

NATURE RESERVES IN KALMAR COUNTY



**Ottenby**





## *LAST STOP BEFORE THE HORIZON*

Imagine that you are a 5-gram goldcrest looking towards the sea horizon. Something in your body pulls you fiercely to the south, away from the harsh winter cold, but crossing the big dark water is a gamble of life and death. Most land birds hesitate before leaving the shore out of sight. Crossing Kalmar Strait is no problem, but after that most birds fly alongside Öland for as long as they possibly can, all the way to the southern cape. Birds that are in two minds about the open sea gather here, but also sea birds who, on the other hand, do not want to fly across land. Many of them follow an “aerial motorway” from northern Russia to Western Europe, which passes Öland. In autumn, the route becomes increasingly busy towards the south of the island.

For the birds that manage the return flight in spring across the Baltic Sea, Ottenby is often the first land in sight – an oasis with a wide range of habitats offering food and rest for many species.

Ottenby Nature Reserve is therefore just the right place for people who want to understand the miraculous bird migration across the globe. Here, where sky meets the sea, birdwatchers and others with an interest in nature gather from all over Sweden. Travellers, farmers, and kings have also met here since the Middle Ages.



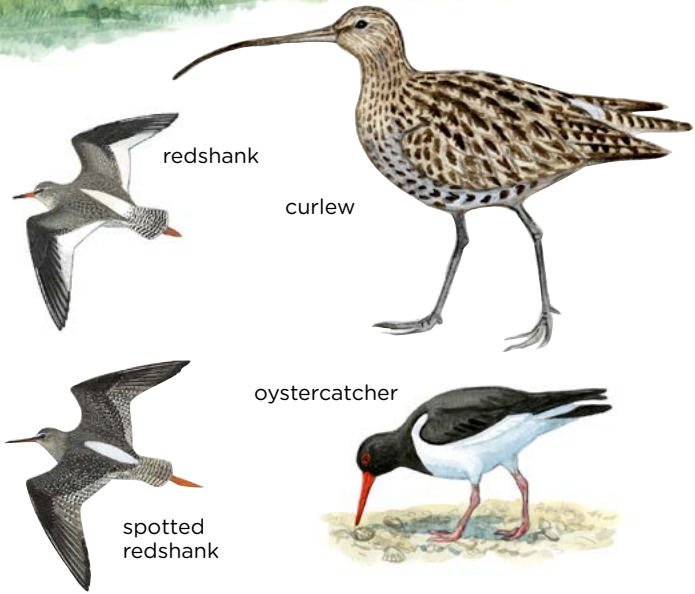
ped avocet

## FOOD ON THE GO FOR WADERS

Ottenby Nature Reserve is one of the best localities in Sweden for spotting waders. As the name suggests, these long-legged birds wade along the shoreline searching for small creatures in the water, which they pick up with their large bills.

**Many waders pass here** on their long flight from the breeding sites on the Russian tundra to the winter quarters in south-western Europe and Africa. Ottenby provides them with the perfect “snack bar” to rest at.

Several species also stay on the coastal meadows around the cape to raise their young. On the sandbank east of the Schäferiångarna meadows you find, for example, one of Sweden’s largest colonies of pied avocet. But the waders’ summer is short. Already in June, female spotted redshanks and curlews start returning to the south. The earliest south-flying birds meet the last north-flying species such as barred warbler and marsh warbler. On the southern cape of Öland it is possible to see migratory birds almost all year round, although the airspace is most crowded in April and May as well as from August through October.



redshank

curlew

oystercatcher

spotted  
redshank



ruff



# MEADOWS AND DECIDUOUS WOODS

Ottenby's rich nature is strongly linked to the area's special cultural history. Even into the 1940s, an enormous haymeadow extended across the present Schäferiängarna, the southern part of Ottenby lund, and part of today's Västra mark. Farmers had cut winter fodder for their animals there since time immemorial, but after the mid-20th century, the meadow decreased in size until haymaking ceased completely in the 1960s.

Much of the old meadows are now used for grazing, and since 1988, haymaking has resumed on part of Schäferiängarna, north of the Ångsvaktarstigen Trail. The area cut here is unusually large. For centuries, birdlife and plants have adapted to living conditions in the open areas, and if they become overgrown many species would disappear.

Ottenby lund is now a deciduous woodland of predominantly oak and birch. The oldest oaks are more than 450 years old and have a girth of around four metres. Many very rare lichens thrive here thanks to the old trees and the moist woodland climate. A number of special insects also live in the old and in the dead trees. The biodiversity in Ottenby lund is increasing thanks to haymaking having resumed here too on some meadowland. Kyrkängen in the north has escaped artificial fertilizers and therefore has the richest flora of all the haymeadows. Here you find species such as adder's-tongue, lesser butterfly-orchid, heath spotted-orchid, and flea sedge.

Today, Ottenby kungsgård manages most of the nature reserve. The farm's cattle and sheep graze large areas. Deer grazing and haymaking also contribute to keeping the land open and preserving biodiversity.

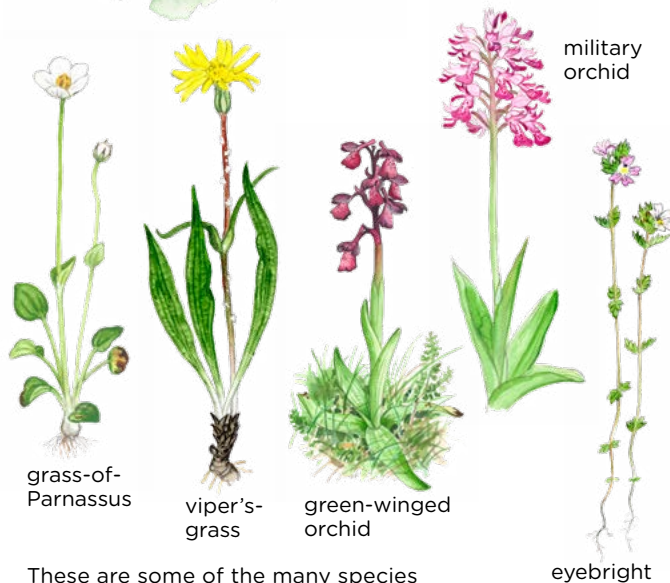


Many rare and threatened lichens, only found on a few trees throughout Sweden, grow on the ancient oaks in Ottenby lund. One of them is *Lecanographa lyncea*.

During the last week of May, golden oriole arrives in Ottenby lund.



In May, the woodland resounds with a multi-voice bird chorus. Collared flycatcher is one of the many small birds that can be heard.



grass-of-Parnassus

viper's-grass

green-winged orchid

military orchid

eyebright

These are some of the many species that flower in Ottenby's meadows and pastures.



The endangered union rustic moth thrives in the semi open woodland.



In the old and in the dead woodland trees you find lesser stag beetle and many other rare beetles.

# STONE AGE LIFE AND ROYAL HUNT

**Humans settled** in the area around the southern cape of Öland already in the Stone Age. Just north of Ottenby kungsgård is one of the island's largest Iron Age burial fields with 275 graves. The name "Otenby" was first mentioned in the 13th century. The appellation contains the name "Otame", meaning "wild", "untamed", seen on runic inscriptions from as far back as the 11th century. But in 1544, king Gustav Vasa ordered that the village be demolished to give way to the royal demesne Ottenby kungsgård. Gustav Vasa's son, Johan III, introduced fallow deer in Ottenby in 1569, and their descendants live on here. The current king of Sweden, Carl XVI Gustaf, holds the hunting rights and carries on the tradition.

**Medieval fishing village.** The stone cross on the eastern side of the road down to the cape marks the remains of Saint John's chapel from the 13th century. Families from the large fishing village gathered here.



By Kungsstenarna in Västra mark is a burial field from the Late Iron Age.

**Site of shipwrecks.** In the old days, sailors used natural features for navigation. For a long time, a large hawthorn tree called Rosenkind's tower was used as a landmark on the southern cape of Öland. But in the late 17th century, a beacon was erected on the cape: An iron basket with burning coal was hoisted on a long pole. The beacon did not emit much light, but the Ölanders didn't complain as wreck-looting was an important supplement to the income of local people. Not least the ships' timber was sought after since at times wood for fires and building was in short supply.

**Despite local protests,** it was decided to replace the beacon with a lighthouse. Material from the decaying Saint John's chapel was used, and the lighthouse was named Länge Jan. (Jan is a short form of Johannes, the Swedish variant of John). It was lit for the first time in November 1785.

**World heritage.** For several thousand years, animals have grazed here and humans have cut grass with scythes. This traditional management, which has been uninterrupted from prehistoric times to the present, is the reason for the designation of The Agricultural Landscape of Southern Öland – of which Ottenby is part – as a World Heritage site. The linear villages, cultivated land, coastland, and alvar plains are all included.





# CRADLE FOR BIRD RESEARCH

Ever since Carl Linnaeus came to Ottenby in 1741, the southern cape of Öland has been known for its birdlife. Ottenby Bird Observatory, where thousands of birds are ringed every year, opened in 1946.

**World-unique research.** The observatory has the oldest uninterrupted bird ringing scheme in the world. Ringing has given us much of the knowledge we have about how birds live and migrate. Today, the observatory is also a part of Swedish environmental monitoring, documenting how species populations increase and decline.

There is also research on influenza viruses, which actually occurs naturally among ducks, geese, swans and other water birds.



goldcrest

**Ottenby rev Nature Reserve** borders on Ottenby to the east. Below the surface is an underwater world of seaweed forests, mussel beds, and eelgrass meadows. Here birds and seals can feast on fish. Ottenby rev has one of four harbour seal colonies in the Baltic Proper (the Baltic south of Åland). In the area are also plenty of grey seal, which have their colonies further north.



harbour seal



grey seal

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## OTTENBY NATURE RESERVE IN BRIEF

- AREA: 995 HA, 95 HA ARE WATER
  - ESTABLISHED: 1970
  - COUNTY: KALMAR
  - PROVINCE: ÖLAND
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## REGULATIONS

Special rules apply within the nature reserve. Full regulations about the right to travel and remain within the reserve are posted on information boards.

- Restricted access applies to some areas and during certain parts of the year, see map in folder.
- During hunting, which is notified on signs, it is only permitted to walk on the Ängsvaktarstigen Trail and on the road Allévågen from the parking area at Norra lund down to the the northern bird watching tower.
- Parking is only permitted in designated areas.
- Dogs must be kept on a leash all year round.
- It is not permitted to camp or park caravans.
- It is not permitted to light fires or leave litter behind.
- It is not permitted to pick flowers, or to damage or remove growing trees, shrubs or plants.
- It is not permitted to damage or disturb wild animals.





Ottenby is one of Sweden's top bird sites. In a normal year, around 270 bird species are observed here.

## GETTING HERE

Ottenby Nature Reserve is located on the southern cape of Öland. Just go as far south as you can, and you will find it!

## DON'T FORGET

**BINOCULARS:** To see the birds close up it is useful to have binoculars. If you don't have your own, you can borrow a pair at naturum.

## FURTHER INFORMATION

Kalmar County Administrative Board  
Website: [www.lansstyrelsen.se/kalmar](http://www.lansstyrelsen.se/kalmar)  
Contact: +46-(0)10-223 80 00,  
[reservat.kalmar@lansstyrelsen.se](mailto:reservat.kalmar@lansstyrelsen.se)



Länsstyrelsen  
Kalmar län



Ottenby is part of the EU's network of protected areas, Natura 2000.

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**Production:** Naturcentrum AB 2022. **Text:** A. Froster **Map:** C. Lindkvist, Naturcentrum AB. **Translation:** Maria Morris for Stefanie Busam Golay | Stilren. **Illustrations:** N. Forshed except for lesser stag beetle by M. Holmer and spotted redshank and redshank by K. Mullarney. **Photo front page:** H. Karlsson. **Other photos:** J. Nilsson (birds over the horizon, birdwatchers, small photo of Långe Jan, Naturum, wash house, bird observatory, haymeadow, burnt orchid), H. Karlsson (Långe Jan in evening light, Kungsstenarna, bird ringing, fallow deer in woodland), S. Hultengren (*Lecanographa lyncea*) and County Administrative Board (Saint John's chapel).