

## Welcome to Hallands Väderö



Hallands Väderö nature reserve comprises the main island of around 310 ha, together with the surrounding waters, islets and skerries totalling 1742 ha. The island is 3 km long and, at its narrowest, is 600 m wide.

The reserve was established in 1958, but plans to protect the unique nature of the island were laid down at the beginning of the 1900's. The island has belonged to and been administered by Torekov church for several hundred years.

In proportion to its size, Hallands Väderö is one of the country's most species-rich places, with many uncommon and threatened species. Unlike many other woods along Sweden's west coast, the woods on the island were never chopped down completely. Many of the old trees contain myriads of insects and plants.

### Väderöns early exploitation by man

Man has frequented Väderön since the early stone age in order to fish, hunt seals and birds and collect eggs. Among the one hundred or so archaeological finds on the island are flint tools from the stone age and graves and ceramics from the bronze and iron ages. From the middle ages there are numerous remains of "bothies", small stone huts measuring a few square meters which were used as overnight dwellings for fishing and hunting.

### Traces of ancient woodland husbandry

It is probable that already during the bronze age Väderön began to be used as pasture land. The island was sheltered and predator-free, with the sea forming a natural boundary. The woodland was not only used for grazing, but also for providing firewood and rough building-timber. Tree foliage was important in supplying the animals' needs for winter fodder. Some trees were pollarded, which is to say they were regularly cut back in order to produce fresh new shoots. Another form of tree husbandry was coppicing, where the trees were cut down to ground level. This method was also used to produce low-grade, multi-purpose timber

to those dimensions needed in agriculture, for fishing and within the household. Pollarded trees often become very old and rich in decaying and decomposing wood, creating a good habitat for insects, lichens, mosses and hole-nesting birds. Nowadays, new pollarding is being carried out on the island's lime trees in order to maintain the old ways.

### **One of Sweden's richest insect and lichen localities**

Thanks to the rich stand of old trees, the island is one of Sweden's foremost insect localities and the best for beech-dwelling insects. Here are to be found a quarter of Sweden's most threatened beetle species and even some of the most threatened species in Europe.

Hallands Väderö is also one of Sweden's richest lichen localities with approximately 350 species, many of which are scarce or threatened.

### **Söndre skog, Nörre skog and Tångakärret**

Söndre skog is the island's largest continuous wood. On the dry and mesic soils are stands of pure beech and oak-dominated mixed deciduous woodland. In the wetter areas, alder carr occurs which was previously utilised as a coppice wood. On the north side of the island lie Nörre skog and Tångakärret, with their oak-dominated, rich deciduous woodland and alder carr respectively. Here, there are thirty-odd formerly pollarded trees, one of which is a mighty ash.

### **Ulagarskärret**

One of the most well-known places on the island is Ulagarskärret on the south side. In the spring, the inner parts of the carr are, for the most part, flooded, and the powerful alder stools rear up out of the water like verdant islands. These alder stools have their own particular flora in the form of luxuriant ferns and cushions of moss. In the spring, water violets bloom in the basins in between later to be succeeded by yellow iris and the white, fine-leaved water dropwort and finally by purple loose-strife.

### **A sea of thrift and dense thickets**

The open pastures are dominated by dry meadows of thrift, meadow saxifrage, wild pansy and bulbous buttercup. There are large expanses of dense and sometimes impenetrable thicket of juniper, bramble, blackthorn and dog rose.

### **Väderön's birds**

The bird-life of the island is dominated by the larger gulls. The greater blackbacked gull with the characteristic black wings is the largest, but the herring gull is the most numerous.

Many eider nest on Väderön. After hatching, the females usually take their ducklings across to the mainland. Hallands Väderö is also the only locality along the west coast where the three members of the auk family, common guillemot, razorbill and black guillemot breed.

The woods and thickets also support a rich bird-life, with several species of warbler breeding. In winter, sea eagle can often be seen, as well as purple sandpiper and rock pipit (which also breeds).

### **Common seal *Phoca vitulina***

The common seal can achieve speeds of 35 km an hour, can dive to a depth of 100 meters and can remain under water for 15 minutes at a time. The pups, which are born in June, suckle the nutritious milk containing 50% fat, and increase their weight from 10 kg to 30 kg in the space of 4 to 6 weeks. If disturbed, the baby seal has less chance of surviving its first, critical year.

**Thrift *Armeria maritima***

The thrift, or sea pink, is often to be found growing in vast beds on stretches of pebble and rock near the shore.

**Black guillemot *Cepphus grylle***

The black guillemot, like Väderön's two other auks, the common guillemot and the razorbill, is a pelagic or sea-dwelling bird which only comes to land to nest. Please refrain from approaching or sunbathing on rocks where auks can be seen swimming nearby. They have eggs or young in the vicinity and your presence can sabotage breeding success.

**Hermit beetle *Osmoderma eremita***

In order to survive, the hermit beetle requires very old trees, preferably over 250 years old. The hermit beetle is one of the larger, more well-known species which lives in this species-rich and rare habitat. This makes it most suitable as an indicator species, which is to say that where the hermit beetle occurs this indicates the occurrence of a large number of other rare and threatened species.

**Wild honeysuckle *Lonicera periclymenum***

A characteristic plant of Väderön's woods is the wild honeysuckle which twines its way high up into the branches of the trees.

This area is included in the EU's ecological network, Natura 2000. Maintenance has been partly financed by the EU Life-Nature fund.