

Bird watching all the year round

Getterön offers excellent opportunities for bird watching during all months of the year. During spring and autumn large numbers of geese, ducks and wading birds roost here. Thanks to the mild climate and the proximity to the sea, many birds are also wintering. Heated water from Varberg's sewage plant flows through the channel and out into the lagoon, and contributes to keeping the ice away even during severe winters. Just outside the Visitor centre (Naturum) it is therefore possible to see little grebe, smew, kingfisher and many of the other exciting winter guests, and all from a comfortable cafeteria. Flocks of whooper swans and diving ducks are also to be seen on the water. Wintering bearded tits gather in the reeds along with water rails and bitterns. The peregrine falcon is found in the reserve all year round. During the winter it may be accompanied by white-tailed eagle and gyrfalcon.



Getterön – one of Northern Europe's finest bird sites, is located 2 km north of the centre of Varberg, in the province of Halland on the west coast of Sweden. The wetlands are an Eldorado for birds and bird watchers. About 170 species regularly breed or rest during migration. In addition to these, a large number of temporary guests visit. Up to and including 2006, not less than 334 species have been recorded at Getterön, and the list is getting longer all the time. There is almost always some rare bird to be found visiting Getterön or its surroundings.

Directions: From the E6 follow the signs to Varberg town centre and Grenå and then the signs to Getterön.

More information

Getterön's Naturum
Lassavägen 1
SE-432 93 Varberg
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Varberg's Ornithological society
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Varberg's Local Authority
SE-432 80 Varberg
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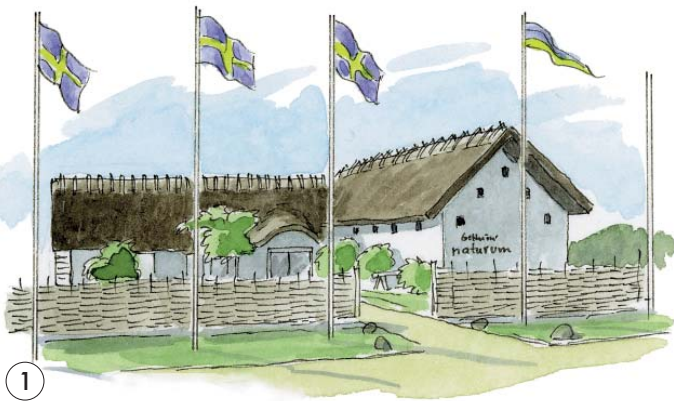


* GETTERÖN




County Administrative Board Halland

Nature reserves in Halland county Sweden



①

Naturum Getterön (Visitor centre)

Good view of the entire reserve. Look through Naturum's fixed telescopes free of charge. Information, café, exhibition, conference room as well as sales of bird books, outdoor clothes and binoculars.



②

The Pavilion

You can sit indoors here and eat your packed lunch.



④

The observation hut

Good view of the entire reserve. The best place to see the birds on the salt meadows and in the lagoon. The best light is in the morning.

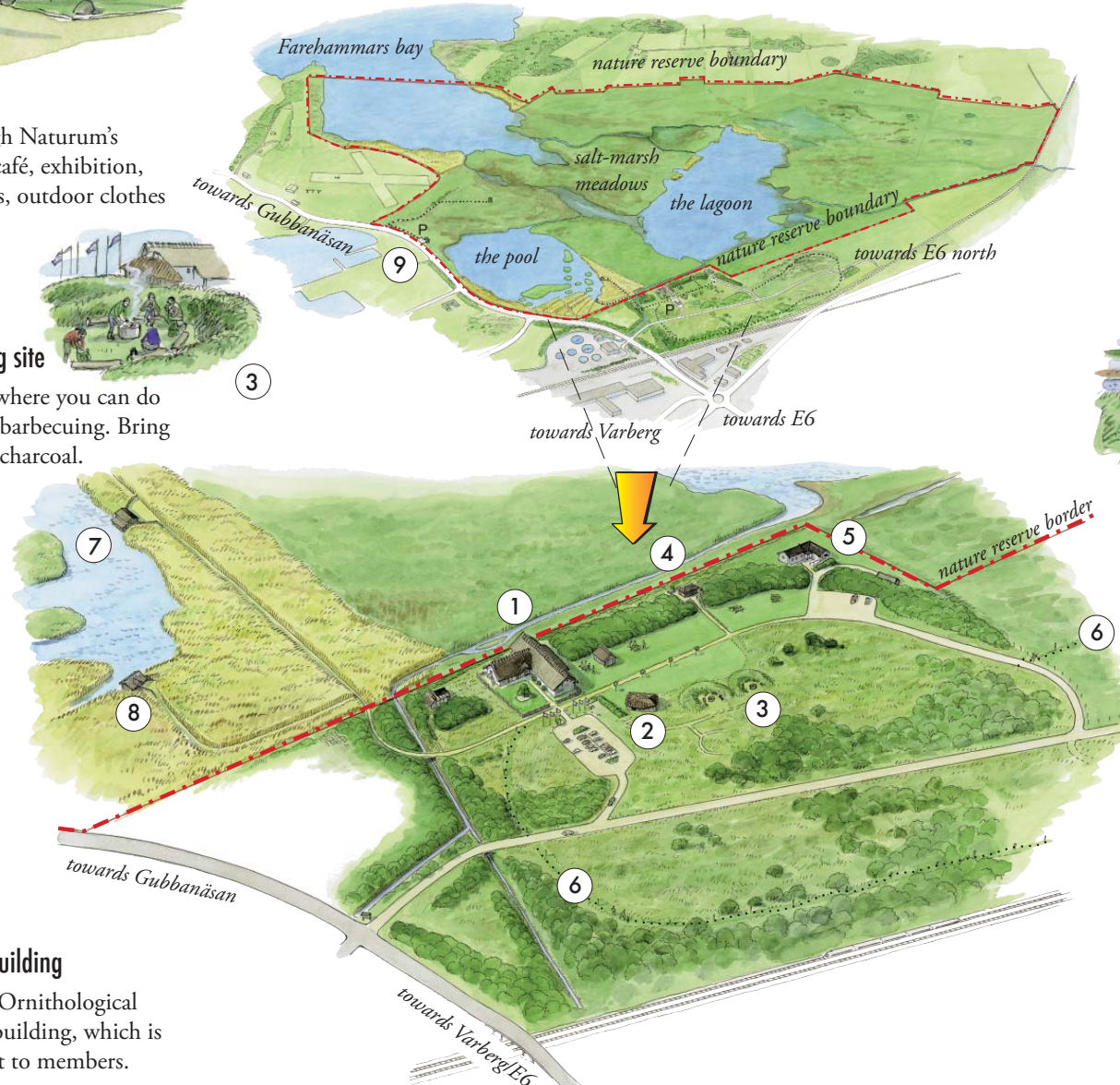


⑤

The VOF building

Varberg's Ornithological Society's building, which is rented out to members.

In Getterön's nature reserve you get right up close to the birds without disturbing them thanks to the superb hides and observation positions. The entire reserve can be seen from Naturum (Visitor centre) through panoramic windows, and information about current bird observations is also available here. Have a cup of coffee in the café and plan your stay. You are free to visit all the facilities except for the VOF-building. However, outside of the facilities and the trails there is a year-round prohibition on entering the other parts of the reserve.



⑥

Nature trail

Pleasant path for rambling that is marked out with red posts. Watch small birds in the shrubberies and enjoy your packed lunch at the top of the hill.



⑦

The large hide



⑧

The reed hide

Right into the birds' living room without disturbing them. Good view over the breeding islands in the pool and superb close contact with the birds in the water. Good place to watch bearded tits and other birds in the reeds.



⑨

Hide at Getterövägen

Parking and outlook platform with a good view over the pool. Good light during the day.



There are several different types of natural habitats in the nature reserve, each one of which has its particular importance for Getterön's bird life. Naturum, the hides and the observation position offer excellent views over the different environments.

1 The pool

The water level and salt content in the pool is regulated by means of a dam and pumps, so that the environment is favourable for bird life. A variety of small creatures flourish in the shallow water and they are food for ducks and wading birds (wadgers). During the late summer and the autumn the water level drops, exposing the mudflats where resting waders can find food.

In addition to all the ducks, common terns, black-headed gulls and avocets are especially prominent amongst the birds in the pool. They breed in large colonies on the artificial islands, together with little terns, oystercatchers and also ringed plover and little ringed plovers. Great crested grebes and coots breed in reeds.

2 The reeds

Large numbers of small birds, seeking out protection and food, periodically roost and spend the night in the reeds, however only a small number of them spend the whole year there. Reed buntings and bearded tits belong to those that do. During the summer they feast on the reed's abundant profusion of springtails, mosquitoes, flies and other insects, however

during the winter their diet changes to reed seeds. The easiest places to catch sight of both of these species is outside the reed hide and the large hide where they often climb about amongst the reeds. During the early summer the monotonous verses of the reed warbler are to be heard throughout the reeds, and perhaps also the more varied song of the sedge warbler. In August there is also a good chance of catching a glimpse of a water rail or a spotted crane scampering between the openings in the reeds.

3 Salt-marsh meadows

Extensive, salt-marsh meadows spread out over large parts of the reserve. Grazing animals keep the grasslands open. If the grazing disappears, the meadows will become overgrown with reeds and many species of birds will disappear.

The characteristic species of the meadows are primarily breeding waders. Lapwings and redshanks are the most common, however black-tailed godwits and dunlins are also found. Ruffs were previously more common but there are now only a few individual pairs to be seen. The greylag goose is however a species that has increased. The grazing of the geese also contributes to keeping the meadows open.

4 The lagoon

Due to the fact that the shallow lagoon is supplied with water from the channel and the nutritious Himle stream, the water is fresh. Farther out towards Farehammars bay, the water becomes more salty. Large numbers of dabbling ducks gather in the lagoon, especially during the migration in spring and autumn. Most of these ducks migrate further while some stay and breed. All the species of Sweden's dabbling ducks have bred at Getterön during recent years.

5 The mudflats

All of the Swedish species of waders regularly rest at Getterön during the autumn and spring migration. Large flocks are to be seen flying around between the mudflats on the sandbanks and along the shallow shoreline. With their long legs and beaks the waders are specially adapted for snatching up the small creatures that live in this environment.

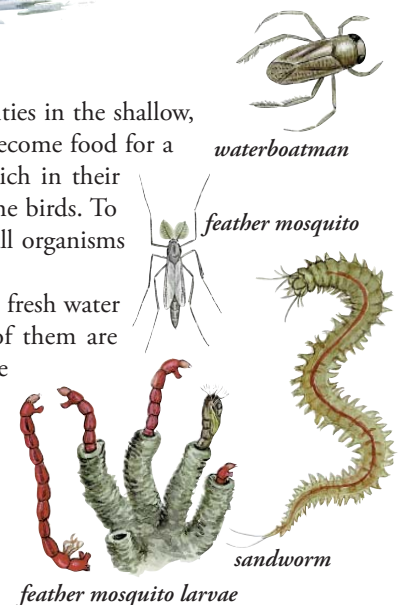
Small organisms in the water

Plankton are produced in great quantities in the shallow, nutritious water. The plankton then become food for a large number of small organisms, which in their turn constitute the basic feeding for the birds. To the right can be seen some of the small organisms that live in the shallow water.

Feather mosquito larvae live in the fresh water and sandworms in salt water. Both of them are sought-after food for waders. The adult mosquitoes are instead food for the young waders on the salt-marsh meadows. The waterboatman lives in the brackish water of the pool. This aquatic insect provides an important source of protein for the female ducks when they are laying eggs.



Dabbling ducks – males in their spring plumage



waterboatman

feather mosquito

sandworm

feather mosquito larvae