

The countryside around Vest Stadil Fjord

Vest Stadil Fjord is a large open flat area with very few trees and bushes. In such a landscape there is not much biological variety, however, those species which have adapted to the area are to be found in very large numbers.

The reed beds are an experience in themselves. The dominant grass in the reed beds is the Common Reed, which is harvested and used for roof thatching.



Thousands of migrating geese

Vest Stadil Fjord is especially known for the many geese which use the area as a resting place on their migration. In the spring and autumn, the open water of the fjord and the corn fields around it attract the Pink-footed Geese by their thousands when they are migrating to and from their breeding grounds in the Arctic archipelago of Svalbard. In order to avoid damage to the crops, the geese are fed with corn in certain fields in the spring.

Especially in the morning and the evening the geese fly between where they eat in the fields and where they sleep on the open water. One can be lucky and see the geese flying in large flocks while they "talk" loudly to each other. Moreover, the area is an important resting place for migrating ducks, waders and swans.

More birds have arrived

The recreation of the nature areas has changed the former fields into open water and wet meadows with the result that more species of birds have arrived in the area. On an artificial island in Mellem Dyb a colony of Avocets and Black-headed Gulls has established itself. The Avocets have not previously bred in the area, whereas the Black-headed Gulls last bred here in 1953, ie until the last draining of the land.

Four different kinds of Grebes now breed in Mellem Dyb, whereas before only one did. Many ducks and waders are breeding successfully.

The Marsh Harrier and the Bittern are two species of bird whose habitat is the reedbeds. Both species breed in West Stadil Fjord's reed beds, and as the reed bed area increases in size there will be more room for more of these rare birds.



Roe Deer in the reed beds

Normally one thinks of deer as animals which belong to the forests. However, there is quite a large deer population in the reed beds. They thrive well in areas with reeds and thickets as there is peace and quiet in these areas and the possibility of finding food and a place to hide.



The otter has good conditions for survival

Now and again one is lucky enough to find otter tracks. The otter lives near streams and lakes and needs a great deal of room where it can find food and a place to hide. The otter has been close to extinction, but has become more common again in northern and western Jutland. It will have a good possibility of survival in the new West Stadil Fjord.

The Natterjack's croaking or warbling

The Natterjack is common. One hears them in large numbers in the spring when they lie in shallow water and croak. "Croak" is not really a good description of the sound: it is more of a warble which can be heard both day and night.



Welcome to Vest Stadil Fjord

Standing beside Vest Stadil Fjord you can experience the characteristic open countryside of western Jutland. The flat landscape is separated from the North Sea by dunes and from these there is a unique view over the fjord and the sea. The northern part of the fjord was drained and then cultivated from the 1950's to the 1990's. Now, the countryside has been returned to its origins with areas of open water, reed beds and meadows; the many wild animals and plants are returning to their original habitat.

Access to the area

There is a public road along the west side of Vest Stadil Fjord on the road between the dunes and the fjord. Along the east side, on top of the dyke, a path has been made for cyclists and people on foot. Along part of the route there is a bridle path as well. However, you are allowed to walk anywhere you wish throughout the area.

Suitability for wheelchairs

The path along the dyke has a good layer of gravel and therefore it is possible for people in wheelchairs to use the path. Likewise the footbridges and the toilets.

Wildlife Reserve

Vest Stadil Fjord is a wildlife reserve where hunting as a general rule is forbidden. However, the National Forest and Nature Agency is permitted to organise some hunting.

EU cooperation in the protection of Nature

The EU countries cooperate in protecting Nature. Among other things it has been agreed that each country designates areas where particularly good conditions have been created for migratory birds and areas where endangered animal and plant species can thrive.



The EU Life Nature programme has contributed funds to the restoration of the countryside in the Vest Stadil Fjord area to its original state.

Vest Stadil Fjord is run by the National Forest and Nature Agency and can be contacted locally through the State forest District of Ulborg, telephone nr. 97 49 14 00. www.sns.dk

● Vest Stadil Fjord



Walks in the State forests* are a series of leaflets on chosen nature areas. They are available at local libraries and tourist bureaux, as well as at the entrances to many of the areas.

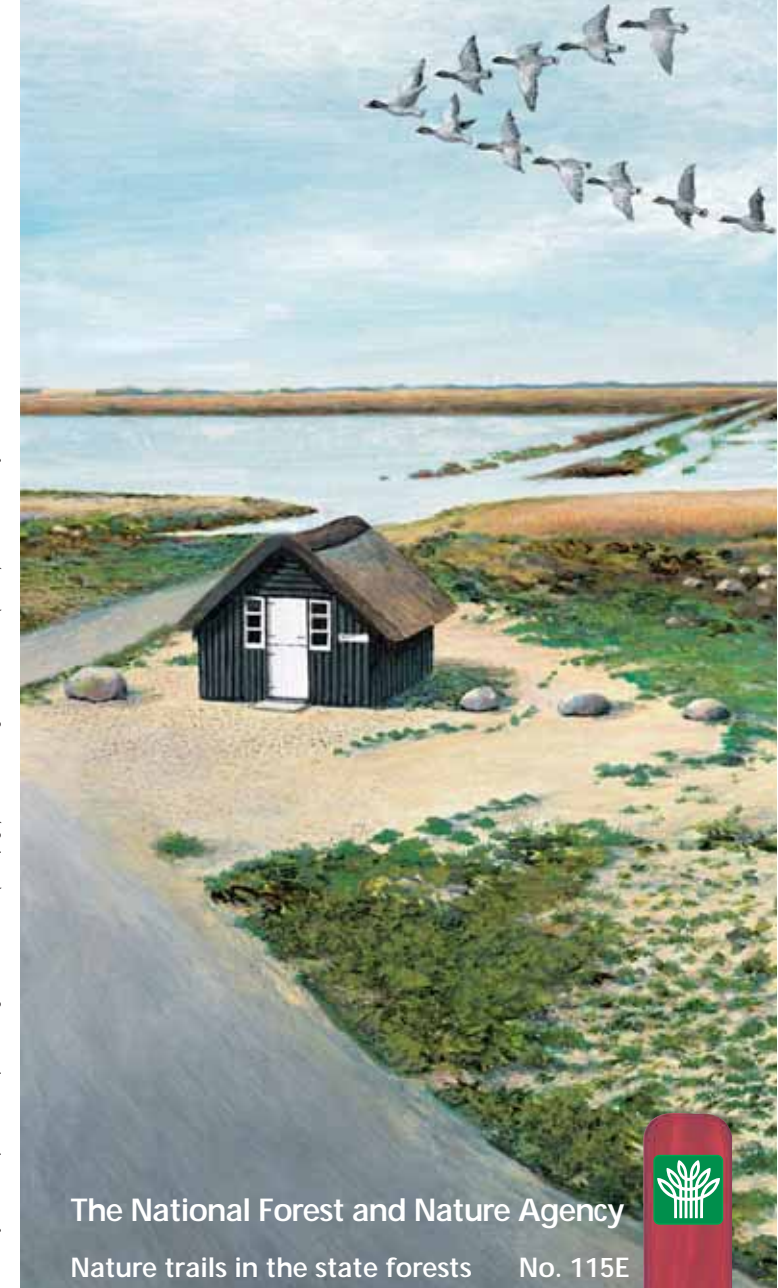
Ministry of the Environment and Energy
National Forest and Nature Agency



- manages stateowned forests and other nature areas all over the country
- and at the same time takes into consideration the recreational activities of the public, the production of timber and the protection of Nature and cultural values.

This leaflet carries the nordic environmental seal - the Swan. Licence no. 541006

Vest Stadil Fjord



The National Forest and Nature Agency

Nature trails in the state forests No. 115E



115E-0012 Layout and map: Parabol ApS. Drawings: Poul Andersen (front page) and Jens Overgaard Christensen (others). Print: Phønix Trykkeriet A/S.

Vest Stadil Fjord

Key to map symbols

- Public road, motor vehicles permitted
- Road, motor vehicles not permitted
- Path
- Footpath, Cyclepath
- Bridle Path
- Ditches, streams and water-courses
- Wildlife reserve
- Meadow and Reed beds
- Meadow and Reed beds, privately owned
- Sea, Fjord, Lake
- Built-up areas
- Forest
- Forest, privately owned
- Beach and dunes
- Beach and dunes, privately owned
- Surrounding area
- Special View
- Navigation beacon
- Farm
- Parking
- Bird- / Viewing tower
- Handicap toilet
- Toilet

0 500 1000m



Experience the fjord

1. The car park is a good point of departure for a visit to Vest Stadil Fjord.
- Bjerg-Thomsen's hunting lodge. Jens Bjerg-Thomsen was a hunter who wrote books and made films about the area in the 1930 – 1950s. In the hut there is a small exhibition.
- A little to the north-west of the hut is a dam made of wooden planks which was made in 1998 in order to raise the water level. Below the dam there is stream which flows slowly so that fish (eg eels) can migrate up stream.
2. In the shelter of the windbreak there are information boards, tables and benches, a barbecue and a toilet.
3. Follow the path along the windbreak to the bird tower. From this you have a view over Søndre Dyb.
4. Dam with a path for cyclists and people on foot along the eastern side of the area. The path is a part of the West Coastal route. Along a part of the route there is a bridle path.
5. Footbridge to a bird hide in the reed beds. Car park with a table, benches and a barbecue.
6. Picnic area with tables and benches.
7. Car park with tables and benches.
8. Pump House. Water is pumped from West Stadil Fjord out into Stadil Fjord from here.
9. Sidselsbjerg. From here there is a good view of Søndre Dyb. A good place to watch geese and other birds. Table and benches.
10. From the car park a path leads to a platform with a table and benches. From here there is a view over the beach and the sea.
11. From the high dune with the navigation beacon there is an impressive view out over the North Sea, the dunes, the fjords, the fields and the woods in the distance.
12. Many thousand geese visit the area every spring and every autumn. One of the surest places to see them is in the fields east of Klitvejen eg near Strandgården. Stay in your car, then you and others can enjoy the sight in peace and quiet without scaring away the geese. Only stop where there are passing places.
13. The old farm in the dunes, Strandgården, from 1875, is now the site of a regional museum which has the following opening times:
 - 1st April to 30th June
11 – 18 hrs (Monday closed).
 - 1st July to 31st August
11 - 18 hrs (all 7 days of the week).
 - 1st September to 31st October
11 – 17 (Monday closed).
 - 1st November to 31st March – Closed.

The countryside returned to its original state

Recreating Nature means that the countryside is returned to how it was originally, in areas where it has been changed by Man, by for example draining. The recreating of the wetlands in Vest Stadil Fjord is one of the country's biggest Nature recreation projects.

The background to the project

Vest Stadil Fjord was once a part of a large complex of fjords north of Ringkøbing Fjord. In 1863 the area was dammed up and the water level was lowered to 0.4m below sea level. After the draining most of the area became meadows and reed beds.

In 1954 the water was lowered to 1.4m below sea level. This resulted in the drying out of the ground and cereals being cultivated over a large area.

The new West Stadil Fjord

In 1953 the State bought a large part of the area. The Nature recreation project covered the area north of Skelmosevej where it was decided to keep the water level at 0.5m below sea level over an area of 1,680 acres. This meant that water was still being pumped out of the area.

If one had decided to return the area to the natural water level there would just have been one large expanse of water. It was decided that there should also be reed beds and wet meadows, where many species of birds can breed, find food and rest.

Much is expected of the area. First of all, that the water in the lakes will be cleaner; secondly, that many birds and other animals will return to the area as the recreation project progresses and furthermore that the area will give pleasure to many nature lovers.

Show consideration in the countryside

In the open landscape one can see for vast distances. The birds can too! They are easily startled when they see something move. Please show consideration for the birds:

- Don't walk in the meadows and in the reed beds in the breeding season.
- Don't walk across the fields where there are large flocks of geese.
- Keep your dog on a lead.