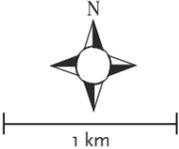
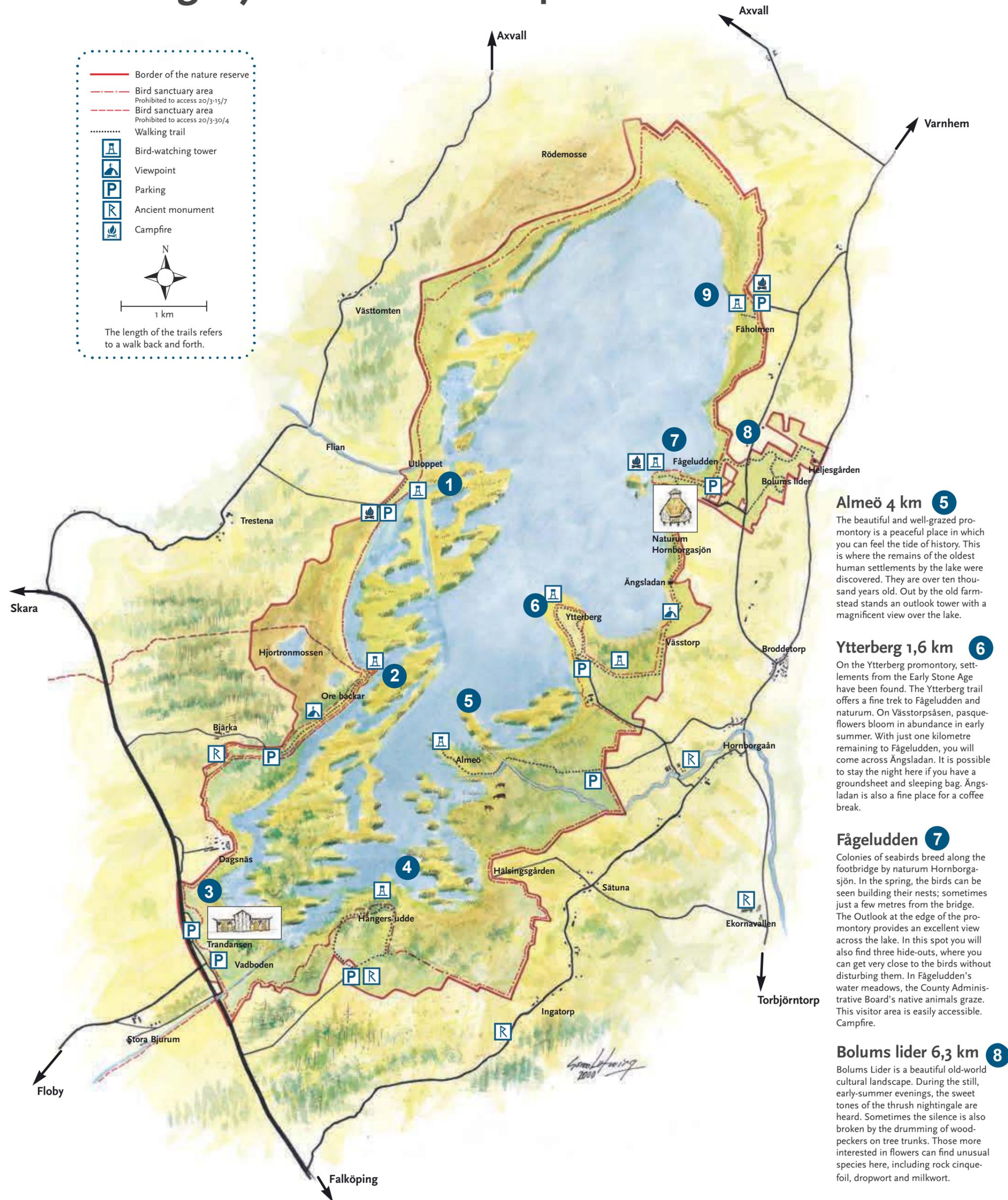


# Hornborgasjön – one of Europe's most beautiful bird lakes

— Border of the nature reserve  
- - - Bird sanctuary area  
Prohibited to access 20/3-15/7  
- - - Bird sanctuary area  
Prohibited to access 20/3-30/4  
- - - - - Walking trail  
A Bird-watching tower  
V Viewpoint  
P Parking  
R Ancient monument  
C Campfire



The length of the trails refers to a walk back and forth.



## Utloppet 1,3 km 1

At Utloppet, visitors are treated to a light trek through the valley along the path built in connection with the restoration. There are often flocks of birds in the area. When the rest of the lake is frozen over, Utloppet is the best place to come for birdwatching, as the water seldom freezes here. In spring there is a good chance of spotting the most rare black-necked grebe. Campfire.

## Ore backar 3,5 km 2

The hiking trail meanders along a beautiful pebbled ridge covered with dense deciduous forest. The environment is at its most beautiful when the flowers of may are in bloom, though the rich colours of autumn must also be witnessed. West of the trail lies Hjärtronsmossen. This type of moss commonly grows with bell-heather and cranberries, giving a true sense of Norrland.

## Trandansen 3

From late March until mid-April, thousands of cranes, geese, whooper swans and wild ducks inhabit Trandansen. Thousands of visitors welcome the spring and the coming of the cranes, a delightful blend of nature experience and national holiday. The information centre at Trandansen is open during the crane season.

## Hångers udde 3,1 km 4

Hångersleden offers a beautiful walk in a level and varied landscape which is home to many old oaks. The birdlife is rich, and for the culture-minded, the ancient cemetery at Hånger lies at the end of the trail. According to legend it was here that Inge the Elder, once King of Sweden, was buried. It is said that it was Inge the Elder who brought Christianity to Sweden.

## Fåholmen 0,5 km 9

Directly south of Fåholmen lies a riparian forest partly consisting of dead tree trunks which remain standing. It is an amazing sight and a very important environment for many species of insect and birds. In the autumn, this is a good place to come at dusk to see the cranes fly out to sleep in the lake. The best time to do this is usually September and early October. Campfire.

## Almeö 4 km 5

The beautiful and well-grazed promontory is a peaceful place in which you can feel the tide of history. This is where the remains of the oldest human settlements by the lake were discovered. They are over ten thousand years old. Out by the old farmstead stands an outlook tower with a magnificent view over the lake.

## Ytterberg 1,6 km 6

On the Ytterberg promontory, settlements from the Early Stone Age have been found. The Ytterberg trail offers a fine trek to Fågeludden and naturum. On Västtorpsåsen, pasqueflowers bloom in abundance in early summer. With just one kilometre remaining to Fågeludden, you will come across Ångsladan. It is possible to stay the night here if you have a groundsheet and sleeping bag. Ångsladan is also a fine place for a coffee break.

## Fågeludden 7

Colonies of seabirds breed along the footbridge by naturum Hornborgasjön. In the spring, the birds can be seen building their nests; sometimes just a few metres from the bridge. The Outlook at the edge of the promontory provides an excellent view across the lake. In this spot you will also find three hide-outs, where you can get very close to the birds without disturbing them. In Fågeludden's water meadows, the County Administrative Board's native animals graze. This visitor area is easily accessible. Campfire.

## Bolums lider 6,3 km 8

Bolums lider is a beautiful old-world cultural landscape. During the still, early-summer evenings, the sweet tones of the thrush nightingale are heard. Sometimes the silence is also broken by the drumming of woodpeckers on tree trunks. Those more interested in flowers can find unusual species here, including rock cinquefoil, dropwort and milkwort.

# Welcome to Lake Hornborga

Lake Hornborga is situated in the middle of a wonderful natural and cultural landscape. Stone walls, cattle paths, meadows and grazing animals remind us of the old small-scale farming landscape. The lake is a shallow and nutritious wetland teeming with insects, plants and fish. The birds flock here en masse, drawn by the rich food source. The lake is best known for its resting cranes during the spring, a nature experience which attracts thousands of visitors every year. But the area offers magnificent nature experiences all year round.



Vaneko, one of the rare breeds. Photo: Kent-Ove Hvass

In the Spring, the migratory birds return and the cherry trees turn the slopes white. During the summer, the lake becomes a flourishing nursery that is never quiet - not even during the short nights. In May and June, the thrush nightingale and other nocturnal singing birds serenade. During the autumn months, thousands of wild ducks, coots and swans gather in the area. The rich variety of sea birds attracts white-tailed eagles that spend the winter by the lake.

## Early settlers

The inland ice is the chief contributor to the soft and gentle landscape by the lake. When the ice disappeared 10,000 years ago, hills and ridges were formed. Melting icebergs left large hollows in the



Billowing countryside at Ytterberg. Photo: Torbjörn Skogedal

ground, and eskers took shape in irregular formations at their edges. Lake Hornborga was at this point in time a bay on the west coast of the then unfounded kingdom of Sweden. Shortly after the ice from the last ice age had melted away the first settlers arrived. Archaeological excavations have shown that people lived here as early as 10,000 years ago. Naturally, the attraction was the access to food; hunting and fishing by the lake had a high yield. Eventually, people began to farm the lands as well, but the lake was still an essential food source. Going fishing and hunting for duck were important events. Humans have benefited from the lake throughout the ages. Then something happened...

## The lake that disappeared

Lake Hornborga was drained five times between 1800 and 1930. The first few times this was done to protect agricultural land against flooding, the latter were so the farmlands could be expanded. The last efforts to drain the lake during the 1900s were so successful that the lake nearly disappeared. Only small areas of open water remained in the northern parts of the lake. The arable lands were later abandoned and the beautiful bird lake was transformed into an overgrown swamp. Reeds, bushes and trees took over the lake area.

## ... and rose again

The idea of recreating the rich bird lake was formed as early as in the 1960s. It was a lengthy process. In 1988, the Parliament decided that Lake Hornborga would be restored to a living bird lake. Trees and bushes along the shores were removed and reeds in the lake were chopped up. Channels were dug once more and eventually the lake's water level rose by nearly a metre.

The restoration of Lake Hornborga was in many ways a pioneering project. The Swedish Environmental Protection Agency had to develop new technology, new machines and new expertise. The restoration was finished by the middle of the 1990s and Lake Hornborga is now once more one of Europe's most important bird lakes. But Lake Hornborga requires continual nature conservation work in order to retain its natural value. It is primarily the important water meadows that require care. Grazing animals and hay-making keep the lands open.

## The bird lake

A total of nearly 50 unusual wetland species breed here, some of which are rare and endangered. One example is the black-necked grebe which breeds every year at Lake Hornborga. The lake is also home to by far the country's largest colony of black-headed gulls. Many thousands breed on the lake every year. The Black-headed Gulls are important; they provide protection for many other species which build their nests in the gull colonies. Western marsh harriers and great reed warblers breed in the lake's few remaining reeds.



Black-necked grebe. Photo: Kent-Ove Hvass

The water meadows host several species of charadriiformes as well as yellow wagtails and greylag geese.

The lake is one of the country's most important resting places for migratory wetland birds. Many birds stay for much of the autumn. At this time you can expect to see the mute swan, the common pochard, the eurasian wigeon, the eurasian teal, the mallard and the eurasian coot. Close to 50,000 birds can be in the lake at the same time to feed from the rich food source.

## The cranes and the lake

The first cranes tend to appear in the beginning of March. It is the lake's "own" cranes that breed at Lake Hornborga and their number only reaches double figures. A few weeks later, the large flocks of resting cranes arrive in the fields in Trandansen at the southern end of the lake. The cranes return after a winter in Spain or France. After a few weeks they continue their flight to find a bog or mire for breeding.

The fact that so many cranes come to Lake Hornborga to rest is thanks to the Brännvin (Swedish schnapps). The cranes discovered the huge amounts of potatoes that the Brännvin factories around Bjurum and Dagsnäs would leave in the fields. Potatoes which were intended for spirits, became a high-energy food source for the cranes. Potato farming has now ceased and the fields are filled with barley, another excellent source of nourishment for the cranes. The barley is spread out so as to avoid damage to the surrounding agricultural land.

The spring cranes are a magnificent sight, but special mention must also be accorded the autumn cranes migrating south. In September, thousands of cranes rest in the fields around Hornborgasjön. Picture twilight in late September. The trees are of fiery red and gold, and before you hundreds of cranes fly by together, close to the ground. This happens every evening - at Fäholmen, Trandansen and Utloppet.



Cranes at Trandansen. Photo: Kent-Ove Hvass

## Teeming wetland

Lake Hornborga is not just home to birds. The surface of the lake and the water beneath host an abundance of life. Pike, perch, roach and tench are a few fish commonly found here. The shallow waters are

inhabited by water scorpions, water boatmen, asellidae and a host of other insects.

In the spring, the song of the moor frogs is heard from the water meadows, and millions of chironomids dance on the water's surface.



Darter. Photo: Kent-Ove Hvass

## Practical information

Many visitors come to enjoy the lake and its beautiful surroundings. So as not to disturb the birdlife, there are a number of easily accessible visitor areas around the lake where visitors are welcome all year round. These areas have parking spaces, information, bird watching towers and hiking trails. The visitor areas are open even during the bird protection period, from 20 March to 15 July. The only exception is Ore Backar, which is closed from 20 March to 30 April.

Fågeludden and Trandansen have large parking spaces (big enough even for buses), toilets and substantial information facilities. Trandansen to the south is only open for the crane season in the spring.

## Naturum

Naturum Hornborgasjön, an information centre at Fågeludden on the eastern side of the lake, is open from early spring until late autumn. Naturum hosts an exhibition on the history of the lake and its natural value. Naturum offers a number of activities for visitors, such as guided treks, presentations, film watching and various themed days. A programme is available at naturum and at [www.hornborga.com](http://www.hornborga.com).



Naturum Hornborgasjön. Photo: Länsstyrelsen

Naturum also receives school classes and group bookings.

## Welcome!

Nature reserve in the county of Västra Götaland

# \* Lake Hornborga



Lake Hornborga nature reserve is managed by the County Administrative Board of Västra Götaland County, on behalf of the Swedish Environmental Protection Agency. For everyone to enjoy the reserve, you are, as a visitor, asked to follow some rules.

- 20/3-15/7 it is prohibited to enter the bird sanctuary.
- Fires are only allowed at organized fire places.
- If you bring your dog, keep it on a leash.
- Horseback riding is not allowed on hiking trails.
- Motor boats and jet skis are not allowed on the lake.
- Please park vehicles, caravans and mobile homes in designated areas.
- Do not break twigs, dig up plants or in other ways damage living or dead trees and shrubs.
- Fishing is only allowed with a fishing license, off the bird sanctuary period



Produktion: Länsstyrelsen | Foto framsida: Kent-Ove Hvass

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naturum  
Hornborgasjön

