



Tjälvesta-Snavlunda



(Left) Viper's grass. (Right) Grazing animal. Photo: Thomas Eriksson

There are few areas in Sweden quite like the area surrounding Snavlunda village. It is a gently undulating and lake-filled landscape shaped on lime-rich glacial meltwater material. People have lived in and influenced the natural environment in the Snavlunda area since the Stone Age.

When the ice melted 10,000 years ago, large quantities of rock were transported in the sub-glacial meltwater streams. The material was usually deposited in the form of ridges called eskers. It is thought that the ice was stationary at Snavlunda for a while, forming a large sand and gravel delta instead of a ridge. Large ice blocks that had broken off from the front of the glacier stuck in the delta and became embedded in the moraine. After a while, the ice block melted, leaving hollows called kettle holes. Some of these became lakes and others formed hollows in the gently undulating farmland.

The glacial meltwater that flowed out in the Snavlunda area carried gravel and stones that had been eroded from the Närke plain. Alum shale and limestone are nutrient-filled rocks and therefore promote rich flora and fertile soils.

Groves, meadows and pastureland

Snavlunda means “dense grove” in Swedish. It was cultivated from an early time due to the stone-free and well-drained fields on the flat land. The undulating parts became hay meadows and pastureland. During the 20th century, grazing and hay making stopped and the area became overgrown again. Brushwood quickly took over in the grove, and spruce also became established.

It is hard to believe the area was overgrown when

you visit the nature reserve today. This type of landscape is only seen in a few places in Sweden. Grazing animals keep the meadow and pasture fields open, and younger trees are removed to allow more light to reach the ground, which encourages meadow and pastureland plants. Old, thick trees in sunlight are preserved, because they provide habitats for many lichens, fungi, mosses and insects.

A variety of plants

The groves have varied flora. The largest continuous area of grove is in the south-western parts of Snavlunda meadows where the oldest trees are found – oaks, limes, birches and rowans, left from the hay making period. There is the traditional spring flora with anemones in large numbers but also Suffolk lungwort, wood millet, wonder violet, baneberry, wood vetch, spring pea, hedge woundwort, coralroot, common toothwort and Solomon's seal. Other plants found in Tjälvesta are red campion, narrow-leaved bitter-cress, touch-me-not balsam and wood stitchwort.



The open parts have a flora promoted by hay making, with plants such as cowslip, dropwort and viper's grass. In damper areas, wood crane's-bill and globeflowers are found. The protected pasque flower occurs occasionally on dry meadow areas in both reserves. The lakes are also full of nutrients and have a rich flora, including species such as cyperus sedge, sweet flag, curled pondweed, flowering rush, water dock, fine-leaved water dropwort and cowbane.

Inspiration to many

The author Berit Spong lived at Tjälvesta Farm. She described the area in books such as "The Road Through The Meadows", 1961. Others who were inspired to poetry, prose and song are Carl Michael Bellman, Carl von Linné and Erik Gustaf Geijer. The meadows are visited all year round. In the early spring, anemones bloom, in May cowslips and globeflowers and, in the summer, when the leaves provide shade in the groves, there is nothing better than a picnic in the pastureland.

The nature reserve has a comprehensive network of marked paths, offering walks of lengths varying from one to ten kilometres. There are three car parks – in the northern part of Snavlunda meadow, at Snavlunda Church and in the southern part of Tjälvesta meadows. You can also swim in Lake Trehörningen.

Aim

The reserve was established to protect the area's unique landforms and to actively preserve the traditional use of the area, with fields, meadows, pasture enclosure and groves of deciduous trees. This also promotes the diverse flora.

Facts about the nature reserve

Established: Tjälvesta 1956, Snavlunda 1965
 Area: Tjälvesta 68 ha, Snavlunda 83 ha
 Landowner: Swedish Church and private ownership
 Managed by: County Administrative Board
 Established by: County Administrative Board



How to get there

The nature reserve lies approximately 8 km north of Askersund and approximately 6 km south of Vretstorp. It is situated immediately west of the village of Snavlunda.

There are signs along the road between Askersund and Vretstorp. You can park either in the north, in the south part of the area or at Snavlunda Church.



Viper's grass.
 Michael Holmberg

§ In the nature reserve, you are not permitted to:

- destroy or damage solid natural objects or surface forms
- pick flowers, dig up plants, remove branches or damage vegetation in any other way
- disturb animal life, for example by taking close-up photographs of birds nests
- have dogs unleashed
- disturb grazing animals
- camp or park caravans
- light fires, fish or drive motorboats
- drive vehicles except on designated roads
- park anywhere other than where designated
- ride horses or cycle anywhere than on the main access roads through the reserve
- mark trails with paper strips, arrange quiz walks, cross-country races, orienteering competitions or similar
- set up notice boards, placards, posters, signs, inscriptions or similar
- disturb others through the use of radios, CD players, tape recorders, musical instruments or similar