



Ministry of Environment
and Food of Denmark
Nature Agency

Royal hunting The par force hunting land- scape in Store Dyrehave

Find your way with the King's map
Experience the cultural landscape
Get to know the story behind



United Nations
Educational, Scientific and
Cultural Organization



The par force hunting
landscape in North Zealand
inscribed on the World Heritage List in 2015

Welcome to Store Dyrehave

Today, everyone is allowed in Danish state-owned forests. However, this was not always the case. The forest and the hunt used to belong to the King alone. Store Dyrehave is an opportunity to experience nature and to get some exercise by following interesting culture trails. This folder guides you to a number of historical stops where you will see just how significant an accomplishment it was to establish the ruler-straight par force hunting lanes through the landscape.

Use the map to pick a route, whether you're on foot, bike or horseback. Stop by all of the places described, and get around 8 kilometres of historical exercise. We hope you enjoy your visit!



The royal hunting forest was surrounded by a stone fence. The stone fence is still here today; however the wattle fence that used to sit on top of the stone fence is long gone.



Christian IV had Frederiksborg Castle built during the early 1600s. The castle's foundation is made of stones from the nearby forest.

Power, pomp and pursuit

Store Dyrehave - a royal pantry

In 1618, Christian IV turned Store Dyrehave (great deer park) into a royal hunting forest by surrounding it with a stone fence to keep the game in. In this way, he reserved the right to hunt to himself and he made certain there would always be game to hunt in the deer park.

Hunting was a royal privilege. In his deer park, Christian IV could entertain himself and his entourage with 'the good hunt'. After the hunt, the sociable king hosted a grandiose dinner party at Frederiksborg Castle in Hillerød.



Christian IV
and his grandson
Christian V



The absolute monarch's par force hunt

From 1670, the absolute monarch Christian V transformed all of north-eastern Zealand into a large royal hunting park; a grand stage for the most grandiose of all hunting forms: The absolute monarch's par force hunt.

As a young heir apparent, he had visited France and had fallen for the Sun King's magnificent par force hunting practice. Par force means 'by force', and the par force hunt was a clear demonstration of the King's divine power.

Find your way with the King's map from 1690

The map shows the complete outline of the par force hunting trails in Store Dyrehave at around 1690.



Phases of the hunt:



The quest



The rendezvous



The hunt



The compass card ● with the King's monogramme symbolises the King's power.



It's a 20-minute walk from the parking ground to Kongestjernen (the King's star) ●. The roads cut straight through hills and wetlands.



Each of the eight trails in the centre of Kongestjernen (the King's star) ● is marked with a numbered stone post.

- Kongestjernen (the King's star)
- Fangfolden (the horse enclosure)
- Grooved stones
- Wetlands/bog
- Difficult terrain



● The King was the star of the hunt

If you position yourself in the centre of Kongestjernen (the King's star), you'll get an idea of the scope of the hunt. A festive entourage would follow the hunters in coaches and on horseback. The guests were waited on and entertained against a backdrop of the sounding of horns, cheering and the barking of hounds through the forest trees. While hunters and hounds pursued their chosen quarry, the King revelled in the attention of his guests; it was a scene well-suited for demonstrating his control over the course of events.



The killing of the hart

The interconnected system of numbered trails made it an extremely efficient hunt. Hunting horns enabled the hunters to communicate with each other about the flight of the deer. It was a brutal quest. The hunt stressed and exhausted the deer, making the meat inedible. When hounds had caught up with a deer and trapped it, the King could demonstrate his absolute power by delivering the fatal blow to the deer's heart - a not entirely unsafe feat, despite the unequal terms of the hunt. A red-deer stag (hart) can weigh up to 230 kg and defends itself by kicking and using its large antlers.

The ceremonial hirschfänger was used for the coup de grace.





The hart's death



The feeding of the hounds

Wetlands and difficult terrain

At the end of the 1600s, Store Dyrehave was practically impassable due to its hilly terrain and many wetlands. It took hundreds of soldiers to build the roads in Store Dyrehave. They used shovels, pickaxes and axes to penetrate the forest, scrub and bogs. They had to remove large boulders and build dams across low-lying wetlands.



The forest floor of Store Dyrehave holds about 250 grooved stones. The stones were split on site. If the split failed, the split stone was left behind. The stones successfully split were used for the foundations of Frederiksborg Castle. "Christian IV hired stonemason Jacob Muus to carve the foundation stones for his castle. He was given one Mark for every two feet of stone carved and cleaned. In addition to this, 15 barrels of malt, 40 gallons of flour and 35 pounds of butter for every 200 feet".

Registers of the Danish Chancellery 1596-1602. Hans Reitzels Forlag, 1913.

When horses were to be captured, they were led along the stone fence and into an enclosure (Fangfolden). On top of the stone fence was a wattle fence.



World-famed horses in Fangfolden

The horses were an important part of the absolute monarch's display of power. During the time of the stud farm, the horses were divided by colour: The blue-roan horses pastured in Store Dyrehave. In its heyday in the 1700s, the stud farm supplied horses for the royal coaches. The horses were used for hunting, war and as carriage horses.

Are you lost? Find your way with the map below. The map shows Store Dyrehave with its par force system of roads as they are today.



Ministry of Environment
and Food of Denmark
Nature Agency

www.naturstyrelsen.dk

www.parforce.dk