



Illustration: Peter Nilsson

Coastal Meadows and Wetlands in the Agricultural Landscape of Öland is a project being run by the Kalmar County Administrative Board between 2000 and 2005, in consultation and collaboration with a large number of farmers and landowners, its aim being to increase the acreage of well-tended, moist and wet habitats in the island's agrarian landscape. More than 160 sq. km on 18 different sites will be affected by a variety of measures to be taken.

The project sites comprise valuable moist and wetland environments with a fantastic biodiversity which is to be preserved and/or reinforced. All the project sites have been proposed by the Swedish Government for inclusion in Natura 2000, an ecological network of special areas of conservation within the EU.



Wetlands, grazing livestock and an open landscape

For thousands of years past, the Öland landscape has borne the imprint of human habitation and grazing livestock. Large areas of natural pasturage – alvar dry grassland, coastal grasslands, coastal meadows, bogs and swamps – extend far and wide. Many of the habitats here are not commonly found in other parts of Sweden and Europe. Boreal Baltic coastal meadows (mudflats and sandflats not covered by sea water at low tide), calcareous dry and moist grasslands and alkaline fens are among the Öland biotopes for whose conservation we are internationally responsible.

The open landscape is wholly dependent on living agriculture with animal husbandry. Ungrazed, the terrain would soon be overgrown. The farmer is invaluable for the long-term maintenance and preservation of Öland's unique natural and man-made environments.

Endangered flora and fauna species

Moist and wet lands, as well as temporary accumulations of water and lakes, are vitally important to many plants, birds, insects, molluscs and reptiles.

Drainage of wetlands, lowering of water tables and overgrowth resulting from reduced grazing have led to the disappearance of many species from previously well-known habitats. Currently endangered species include, for example, the ruff (*Philomachus pugnax*), the avocet (*Recurvirostra avosetta*), the Slavonian grebe (*Podiceps auritus*), the fen orchid (*Liparis loeselii*), the marsh fritillary (*Euphydryas aurinia*), the Geyer's whorl snail (*Vertigo geyeri*) and the European crested newt (*Triturus cristatus*).

Grazing in Öland has been resurgent since the mid-1990s, thanks partly to environmental measures, counselling and restoration projects. In order, however, for endangered flora and fauna species not only to survive but to have the chance of multiplying and spreading, more lands must be kept open and more wetlands reinstated.

Photographs by
Anders Johansson (cover),
Susanne Forslund and Markus
Forslund (*Euphydryas aurinia*)

Sites and remediation measures

- 1 Ottenby – Inventories, overview of previous drainage measures etc.
- 2 Stora Alvaret – Shrub clearance, reinstatement of alvar lakes, natural water levels and flows, fencing, resumption of grazing, formation of new nature reserves. Information boards, stiles, duckboards, birdwatching towers.
- 3 Eckelsudde – Shrub clearance, information board, stiles.
- 4 Beijershamn – Shrub clearance, nature reserve enlargement, stiles.
- 5 Coastlands of Southeast Öland
- 6 Coastlands of Störlinge
- 7 Coastlands of Tjusby
- 8 Coastlands of Husvalla
- 9 Coastlands of Östra Väsby
- 10 Coastlands of Hjälmsstad/Marsjö
- 11 Södviken
- 12 Coastlands of Hallnäs
- 13 Högenäs Orde
- 14 Vanserum/Södra Bäck – Shrub clearance, fencing, resumption of grazing, investigation water table, formation of nature reserve. Information boards, stiles, duckboards.
- 15 Petgårde – Shrub clearance, resumption of grazing, reinstatement of natural water levels.
- 16 Djurstad – Shrub clearance, reinstatement of natural water levels, resumption of grazing and haymaking.
- 17 Knisa Mosse – Shrub clearance, resumption of grazing, fencing. Stiles.
- 18 Nabbelund – Shrub clearance, fencing, resumption of grazing. Information boards, stiles.

Fencing, shrub clearance, reinstatement of wetlands, natural water levels and water flows, resumption of grazing and haymaking, formation of new nature reserves. Information boards, stiles, birdwatching towers.



The LIFE project

Coastal Meadows and Wetlands

in the Agricultural Landscape of Öland

Project duration: 1st Nov. 2000 – 31st June 2005

Total budget: EUR 3,360,000

(MSEK 30 approx.)

Funding sources: EU LIFE fund 50% (LIFE-nature part-finances projects for the protection and preservation of habitats, flora and fauna of interest within the EU)
The Swedish National Environmental Protection Agency 29%
Swedish national authorities, higher education establishments, foundations and associations 21%



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See also home page:

www.h.lst.se/verk/nat/life2001.htm

