, Knotted Pearlwort, Baltic Rush.



## 21. Axmar Nature and Culture Reserve

– big, above and below the surface



Here the White-tailed eagles stare out over the pine covered, land rise coast with its multitude of sea birds. In addition to the natural life of the archipelago there's a lot of history to look into, both above and below the surface. Along Axmar's underwater trail lie three sunken ships, bound for the ironworks in Axmarbruk. The iron works are still there and you can follow the great rise and fall of the iron industry.

Axmar Nature Reserve is the biggest contiguous archipelago area in the Bothnian Sea that is pretty much unexploited. It is difficult to get to from the land but a boat opens up a whole world of coast, islands and rocks. And there is a lot to discover under the water too.

At [www.axmarbluepark.se](http://www.axmarbluepark.se) you can read more about the diving trail that is a guide to underwater nature and to all the many beached wrecks along the coast. The sunk ships tell a tale of the fates of men over the last 300 years, and are also the home to a multitude of small animals and plants. You can see a lot from the surface so it is possible to follow the diving trail with a canoe or snorkelling.

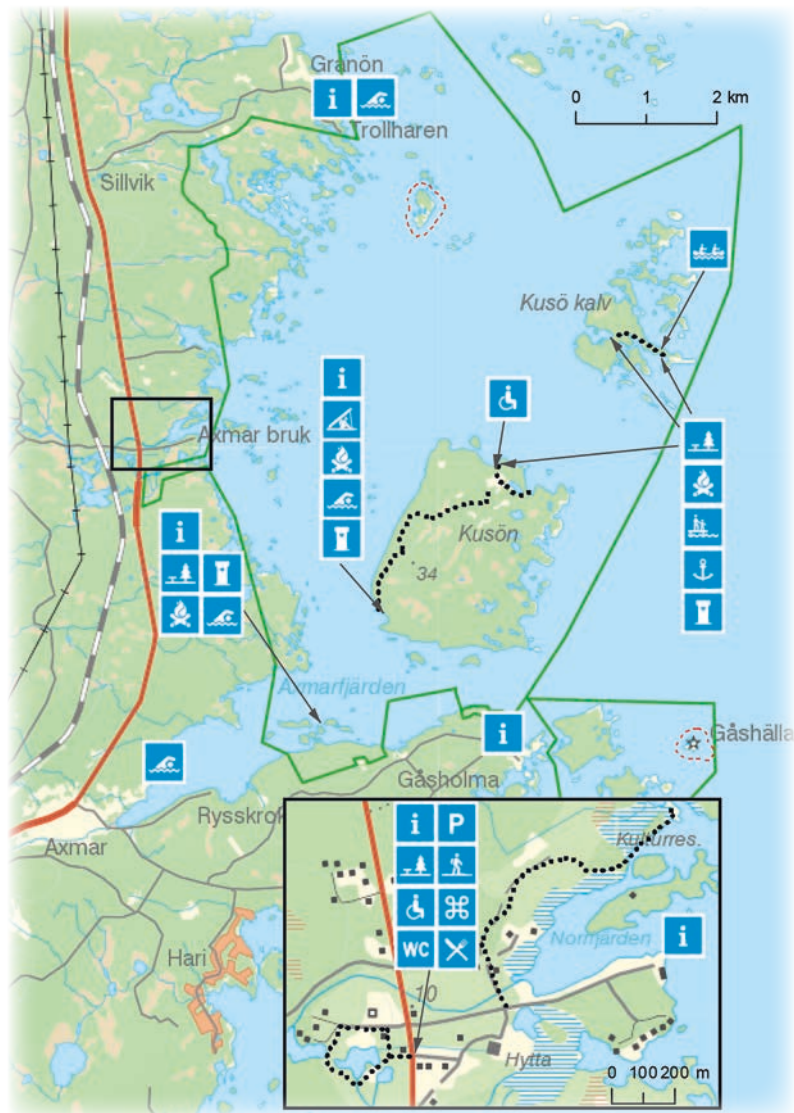


White-tailed Eagle

The biggest of the islands is Kusön, with its old fishing village, completely sheltered from the sea. It is a real Astrid Lindgren style village, with small red buildings, with white trim, nestling among the Lilacs and apple trees and with sheep bleating in the meadows. In the beginning of the twentieth century all 12 houses were inhabited, and there is even a school here but in 1968 the last permanent inhabitants left the island. The houses are now mostly used in the summertime. The old

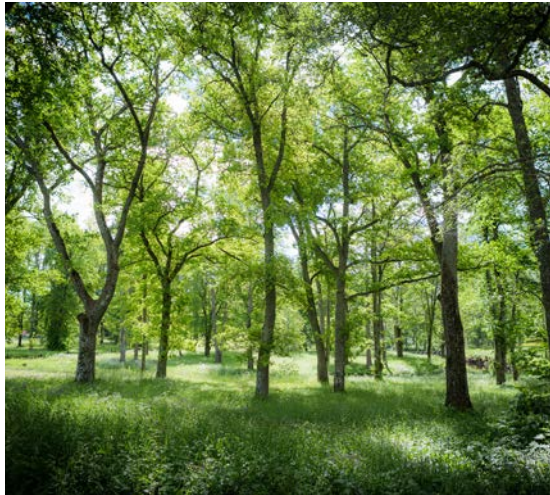
school house is the first building on the left as you climb ashore at the harbour of Korshamn.

Much of the forest nearest the village was cleared in the 1980's but on the south side there is more old forest. Coarse, crooked pines lean out over the water. On the southwest side there are two small bays for bathing with windbreaks, hearths and toilets. Here you can sit in front of a fire and take in the woods, rocks and the aromas of algae in Gästrikeshäraden





Staff at Axmar ironworks



In the culture reserve Axmar bruk has everything in place from the time when the ironworks were running. The water, the woods, the ironworks and the English Garden which speaks of the wealth that the iron brought. The English Park is open all year round, with its promenades, mirror ponds, old broad leaved deciduous trees and the ruins of the ironworks. There are hard-made trails in the park, making it easy to walk. On a small island in the great pond there is still a gazebo in robust brick like the ironworks but with ornate windows, crenellation and tower. Here you can sit down at a coffee table and look out over the park.

Axmar bruk was in operation from 1671–1927, one of many ironworks that appeared in Gästrikland in the 17th century. At that time Sweden was a great military power, and iron was in great demand. Here you can see the gigantic furnace and the whole iron production process.

In the summer there is also an exhibition in the boathouse in the harbour. There you can find out more about nature and the heritage under the water. The exhibition is open every day.

**Guided tours may be booked via**  
[www.axmarbruk.se](http://www.axmarbruk.se)



## Getting there

### Coordinates (WGS84)

Lat: 61.0474 Long: 16.1445

Turn off the E4 about thirty kilometres north of Gävle, towards Axmar village. Follow Route 583 to wherever you want to enter the reserve. There are information boards at the ironworks in Axmar bruk and at Axmarbrygga restaurant.

**Size:** The Nature Reserve is about 4,500 hectares (of which 3,500 are water ) and the Culture Reserve is 35 hectares.

## Don't miss this

- Nature and Culture trails, beginning at the ironworks, with signs indicating coastal nature and traces of iron working , manor houses and water navigation.
- Canals and mirror ponds in the English park in Axmar bruk. In the 19th century the cabin stood where the park is now, and if you follow the water system you see that it was not just built for its aesthetic appearance, but that everything was a part of the iron production.
- The old harbour at the village on Kusön, that shows the rapid speed of the land rise. What was once a sea bay is now just reeds and grass.

### Interesting species

Here you can find the White-tailed Eagle, Grey Seal, Whitlow-grasses, Velvet Scoter, Turnstone.

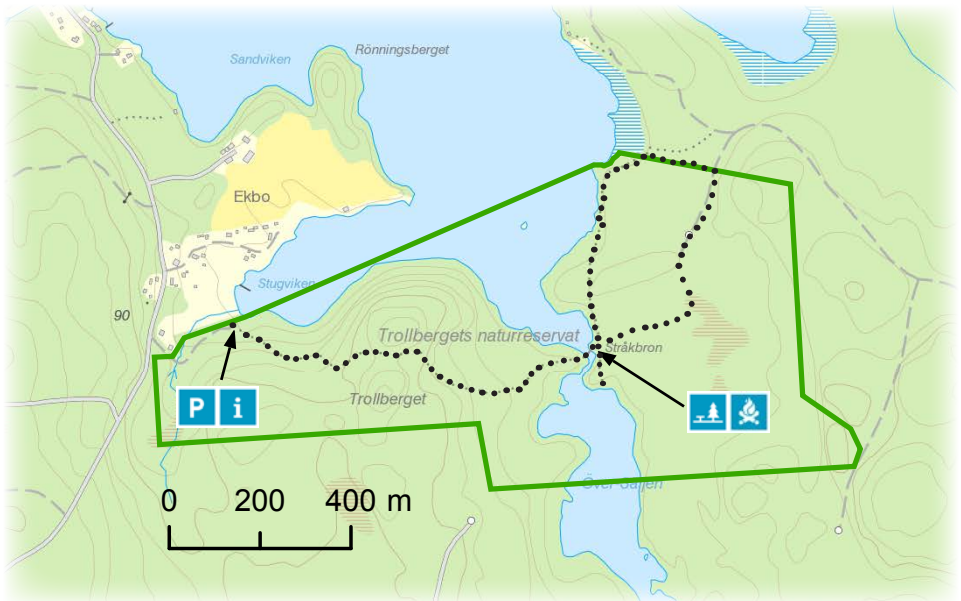


# 22. Trollberget

– a piece of an ancient tale



Trollberget has everything that a troll could want: thick carpets of moss, large boulders and old Scots pine trees bearded with lichen. This is a place where an island of old-growth forest has remained in a sea of commercial forestry.





The three billy goats Gruff could walk over Trollberget on their way down to the mountain pasture on the other side of the bridge. It is now almost a century since cows and goats walked to the summer grazing here. Almost no traces are left of the old barn and the meadows to the east of the bridge. In Stugviken, an old cabin remains, just outside of the reserve.

Since then, the forest has largely been left to look after itself. East of the bridge, there are plenty of two-hundred-year-old Scots pine trees with thick armoured bark, narrow old spruce and a mossy pick-up-sticks arrangement of fallen trees. The leaves of many large aspen quiver when the wind blows. All this, old trees, dead wood and deciduous trees are things that forestry has almost cleared out of Gästrikland. That is why Trollberget is an important refuge for the forest inhabitants of times past. Not just the trolls behind the large boulders, but also the caps of the fungus *Phellinus pini*, which stick out from the old Scots pines and the crust fungus *Phlebia centrifuga*, which resides in the dark under fallen spruce.

The most beautiful way to get to Trollberget is to canoe from Lingbo, across the lakes Lingan, Klubbäcksjön and Ekaren. You can come ashore easily both in the bay at Stugviken and at Stråckbron. There is a picnic table and a barbeque area with a sparkling view out over the lake at Stråckbron.



## Getting there

### Coordinates (WGS84)

Lat: 60,9959 Lon: 16,7457

Take road 272 between Ockelbo and Lingbo. Turn off at the sign for Ekbo and then follow the signs for the nature reserve.

**Size:** c. 70 hectares

## Don't miss this

- The stunning aspen forest east of the bridge. Continue straight ahead, to the east, where the trail divides in two and you will soon be among really mighty aspens.
- The little orchid creeping lady's-tresses. This flower is unassuming, but if you learn to recognise the small leaf rosettes, you will soon see how common they are among the moss. The creeping lady's-tresses is a plant that thrives in old-growth forest that has never been clear felled.
- Looking out at the view between the Scots pines out over the lake Ekaren when you come up onto Trollberget.



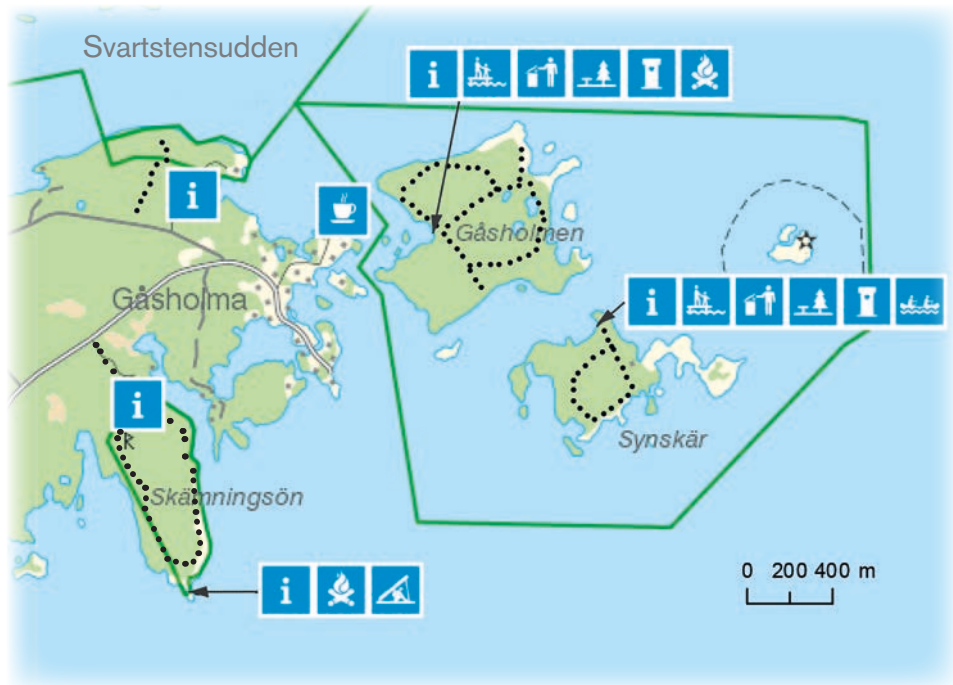
# 23. Svartstensudden and Gåsholma Nature Reserve

– grey stone treasures with aroma of crowberry



Sugared sunburst lichen

Take a Bothnian Sea picnic on the dark, smooth rocks of Svartstensudden. From there you will likely feel like heading out further, to the islands off the coast.



Svartstensudden is a small forgotten strip of land, though the sea and the north wind have weathered perfect welcoming smooth rocks and shingle beaches. The nature reserve is not large, but it is big enough for you to have time to feel hungry from the walk through the peninsula forest and then up and down the rocks. And big enough to find the perfect spot for a picnic. Along the path east towards Estudden there is small barbecue area.

At Estudden, the *Xanthoria soredata* stands out orange against the black rocks. This is a lichen which is otherwise only common on chalkstone in the mountains. The reason it thrives here has to do with the type of base rock, which is what make the rock dark.

From Estudden you can see Gåsholma Nature Reserve to the east, three islands where you can get even deeper into the pine covered rock that is the essence of the

Bothnian sea. They are largely undeveloped and you need your own boat or canoe to get there. On the biggest island, Gåsholmen, the path moves rapidly from sea buckthorn brushwood and rock to real mossy boulders and rugged old pines. The east part of the island is primeval forest in character with fine hiking trails around small tarns – Gammelhamnspussarna. On Synskär a lot of the forest blew down in a winter storm in 1954 but on the west and south west parts of the island a lot of the old forest remains. Furthest out to sea is the almost completely bare Gåshällan. Here sea birds live their own lives and visits are not allowed from April 1st to August 15th.



Goldmoss stonecrop

## Getting there

### Coordinates (WGS84)

Svartstensudden: Lat: 61.0102 Long: 17.2282

Gåsholma: Lat: 61.0093 Long: 17.2540

.....  
Turn off the E4 about thirty kilometres north of Gävle, towards Axmar village. Head towards Gåsholma, but just before you reach the houses turn left onto Gamla Gåsholmavägen. Follow the road and keep a lookout for a small wooden sign on the right saying Svartstensudden.

.....  
**Size:** Svartstensudden Nature Reserve is 6.5 hectares. Gåsholma Nature Reserve is 72 hectares.

## Don't miss this

### Interesting species

Here there are Creeping lady's-tresses, *Satureja*, *Xanthoria soredata*.

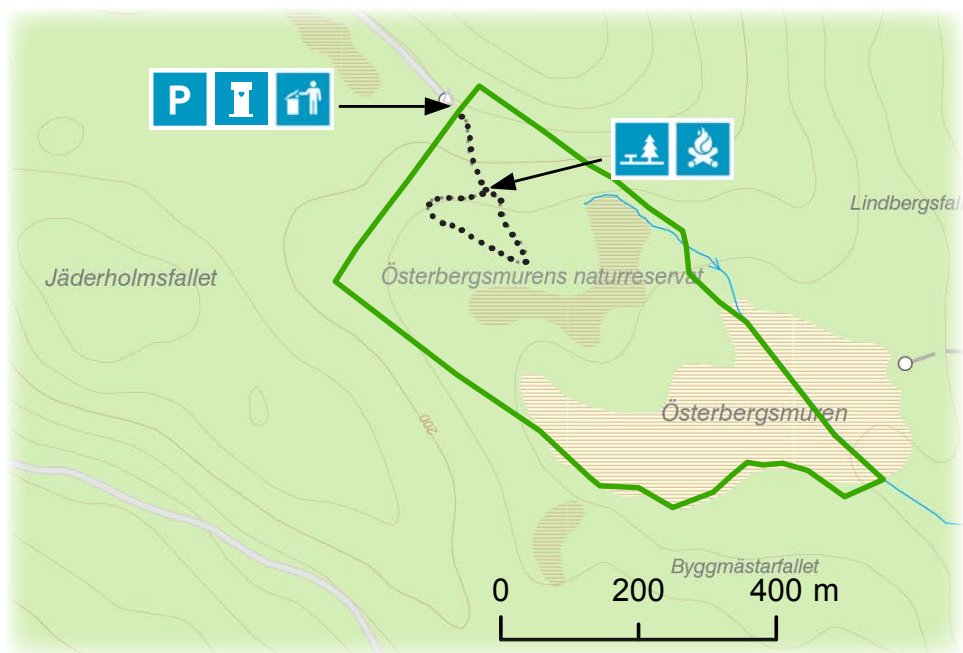


## 24. Österbergsmuren

– easily get out into the middle of an old-growth forest



Österbergsmuren is the forest in Gästrikland that most resembles a virgin forest, with fallen trees lying this way and that on the ground. Even so, it is still unusually easy to move through the forest on a wide, wooden walkway.



The walkway gradually rises over the ground and provides you with a bit of a new perspective on the forest. Along the elevated walkway, you can find the “forest café Myrstacken, a platform with a bar and wooden sofas, where you can barbeque and eat a packed lunch in the middle of the gigantic forest.

Österbergsmuren Nature Reserve is an educational place for discovering more about what an old-growth forest actually is. There are old stumps here that have survived three fires, where the charcoal still glares black. Many of the Scots pine are 400 years old and one of them is even more than 500 years old. It is a peculiar, rugged being. The Old Pine sprouted in 1542 and is signposted from the trail. However, aside from this pine, the oldest generation of trees is missing. Apparently, some of the forest here was felled around 300 years ago and that is why the forest only resembles a virgin forest, rather than actually being one.

For the majority of the old-growth forests animals, birds, plants and fungi, it makes no difference whether it is a virgin forest or simply one that resembles a virgin forest. Many species that need old and dead trees are at home here. The three-toed woodpecker, the fungi *Amylocystis lapponica*, *Fomitopsis rosea* and *Pseudographis pinicola*, and the orchid creeping lady's-tresses are some of the inhabitants since time immemorial that have vanished from the surrounding managed forests.

Österbergsmuren Nature Reserve a welcoming place for both old-growth forest-dwelling animals and people. There is an accessible dry privy, a large wind shelter and a barbeque site at the car park.



## Getting there

### Coordinates (WGS84 DD)

Lat: 60.71104 Lon: 16.40332

From Sandviken: Take road 80 west. At Kungsgården, turn north onto road 537 towards Öshammar to Stocksbo, where you turn right onto the minor road. Then follow the signs for Österbergsmurens naturreservat. The final kilometre before the reserve is not cleared of snow in winter.

**Size:** 19 hectares

## Don't miss this

- Look out over the bogs where the forest forms small windows. The name contains the local dialect word for bog and the nature reserve has taken its name from the bog that meanders through the forest.
- The silence and the murmur of the giant forest in the treetops.- Take a break at the forest café Myrstacken in the middle of the forest.

# 25. Testeboån Nature Reserve

– walking by winding, lively water



Royal Fern

Testeboån is the place to go if you want to feel that exuberant joy of life. In the rapids otters catch fish and the opulent beaches are coloured light green with all sorts of deciduous trees and ferns.



Testeboån is one of the most unspoiled large water courses in the county. The wild mood of the water has created its banks with Ash, Aspen, and Oaks that live through the floods better than coniferous trees.

It feels like the river is full of life and that it gives life to the land. In the spring blooming Coral Root and Wood anemone spread out like a blanket. In the autumn Yellow Foot mushrooms stand out in the moss and in some places the little hats of the rare Pigs' ears appear. Below the Brännsågen the water is edged by the uncommon and characterful Royal fern.

At Brännsågen there is a wind break where you can barbecue and see how the river splits into three fast flowing channels. Just here this gentle watercourse changes and becomes wilder with many foaming swirling passages. It is easy to believe you are far out in the wilderness, even though Gävle is so near. Several excellent trails begin at Rovan and Oslättfors.

The damp deciduous forest occasionally feels tropical, and the lichen agree. Rarities such as *Evernia divaricata*, *Lobaria amplissima* and *Heterodermia speciosa* grow here.

Many sports anglers like Testeboån since it is so beautiful and so easily accessible. Here there is work to save the wild salmon so Salmon, Trout and Grayling must be returned to the water. Perch, Pike, and Burbot can be taken out.

**You can read more about the regulations and about fishing licenses on [www.testebofiske.se](http://www.testebofiske.se)**

Pig's ears



## Getting there

### Coordinates (WGS84)

Rovan: Lat: 60.7557 Long: 17.0561

Brännsågen: Lat: 60.7574 Long: 17.0383

Oslättfors: Lat: 60.7692 Long: 16.9659

From Gävle: Take Route 567 from Åbyggeby towards Oslättfors. Follow directions to Rovan. It is possible to park at Rovan, at Brännsågen (immediately after the first bridge over the river) and at Oslättfors and immediately after the church it is signposted to the nature reserve.

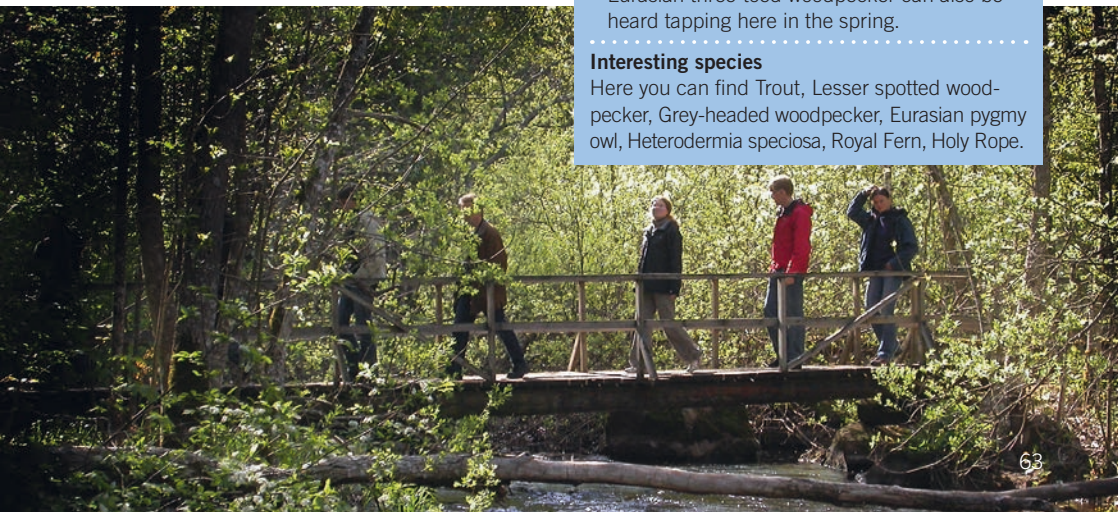
**Size:** 515 hectares

## Don't miss this

- At Kokhusholmen south of Oslättfors there is a fine rest area under great oaks, where the Testeboån flows close on both sides. This is actually the northernmost Oak population in Sweden.
- At the Rovan entrance there is a excellent hiking trail and there is a nice barbecue area just on the beach.
- Listen to the delicate drumming of the Lesser spotted woodpecker Which is very at home in the damp deciduous forest here. The Black woodpecker, Grey-headed woodpecker and the Eurasian three-toed woodpecker can also be heard tapping here in the spring.

### Interesting species

Here you can find Trout, Lesser spotted woodpecker, Grey-headed woodpecker, Eurasian pygmy owl, *Heterodermia speciosa*, Royal Fern, Holy Rope.



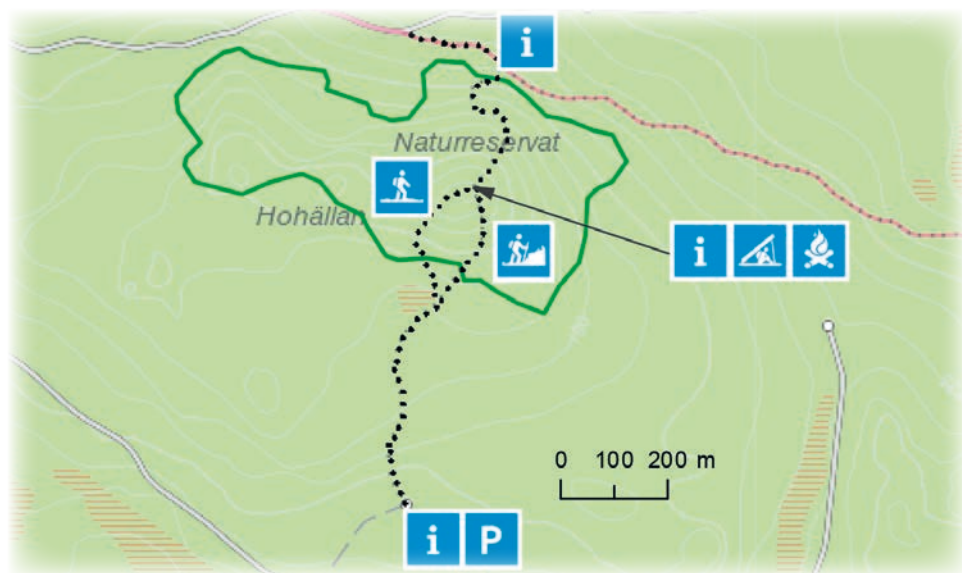
## 26. Hohällan Nature Reserve

– gentle mountain climbing in old forest



The path to the peak of Hohällans winds up in a squiggly manner between moss covered boulders and stubborn pines. It is a gentle Sunday afternoon stroll to get up to the timber hut at the top, high up among the lichen covered rocky terrain.

On the left there is a path which is sign posted “Easy” or ”Lätt”, but the path to the right is not so difficult either. On the other hand it is magical, with twisting roots, grey Scots pines and large boulders. Off the trail small moss covered ravines open up with twisted mature pines where woodpeckers have built multi-storey housing complexes, with holes one above the other.





The promenade from the car park to the top is less than one kilometre, which is just right if you want to get to a picnic place quickly. At the top is a timber cabin with fireplace. Moreover there are no less than seven fireplaces with seats around so there is no risk of having nowhere to sit, even if Hohällan is a popular destination. Here and there you can see out between the trees but mostly you get a feeling of the open space from the whispering in the treetops. You can hear that you are high up.

Witch's hair lichen and Fishbone beard lichen give the trees a bearded quality. The fungi are what shows the forest to be old. *Phellinus pini* begins to grow on pines that are over 150 years old and here there are a lot of *Phellinus pini* that have been on the trunks so long that Fishbone beard lichen and Powderhorn Lichen are growing on the fungus itself. In the winter the notable fungus *Irpicodon* appears in the crowns of the old pines.

## Getting there

### Coordinates (WGS84)

Lat: 60.5960 Long: 16.4488

Follow Route 80 to Storvik. Follow Hoforsvägen/Landsvägen through Storfors and turn off to the northwest on Korsåvägen. This becomes a forest road, signposted to Hohällans Nature Reserve after a few kilometres.

**Size:** 18 hectares

## Don't miss this

- A large cluster of the rare forest plant Prince's pine growing on the right of the path, a couple of minutes from the car park. At the end of July the pink flowers are clearly visible but even before this large buds emerge.
- Remains of an old charcoal kiln just before the wood store before you come into the reserve. Shiny black charcoal flakes can be seen on the trail and if you dig a little with your foot you will get to see more of the black stuff.

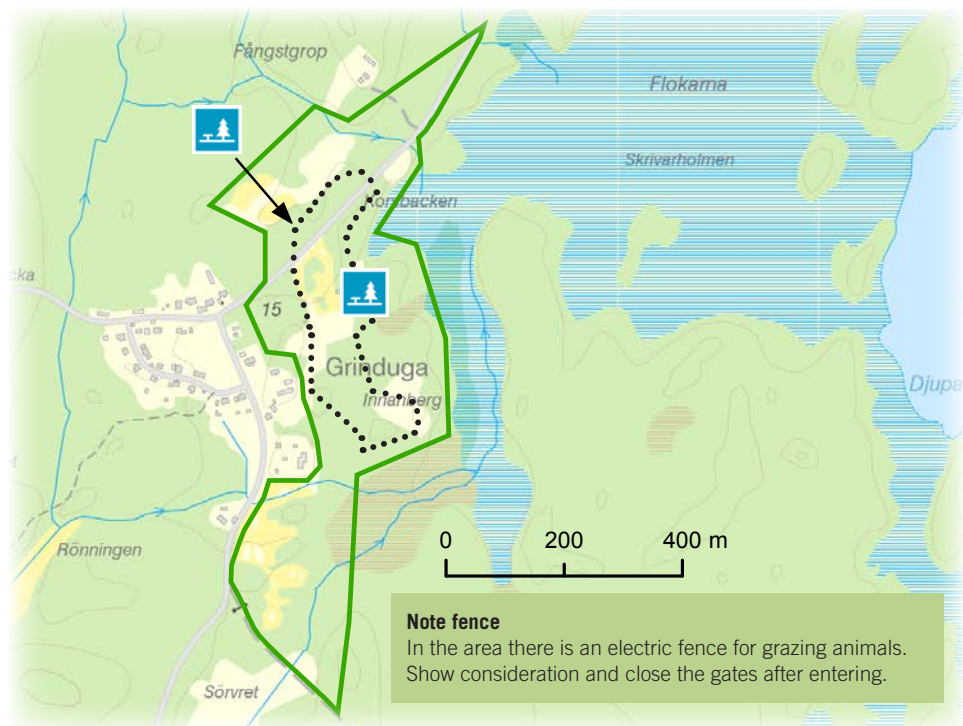


## 27. Grinduga

– a butterfly paradise among mediaeval pastures



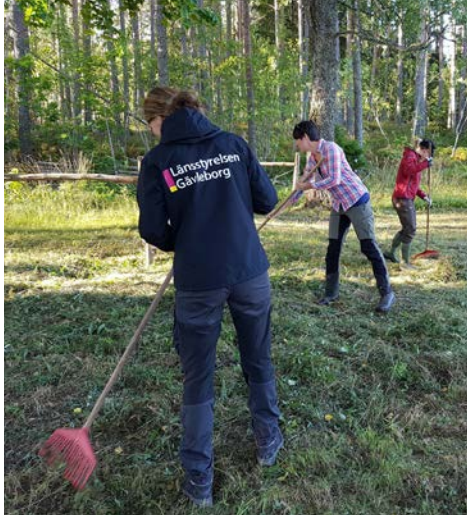
Grinduga is a place where you can wander back in time. Meadows, wooded knolls and cattle paths are the remains of a mediaeval landscape. This is now also an inviting landscape in which to picnic.



It appears that people have been comfortable here since as early as the Bronze Age. They left behind cairns 2 000 years ago – overgrown piles of stone that are now not so easy to spot, but you can tell that the ground here has been well trodden for a long time. The village of Grinduga was here in the 16th century and probably before that. Of course, much has happened since then, but it is still possible to get a sense of what our ancient agricultural landscape looked like.

A cow path runs between the fences, along which the cows were let out to graze on the outlying land and in the forest. Thanks to the grazing animals, the forests are lighter and more open than the majority of forests are nowadays. The old arable fields have now also become pastures but they are clearly flatter than their surroundings. You can see how people have really struggled to shift all the stones onto the wooded knolls. On some of these knolls, there are ‘pollarded’ trees with low, compact crowns. This is where people have harvested leaves from the trees to use as winter feed for their animals.

It is not just people who have a long history around Grinduga, the open landscape’s animals and plants also have a story to tell. On a sunny summer’s day, butterflies in all the colours of the rainbow flutter above the pastures. Rare species such as the purple-edged copper, the large grizzled skipper and the false heath fritillary thrive in the chalky pastures. A good way to get an introduction to the area’s nature and history is to follow the signposted nature trail from the car park.



## Getting there

### Coordinates (WGS84 DD)

Lat: 60.63929 Long: 17.29708

If you are coming from Gävle, take road 76 south towards Furuvik and turn off at the signpost for Grinduga. Follow the signs.

**Size:** 23 hectares

## Don't miss this

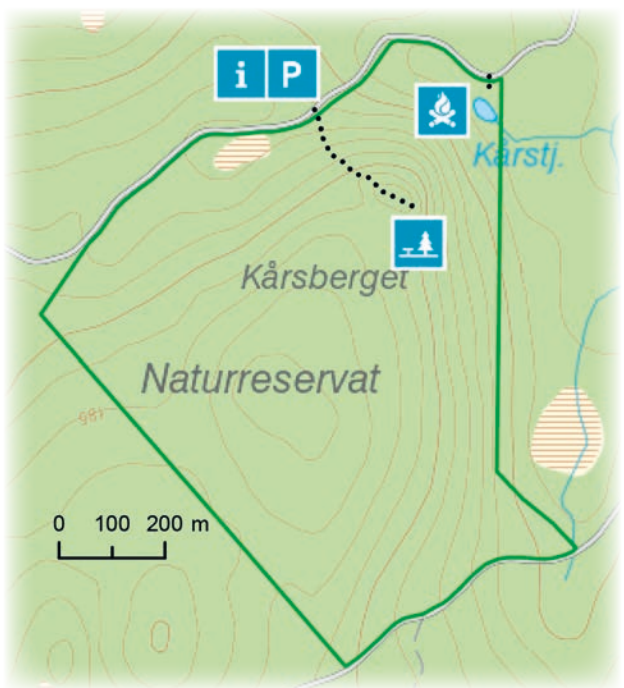
- The picnic table north of the road. You can sit here and eat your packed lunch by the hay meadows that are still being cut each year in late summer.
- This is very close to Fjärilsvägen (butterfly road), where 50 different species of butterfly take to the air in the summer. Continue on the road south from Grinduga and turn in to the forest road that is signposted for “Fjärilsvägen”.
- Grinduga is also next door to Tröskens rikkår. This nature reserve is not as easily accessible but does have plenty to discover, for example 15 species of orchid.
- Grinduga is a good destination for a cycle tour from Gävle or Furuvik.

# 28. Kårsberget Nature Reserve

– forest of the Mountain Troll



On the top of Kårsberget you can sit under strong ancient pines with flat, twisted crowns. From there you can climb further through a great sea of boulders with small caves and moss covered wooden bridges.



The old pines at the top stand 200 metres above sea level as they look out over the forest towards Sandviken and Hofors. The mountain dips sharply away here with great granite boulders slung hither and thither. When the wind blows you can hear the sound of the quivering Aspen leaves. On the west of the mountain Aspen, Birch, and Spruce grow between the boulders.

If you carefully make your way down you may climb around for a long time in the sea of boulders where small caves and black water-filled holes open up under the rocks. On top of the boulders it is almost like small gardens grow with raspberries, Solomon's seal and wreaths of Twinflower. Bridges of mossy tree trunks go between the boulders. But it is better not to walk around here alone as there are many holes you can lose your footing in.

Below the slopes lies Kårstjärn which is small and overgrown with reeds. Here is a small rest place with a fireplace.

## Getting there

### Coordinates (WGS84)

Lat: 60.4066 Long: 16.5245

.....  
Follow route 68 and turn in towards Hästbo, south of Torsåker. Continue over the rail line to Österhästbo and on to Gammelstilla, and about five kilometres further on you will see a sign for the reserve on the right. After two more kilometres you will see the next sign for the reserve on the right. Soon you will see Kårstjärn on the left side and immediately after a car park with information signs on the right.  
.....

**Size:** 66 hectares

## Don't miss this

- Most visitors make do with a visit to the hill top and the tarn but then you have only seen a small corner of the reserve. Those who want can hike far to the south through old forest with no tracks where Grouse play in the spring.  
.....
- Openings in the bark near the base of the old pines. These are traces of old forest fires.

Thyme-moss



# 29. Bredforsen Nature Reserve

– foaming, blossoming river valley nature



Bog Violet

Here you can get a feeling of the wild power of nature that has formed a unique landscape. Walking along blossoming river meadows, under great Aspens, and oaks where woodpeckers are drumming in the spring.



An uplifting walk is to follow the trail over the wooden foot bridges out to Landkvarn where the white water rushes past your feet. Well on you can take a pew and have a coffee on the little island in the middle of the rapids, under a protective roof of old pines and with glittering bubbling water on all sides.

The water has reigned here since time immemorial, forming beaches and islands as it pleased. But since

White-throated dipper





the end of the 1970s the hydropower development upstream has dampened its mood. When the water flow was reduced the fish thinned out and the riverside meadows and deciduous forest began to grow again. The county council tried to reduce the biological damage by cutting and grazing in the meadows and felling of trees.

On the islands in the rapids stand old forest with coarse trees that the water has protected from forestry. Here the old forest fungi like *Skeletocutis odora* grow on the fallen trees and Blunt Feather-moss sits like green beards on the old Aspens.

At Sigerånget there are old arable fields and meadow with hundreds of years of history. Some of the old meadow huts are still standing and remains of the old farms that have extended the same distance since the end of the 18th century. The history is also quite visible in the flora with botanical sights such as Water wort, Adder's-tongue Fern and Cotton grass. The river meadows are still used as pasture and you can sit down in the old heritage landscape at a rest place with table and benches by the river.

## Getting there

### Coordinates (WGS84)

Lat: 60.4423 Long: 17.2098

**From Gävle:** Exit the E4 at the sign for Söderfors/Hästbo, in the southern suburbs of Gävle. Continue towards Söderfors until you come to a turn off towards Kågbo and a sign to Bredforsens Nature – Reserve. There turn off if you want to enter the reserve from the north at Sigerånget. If you want to go to Landkvarn continue a few kilometres towards Söderfors. When you have driven over the river, you will immediately see a sign for the reserve and a carpark on the left.

**From Uppsala:** Follow the E4 north to Tierp. Then turn off onto Route 292 towards Söderfors. Continue through Söderfors towards Gävle/Hedesunda. After a few kilometres there is a sign towards Bredforsens Nature Reserve where you can park if you want to enter the reserve from the south and walk to Landkvarn. If you want to begin at Sigerånget carry on to the turn off to Kågbo and follow the signs to the reserve.

**Size:** 222 hectares

## Don't miss this

- Take a mosquito hat if you visit the area in the summertime as there are a lot of mosquitos.
- Flowering of Dalälven' s own violet, Bog violet, that can colour the riverside meadows violet in May.
- A ski trip along the open waters of Bredforsen where large numbers of a White-throated dipper spend the winter.

### Interesting species

Bog Violet, Fen Violet, Adder's-tongue Fern, Water wort, Stock dove, White-throated dipper, Otter.



# 30. Gysinge Nature Reserve

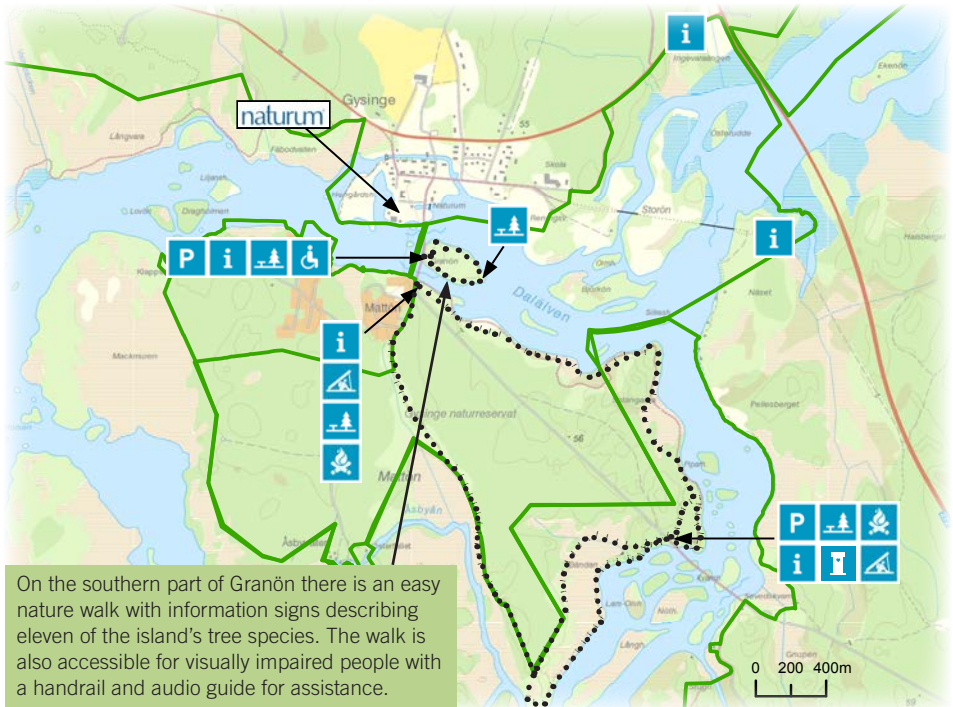
– an easy way to get to know the river



Gysinge Nature Reserve is a welcoming introduction to the nature of Färnebofjärden. Its wide trails allow you to get close to the rapids and the large oak trees, even with a buggy or a wheelchair.

The landscape in Gysinge Nature Reserve is similar to that of Färnebofjärden National Park, but in a smaller format. You do not get such magnificent views out over the firths, but the reserve is a perfect place for short hikes and picnics by the rapids.

The island of Granön lies in the middle of the Gysinge rapids. There is an easily walked





nature trail with signs telling you about eleven of the tree species on the island. A handrail and audio guide make this hike easily accessible, even for those who are visually impaired. The trail takes you under mighty oaks and through leafy river bank forests. Sometimes you come very close to the roar of the rapids.

Gysinge Bruk established a park on Granön in 1876. The area still feels a little park like, with some unexpected trees and shrubs such as copper beech, sycamore and red-barked dogwood.

Those who want to experience real riverside meadows have to go further into Gysinge Nature Reserve, for example to the island of Mattön. One hundred years ago, the meadows were cut using a sickle, but they are now kept open by the river's spring floods. One of the rare plants that thrive on the riverside meadows is bog violet.

Just like in Färnebofjärden National Park, you can hear a large number of different woodpeckers and owls in the forests and see sea eagles glide above you in the sky. This is also home to the ancient carrs, which are needed by the white-backed woodpecker. Catching a glimpse of this critically endangered bird is like winning first prize in a nature lottery.

## Getting there

### Coordinates (WGS84 DD)

Lat: 60.28519 Lon: 16.88468

**From Gävle:** Take road 56 to Valbo, where you turn south towards Sala. After about 40 km, turn right (road 272) at the sign for Färnebofjärdens nationalpark. Follow the signs for Färnebofjärdens nationalpark, pass the turn-off for Naturum, after the first bridge over the river Dalälven, turn left into the car park on Granön.

**Size:** 463 hectares

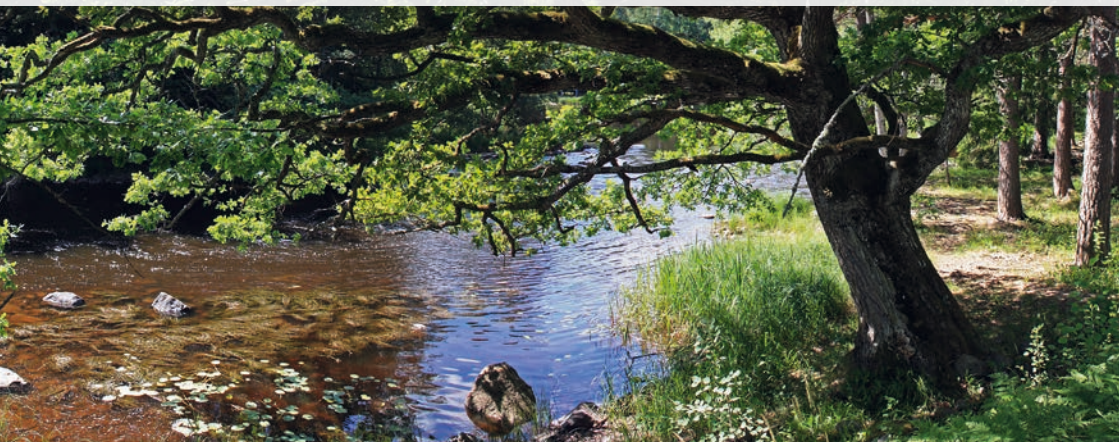
## Don't miss this

- Visiting Granön at wood anemone time, when almost the whole island is carpeted with these chalky white flowers.
- Walking out onto the south-west tip of Granön. There is a picnic area here where you can rest under the mighty oak trees and listen to the rapids.



# 31. Färnebofjärden National Park

– a glittering, gushing realm of deciduous forest



Glide along in your canoe between the hundreds of islands, where great Oak trees, and Aspen line the banks of Färnebofjärden. Or just sit down in a warm nature room and look at the otters playing in the rapids outside.

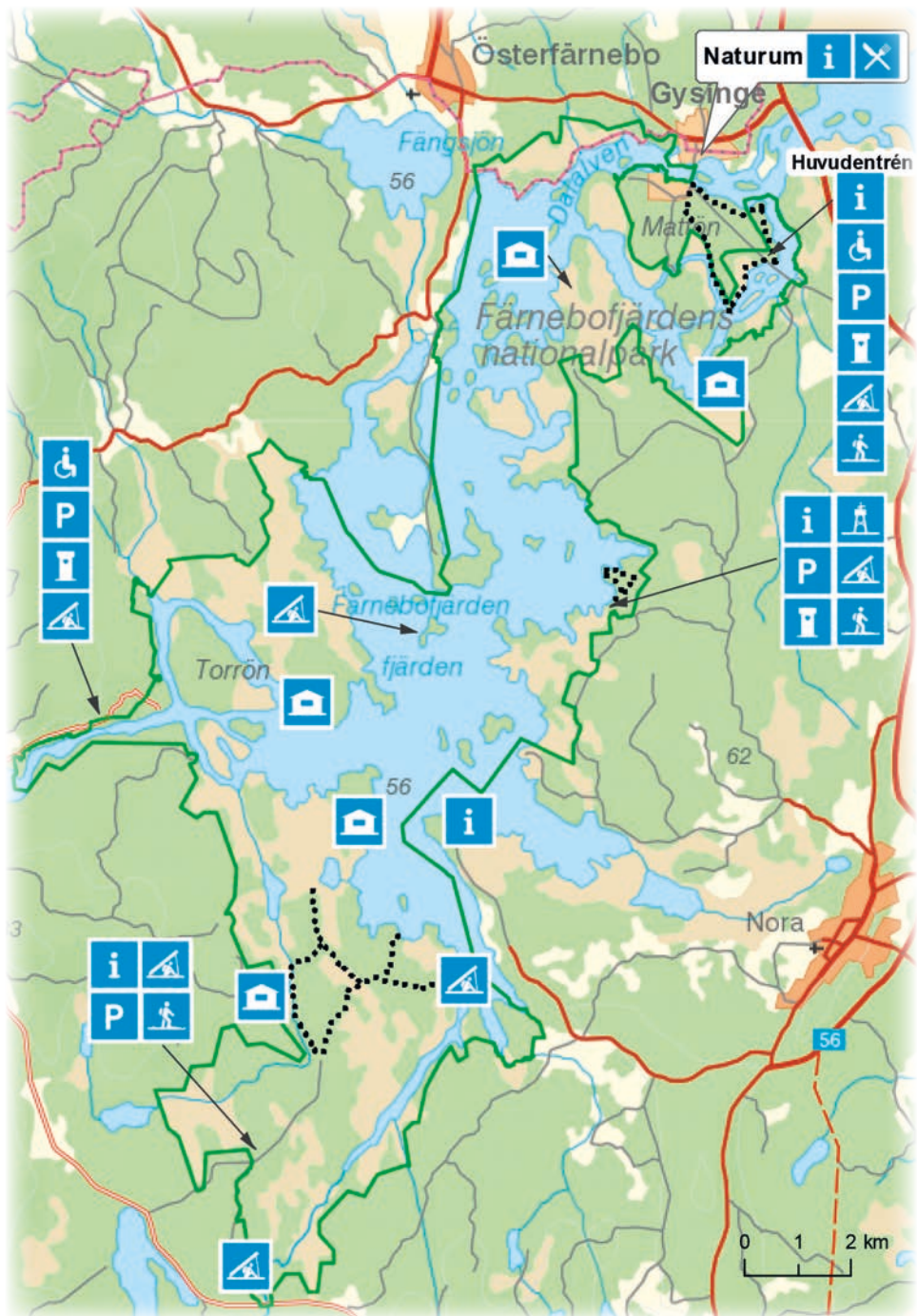
Once upon a time nearly every Swedish water course would flood in the spring. Now most have been tamed by hydroelectric power and dikes but in Färnebofjärden the mighty spring flood still rules. Along the rapids and coastal inlets there are still swamp forests, with coarse Aspen pines and oaks all of which can survive submersion better than spruces. Swamp forests are one of our environments with the most varied species. In the spring the tapping or the calls from all kinds of Swedish woodpeckers can be heard and many different owls can be heard hooting in the twilight.

The border between Norrland and Svealand cuts right through the National Park and it shows. Big cloudberry marshes and dark coniferous forest meet oak, Linden and Wood Anenome meadows.



Ural Owl





For a more detailed map go to [www.sverigesnationalparker.se](http://www.sverigesnationalparker.se)



Willowleaf Yellowhead



Winter is a good time to explore the National Park, when you can get around on skis. Then you can follow the wild tracks of the otter when they have slid along in the snow and the Lynx who has walk with silent paws over the river.

Färnebofjärden is a very hospitable National Park. In Gysinge there is a nature room, a staffed visitor centre with all the information you can wish for about the area. Spread out across the National Park there are also twenty or so wind shelters and five open cabins where you can spend the night if there is space. Read more on [www.sverigesnationalparker.se](http://www.sverigesnationalparker.se). The National Park has its main entrance in the area of Sevedskvarn, just south of Gysinge. There is an outdoor exhibition about the nature in the national park and a nature trail that is suitable for prams and wheelchairs. At Tyttbo there is a ramp where it is possible to get down to the water in a wheelchair. Canoes may be hired at Östa camping.

Many people come here for the rich fishing waters. In the white waters at Gysinge, Sevedskvarn and Tyttbo there are Trout and Grayling. Färnebofjärden is also renowned for its unusually large Pike, that swim in the calm waters. Remember to get a valid fishing permit.

#### More information on

[www.sverigesnationalparker.se](http://www.sverigesnationalparker.se)

## Getting there

### Coordinates (WGS84)

Lat: 60.2704 Long: 16.9078

**From Gävle:** Follow Route 56 to the south, until the exit towards Gysinge and the National Park. There are signs to the nature room and main entrance at the area of Sevedskvarn.

**From Uppsala:** Follow Route 272 towards Gysinge, until the turn off for the National Park.

**Size:** 10,100 hectares (of which 4,110 hectares are water)

## Don't miss this

- Swamp forest. You can recognise it on the many deciduous trees where the many lichens begin to grow a little way up the trunk as they cannot survive the flooding.
- Beavers If you do not actually see one in the flesh you can certainly find tracks or hear a huge splash when they issue a warning by hitting the water surface with their tail. Gysingeforsarna and Sevedskvarn are good places to look out for otters and beavers.
- If you can get hold of a canoe or a boat don't miss the paradise island of Sandön, where you can choose your beach according to where the sun is in the sky.
- Viewing in tower Skekarsbo, with views over the National park. White-tailed eagle Osprey

### Interesting species

Ural Owl, Eurasian pygmy Owl, Whooper Swans Grey-headed woodpecker, Osprey, Bog Violet, Fen Violet, Pericardia foliosa, Willowleaf Yellow-head.





## Many kinds of nature and culture – preserved in many ways

Gävleborgs county contains a shifting nature, from enchanted old forest to barren stone beaches, thronging bird beaches and mountains shimmering with fables and beautiful views. Our county houses just over 200 nature and culture reserves and also many other ways of preserving nature.

### **Nature Reserves**

Nature reserves are our most common form of nature conservation. They should protect valuable natural environment, biological diversity and areas for recreation and outdoor activities. Nature reserves have special regulations both for the landowners and the public. Each reserve has a management plan that sets out how the area will be managed so that the values of the natural world and of recreation shall be preserved and developed. Sometimes management means simply letting the forest look after itself, growing older at its own pace.

### **National Parks**

In Sweden there are 29 national parks that are intended to be the foremost representatives of the different types of nature in the country. These areas that are given the title National Park must be valuable from a biological perspective and attractive for outdoor activities and sightseeing. They should also be large, preferably more than 1,000 hectares. There are two national parks in Gävleborg county. Färnebofjärden and Hamra.

### **Natural Monuments**

Natural monuments are small areas with interesting natural phenomena or with

remarkable appearance. There are nine natural monuments in Gävleborg county, all of them various distinctive trees. Often trees with associations such as pines “suptallar” or oaks “brännvinsekar” where the foresters would sit and drink schnapps, or special trees with mystical qualities from the manor house garden, “vårdträd”. Natural monument is one of the oldest forms of conservation in our country, but today it is not so common for new natural monuments to be designated.

### **Culture Reserves**

Culture reserves were created to care for and preserve valuable cultural landscapes. This is a fairly new form of protection, instituted in 1999. In Gävleborg county there are three culture reserves, which are all described in this guide.

### **Natura 2000**

In order to conserve nature in Europe the EU countries have selected their most valuable natural areas for the major network Natura 2000. The aim of the network is to prevent animals and plants becoming extinct and to prevent their habitats from being destroyed. Particularly important species in Gävleborg county are Lady's-slipper orchid, Freshwater pearl mussels, and the Ural owl. Important

habitats are old coniferous forest, shore meadows and rich fen. There are over 150 Natura 2000 areas in the county. Most of the nature reserves describes in this guide are also Natura 2000 areas.

### **Biotope preservation**

Biotope preservation is used for smaller areas that are the habitats for endangered animals or plants. They might be, for example, sump forest, ravines or natural pasture. In the farming landscape all the lanes, non-arable outcrop, clearance cairns, and stone walls are protected under general Biotope preservation.

### **Animal Conservation Areas**

In order to protect sensitive and shy animals there are animal conservation areas. It is not permitted to visit these areas during certain times of year, particularly when the animals and birds have young, normally from April 1st to July 15th or later. In Gävleborg county the Animal Conservation Areas are mainly near the coast to give peace to the sea birds or seals. There are some others inland, protecting lakes. These are informally known as bird conservation areas.

### **Management of the areas**

Many of the countryside customs in our natural reserves need to be managed in order to preserve them. They might consist of, for example, meadow cutting, cattle grazing, conservation fires in the forest. The County Council is also working hard to make the areas accessible for visitors, for example by providing car parking, information boards, hiking trails and barbecue areas.



# Checklist of reserves and national parks in Gävleborg

There are over just over 200 nature and culture reserves and two national parks in Gävleborg. How many have you visited? Tick them off in the table below.

More information about our reserves and national parks can be found on [www.lansstyrelsen.se/gavleborg](http://www.lansstyrelsen.se/gavleborg) and [www.sverigenationalparker.se](http://www.sverigenationalparker.se)

## Nature Reserves, Culture Reserves and National Parks in Gävleborg County

<input type="checkbox"/>	Agön-Kråkön	<input type="checkbox"/>	Eggegrund-Gråsjälsbådan	<input type="checkbox"/>	Gönhammaren
<input type="checkbox"/>	Alsjöåsen	<input type="checkbox"/>	Ensjölokarna	<input type="checkbox"/>	Hagmyran
<input type="checkbox"/>	Andersvallsslätten	<input type="checkbox"/>	Erik-Olssveden	<input type="checkbox"/>	Hagåsen
<input type="checkbox"/>	Andån	<input type="checkbox"/>	Finnbrännabäcken	<input type="checkbox"/>	Hamra nationalpark
<input type="checkbox"/>	Axmar	<input type="checkbox"/>	Finnbrännan	<input type="checkbox"/>	Hamsas
<input type="checkbox"/>	Bastjärnsrönningen	<input type="checkbox"/>	Flarksjöberget	<input type="checkbox"/>	Hedesundaskogen
<input type="checkbox"/>	Björnåsen	<input type="checkbox"/>	Flisberget	<input type="checkbox"/>	Hemlingby
<input type="checkbox"/>	Blacksås	<input type="checkbox"/>	Flotthöljan	<input type="checkbox"/>	Hohällan
<input type="checkbox"/>	Bladmyran och Granskogen	<input type="checkbox"/>	Färnebofjärdens nationalpark	<input type="checkbox"/>	Holms gammelskog
<input type="checkbox"/>	Bleckbergens urskog	<input type="checkbox"/>	Galvån	<input type="checkbox"/>	Hådelles gammelskog
<input type="checkbox"/>	Blårönningen	<input type="checkbox"/>	Gammelstilla-Bredmossen	<input type="checkbox"/>	Hålsjöholmen
<input type="checkbox"/>	Bläcktäarnsjön	<input type="checkbox"/>	Gammelsäll	<input type="checkbox"/>	Häckelsängs högmosse o Gnagmur
<input type="checkbox"/>	Boda	<input type="checkbox"/>	Garpkölen	<input type="checkbox"/>	Hägenlammsmyran
<input type="checkbox"/>	Bodagrottorna	<input type="checkbox"/>	Gladbäcken	<input type="checkbox"/>	Hästhagsberget
<input type="checkbox"/>	Bodmyran	<input type="checkbox"/>	Gnarpskatan	<input type="checkbox"/>	Hästmyrberget
<input type="checkbox"/>	Bodsjöån	<input type="checkbox"/>	Gommorsberget	<input type="checkbox"/>	Högbranntjärn
<input type="checkbox"/>	Bodåsen	<input type="checkbox"/>	Gran	<input type="checkbox"/>	Högmossen
<input type="checkbox"/>	Bondarvallsberget	<input type="checkbox"/>	Grossjöberget	<input type="checkbox"/>	Hölick
<input type="checkbox"/>	Brassberget	<input type="checkbox"/>	Gryssjömyran	<input type="checkbox"/>	Igelsjön
<input type="checkbox"/>	Bredforsen	<input type="checkbox"/>	Gråsberget	<input type="checkbox"/>	Igeltjärnsberget
<input type="checkbox"/>	Bromsvallsberget	<input type="checkbox"/>	Grävna knippan	<input type="checkbox"/>	Ijungan
<input type="checkbox"/>	Brännan	<input type="checkbox"/>	Gröntjärn	<input type="checkbox"/>	Ista
<input type="checkbox"/>	Bursjöberget	<input type="checkbox"/>	Grötvallsskogen	<input type="checkbox"/>	Jordbärsmyren
<input type="checkbox"/>	Burseskogen	<input type="checkbox"/>	Gulliksberget	<input type="checkbox"/>	Järvsöholmarna
<input type="checkbox"/>	Bålsön	<input type="checkbox"/>	Gulåsen	<input type="checkbox"/>	Järvsöklacken
<input type="checkbox"/>	Bårsån	<input type="checkbox"/>	Gussjövallsberget	<input type="checkbox"/>	Kallmyr
<input type="checkbox"/>	Börningsberget	<input type="checkbox"/>	Gustavsmurarna	<input type="checkbox"/>	Kampstjärnsberget
<input type="checkbox"/>	Djupbäcken	<input type="checkbox"/>	Gysinge	<input type="checkbox"/>	Klackudden
<input type="checkbox"/>	Djupsjön-Römmaberget	<input type="checkbox"/>	Gåsholma	<input type="checkbox"/>	Klibbalreservatet



Klovbacken  
 Kläppaängarna  
 Klövberget  
 Kransarna  
 Kroksjö öga  
 Kuggöarna  
 Kungsberget  
 Kungsfors  
 Kungshögshällarna  
 Kvillanudden  
 Kyrkberget  
 Kyrkön  
 Kårsberget  
 Kölberget  
 Köpmansmossen  
 Laggarbomyran  
 Landa  
 Lappkullen  
 Larzonska  
 Lijjeslåttbäcken  
 Lill-Naggen  
 Lingarö  
 Lisselåsklack  
 Lobåsberget  
 Lomtjärn  
 Lugnsjön  
 Långbro  
 Långhällskogen  
 Långnäsudden  
 Långtjärnsberget  
 Långängarna  
 Lövsalen  
 Majorns hage  
 Mellanljusnan  
 Mössbobäcken  
 Nedre Svartsvedåsen  
 Norra Brassberget  
 Norra Hornslandet  
 Norrberget  
 Norrbränningen  
 Notholmen

Näverheden  
 Näveråsen  
 Oppsjökogen  
 Orarna  
 Ormön  
 Paradisberget  
 Risnosen  
 Rotsjön  
 Rosslavallen  
 Rossåsen  
 Rovennoppi  
 Rännkullarna  
 Sillerberget  
 Sjugarna  
 Skatön  
 Skidtjärnsberget  
 Skjortnäs västra  
 Skjortnäs östra  
 Skrebbmyran  
 Skvallerbäcken  
 Skålvallbrännan  
 Skåmningsön  
 Skärjån  
 Skärjåskogen  
 Snäcken  
 Solbergadalen  
 Spjutholmen  
 Stenbäcken  
 Stensjön  
 Stenöorn  
 Stora Blyberget  
 Stora Bolleberget  
 Stora Korpimäki  
 Stora Sundsjöberget  
 Stora Öråsen  
 Storberget  
 Stor-Dragåsen  
 Storjungfrun  
 Storkvarnberget  
 Storröjningsmorän  
 Storön

Styggmurarna  
 Surtjärn  
 Svartberget  
 Svartstensudden  
 Svartviksberget  
 Svarvtjärnsbergen  
 Svedjebodvallen  
 Sätorskogen  
 Sävasjön  
 Söderåsen  
 T-udden  
 Taskberget  
 Testeboskogen  
 Testeboån  
 Testeboåns delta  
 Tiadalen  
 Tillammstjärnen  
 Tjuvberget  
 Tornmyran  
 Trollberget  
 Trödjemurarna  
 Tröskens rikkärr  
 Tunderåsen  
 Tångberget  
 Törnberget  
 Vattingsmalarna  
 Vitgrund-Norrskär  
 Vitöarna  
 Voxnan  
 Vällingudden  
 Ysberget-Laxtjärnsberget  
 Åby Urskog  
 Ålsjön  
 Änäset  
 Älvåsen  
 Änga-Tjännåsen  
 Ängraån  
 Österbergsmuren  
 Övre Svartsvedåsen

# Notes

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A series of 28 horizontal dotted lines for writing.

# OUT AND ABOUT

Gävleborg County Council want more people to get “Out and about” in the nature and culture reserves around the county. This guide gives you ideas for 31 excursions to our national parks and reserves.

Enjoy yourselves!



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