

# Komosse

## A nature reserve in the County of Jönköping and the County of Älvsborg

In 1949 the Swedish Society for the Conservation of Nature bought 2 286 hectares of the most interesting and central parts of the bog called *Komosse*. The price was 40 000 Swedish kronor and the money was collected from supporters from all over the country.

The nature reserve of *Komosse* is an area of about 2 850 hectares, 1 725 hectares of which belong to the County of Älvsborg and 1 117 hectares to the County of Jönköping. The purpose of this nature reserve is to preserve one of the most interesting areas of bog in our country for scientific research and active outdoor life.

*Komosse* is one of the largest areas of swamp land in southern Sweden and perhaps the most unique and interesting. It is a 47 square metre large tuft area consisting of bog moss and heather, situated near the peak of Sweden's Southern Highlands, 350 metres above sea level. The reserve consists of several different bogs separated by swampy depressions, water courses, coppices, and lakes.

The scenery is grand and desolate. The space and silence creates an atmosphere that reminds you of the feeling you experience when looking out over the ocean. The width of the swamp land seems infinite. The horizon is broken, only at places, by land-islets, i.e. flat hills situated between the heavens and the infinite bog moss. Only the birds of the area break the silence: the golden plover (ljungpipare) and the meadow pipit (ängspiplärka), the curlew (storspov) and the red-throated diver (smålom).

The highland moor is a unique habitat, a giant pillow of peat. It has been built up through thousands of years of half rotten fragments of plants that have gradually isolated the surface of the bog from the surrounding landscape. The only nutrition and water that reaches the bog comes from above in the form of rain and snow.

The swamp land partly creates its own climate and its own living conditions.

The best way to experience *Komosse* is to follow the *Björnleden* path from *Mörkö*. It is five kilometres long and covered with boards at the wettest parts. This map will guide you on the walk.

### Interesting points along the Björnleden path

1. **The lagg.** The lagg is the borderline between the bog and the surrounding landscape. The bog is drained by the lagg and there the water from the surrounding area is collected. Therefore it is more nutritious than the bog and you will find fen plants that cannot exist in the bog.
2. Here the **bog plane** starts. The highland bog is arched and you start to walk **on top** of the bog where you stand on a layer of **bog moss peat** which consists of more or less rotten parts of dead bog moss. It is the bog moss that builds up the whole bog, and under it there is a half a metre thick layer of leaf-fen peat created by the leaves from beech and alder trees. Below this peat layer is a thin layer of **sedge peat** and on the bottom there is a **moraine** – a mixture of stones, gravel, and sand, which was deposited by the inland ice. Both the layer of leaf-fen peat and that of the moraine do not allow the water to pass through. Therefore the bog is never drained.

3. Here you cross one of the soaks that drain the bog. **Soaks** are depressions that can be formed where the surfaces of two bogs meet. Gradually soaks become brooks or more or less broad fen-streaks that lead the water from the moorland plateau to the lagg.
4. Off to your right the large bog plane **Nolmadsmossen** can be seen. Here lies the highest point of the entire Komosse swampland, 350 metres above sea level. The layer of peat started growing here more than 8 000 years ago and is today more than five metres thick.  
On *Nolmadsmossen* there is a well-developed system of water holes that show how high the subsoil water level is. The waterholes are arranged by a clear pattern that follows the contour lines of the bog.
5. A bit north of the path there is a nutritious fen. Here people collected sedge for cattle fodder during the winter by yearly hay-making.
6. *Lilla Björnön*. Here the subsoil comes through the surface of the peat like an island in the moorland. However, the bog is growing all the time. Every year the layer of peat is built up by one or two millimetres and thus gradually covering the subsoil islands. Here the borders of the landscapes between Småland and Västergötland meet.
7. Here the path passes an area of **wooded swamp**. The subsoil water level is very close to the surface of the ground. Even here the bog goes on growing. In 2000 or 3000 years the swamp wood will be covered by bog moss and other plants and the bog as a whole will have taken over.

### **How to get to Komosse**

The bog of Komosse is on the border between the provinces of Småland and Västergötland, and between the towns of Jönköping and Ulricehamn.

Between Jönköping and Ulricehamn you leave from road 40 to Köttkulla. If you come from Tranemo you drive on road 157 to Ulricehamn and take off at Gällstad towards Köttkulla. In Köttkulla there are road signs for Komosse (Mörkö).

There is a car park and an information board at Mörkö next to the road from Köttkulla to Mulseryd. Here the marked walking-tours also start.

### **Take care and respect nature!**

Komosse is visited by many people, that is why it is important to show consideration so that the valuable nature will not be damaged.

Dogs must be kept on a leash at all times and you are not permitted to do the following:

- to pick flowers or dig up plants, to break branches or to damage trees or bushes in any way
- to disturb and stress animals by taking pictures in an obtrusive way in their habitat
- to camp or park a caravan
- to make a fire at sites other than those designated for it
- to drive within the area
- Dogs must be kept on a leash at all times

On the other hand it is permissible to pick berries and mushrooms.

### **For further information call**

The County of Jönköping, 036 - 157 000, The County of Älvsborg, 0521 - 270 000