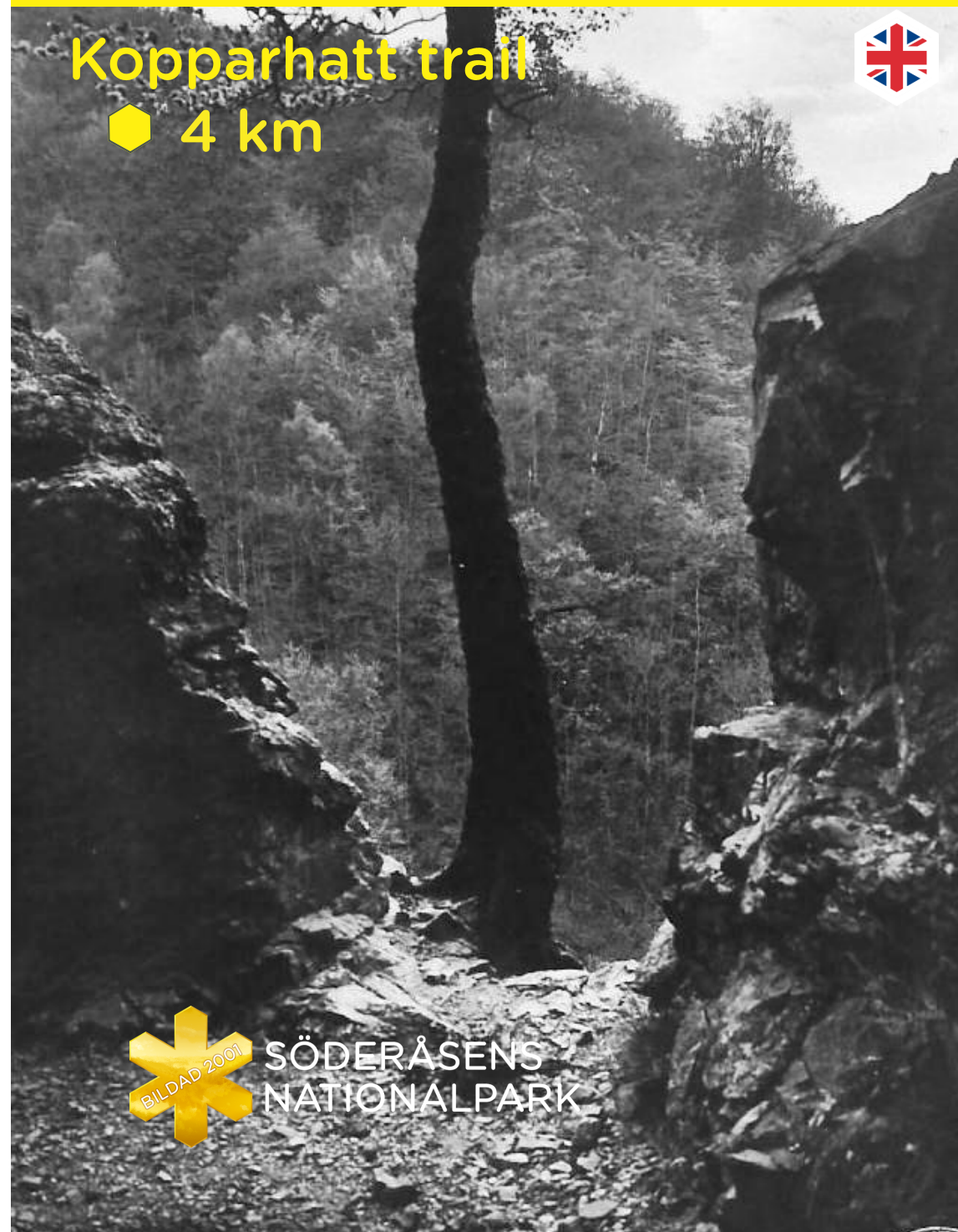


Guide yourself!

2 hours

Kopparhatt trail

4 km



SÖDERÅSENS
NATIONALPARK



Contact us at the Visitor center—naturum

naturum
Söderåsen

tel: +46 (0)435-44 21 20

e-mail: naturum.soderasen@lansstyrelsen.se

More information:

www.sverigesnationalparker.se/soderasen



Good to know

TOILETS are available by naturum Söderåsen, at the view point Kopparhatten, by the rest areas Liagården and Dahlberg and in the Nackarpsdalen valley.

WATER is available at the Visitor centre (naturum Söderåsen) in Skärålid, (water in the wells by the rest areas/camp sites is not tested).

PLACES TO BBQ are available in Skärålid by the Skärdammen pond, in Nackarpsdalen valley in Röstånga and by the rest areas at Liagården and Dahlbergs. Firewood is available. It is not possible to book a fire place/BBQ grill.

TABLES & BENCHES are available at all BBQ sites, by the view point Kopparhatten and in the Nackarpsdalen valley in Röstånga.

OVERNIGHT ACCOMMODATION is allowed and possible only in our rest areas / camp sites.

Liagård: situated along the blue trail; In the garden you can pitch your tent or use the shelters. Toilets, water, fire place and wood is available.

Dahlberg: Along the orange trail; In the garden you can pitch your tent. Toilets, water, fire place and wood is available.
Both free of charge but please keep it tidy and clean.

Killahuset: Killahuset: near Naturum, must be booked at +46(0)435-44 21 20 or naturum.soderasen@lansstyrelsen.se . 6 bunk beds and a sleeping loft for about 20. Toilets, water, fire place and wood is available. Costs 500 SEK per day. Please keep it tidy and clean.

Note that the Swedish "Right of Public Access" is limited in the National Park. Fires and fire places are permitted at prepared sites only.

Ice age sand (16)

*Patches of the finest seashore sand?
How has it ended up here?*

13 000 years ago the inland ice lay like a heavy blanket over Sweden, but had melted away in the far south. Söderåsen and its surroundings was free of ice but the ice was like a back wall tens of kilometres north.

At the time there was a tundra climate here, with snow and sand storms which lashed the bare rock. In some places the sand found shelter and deposited itself, as it has done here.

Sand on the sides of the valley could also have melted out from the glacier which remained and covered the long valley.

Not exactly a beach, but it is also far from the water!



Fine seashore sand at the viewpoint Utsikten.

Entrance to the rift valley (1)

Look into the rift valley and see the history of the earth

Walk along Skärån and experience the ancient nature of the valley up close as well as the breath-taking view up on the horst.

Söderåsen rises up around the lake. A deep rift in the mountain opposite, Skärålid rift valley.

The history of the rift valleys is very old. Continental plates float on the lava in the earth's interior. When they break apart or collide mountain ridges, horsts, like Söderåsen are formed. Söderåsen was born on the division of the Pangea supercontinent 200 million years ago, when dinosaurs still ruled the earth.

A new clash between continental plates 80 million years ago led to the formation of the Alps & the Himalayas. At Söderåsen the mountain broke up. The rift valleys were born!



Skärålid. Skärån nedanför Turisthotellet.

Foto: Torpföreningen Skärålid

Skärdammen (2)

Cosy relaxation or mosquito breeding

Look out across the pond and imagine when, less than a hundred years ago, it was a marsh with alder woods and buzzing mosquitoes.

The tourist hotel's owner dammed up the marsh in 1929 and Skärdammen was born. The light and airy environment with its shiny water surface was designed to enhance the hotel guests' aesthetic experience and willingness to spend.

When you walk alongside the pond now the surface of the water is broken by a swimming grass snake or by majestic, gliding whooper swans. Perhaps you can also see the pike stalking at the water's edge.



Foto: Torpföreningen Skäralid

Snowdrift recess (15)

An amphitheatre from the ice age

Like an amphitheatre between the path and the edge of the valley, you can see a large rounded hollow with a U-shaped opening towards the valley. A snowdrift recess!

The snowdrift recesses were formed when here was a tundra climate after the last ice age. At the time the rock was lashed by sand and snow storms. The snow found shelter in recesses where it was packed. Together with stones and gravel it eroded the ground.

When the snow later melted, the melted snow drove away soil and stones. With time the recess became deeper and deeper.

The recesses can be 30-200 m wide. They are often located high up in the valley slope but sometimes they reach down to the bottom.



Snowdrift recess near by the viewpoint Kopparhatten.

Dance pavilion 1900 – 1950 (14)

Summer evening. Accordion, violin, dance and – love!

The Kopparhatten dance pavilion was located here. People came here in the summertime to dance and drink coffee or something stronger. Many came by train to Skärälid and walked up here. Others cycled. People came all the way from Simrishamn, more than 100 kilometres away, by bike!

One of us who is writing this is a grandchild of one such long-distance cyclist who met his sweetheart in a whirling dance. The dance pavilion was moved to Högakull at Spången in 1952 .

Who do you think has carved into the tree's bark?



Foto: Torpföreningen Skärälid

Scree (3)

A stone quarry? No – the remains of several ice ages

Once there was a near-vertical majestic cliff here. For thousands of years water trickled into cracks & crevices, froze, expanded and broke the rock apart.

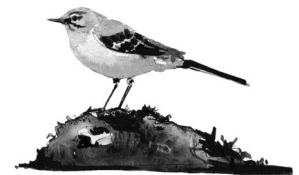
Today the screes you can see between the trees which laboriously cling to the stones are not the work of Man but the result of frost erosion, in the same way as a filled bottle cracks in the freezer.

Here in the stony wedges weasels, voles, lizards and other animals scamper in and out among the stones and logs. Perhaps you can see a grey wagtail wagging its tail before it flies to the brook to hunt for dragonfly larvae.

This south-facing slope is drier and warmer than the opposite side, so you can find many drought-resistant crustose lichens here.



Foto: Torpföreningen Skärälid



Grey wagtail

Rårödspågen spring (4)

*Fresh groundwater emerges
from inside the mountain all the time*

See the rippling surface and the water streaming out into Skärån on the other side of the path.

Springs like this are important for Skärån's unusually pure water. In addition, the brook is not so affected by fertilizers & pollutants from private sewage, agriculture, forestry or industries. A calcareous bedrock, as well as many living & dead trees along the stream are also important reasons for the pure water.

The spring water, just like all the water on earth, forms a part of a global and constantly ongoing cycle of evaporation, rainfall and surface runoff, so Söderåsen's pure water has been drunk by humans, bathed in by dinosaurs and sailed on by explorers... Imagine if the water could speak!

According to one story the spring sprang from where a shepherd boy from the village of Råröd was found after falling from the cliff above.



Rårödspågen spring in the valley

Kopparhatten viewpoint (13)

A place of facts, stories and legends

Stand on the reddish rock surface at the fence and you will find yourself on Kopparhatten 150 m above sea level. It is 90 m to the bottom of the valley and to the other side it is 300 m.

Kopparhatten got its name in the 1800s. "hatten" (hat) was a common word ending of "höjder" (hills) and "Koppar" (Copper) probably refers to the reddish gneissic granite rock, or it is a sister name for the nearby Järnhatten (Iron Hat).

Or it stems from the legend which says that, when Skåne was still Danish, a shepherd girl managed to push a Swedish soldier who accosted her over the steep slope, but his red copper helmet remained...

Skärålid is located to the east in the valley entrance. On a clear day you can see into the distance as far as to Tyninge & Småland...



Offavägen (12)

You are at a three-way intersection. The path that leads up along the side of the valley is called Offavägen. It was built during the 1700s. Why?

The road was built by the big farmer, Joacim Fredrik Offen on Tostarp farm at the foot of the ridge so that oxen could pull waggons up from the bottom of the valley, partly with animal feed and firewood, partly with timber of straight grained beech for the production of wood chips in the family wood chip factory.

Much of the wood chips was exported to Hamburg for the manufacture of book covers. The road was built in steps in order that the oxen could rest.

Offavägen is about 400 metres long.



Offavägen, the "road" up the hillside.

Tumour on tree trunk (5)

Coveted lump

Look up along the tree trunks. Do you see the large lump a few metres up on one of them? A tumour!

The majority of trees can build tuberos growths on trunks or branches. These are coveted by wood-workers who shape them into bowls, drinking vessels and other beautiful things. The diameter can be from a few centimetres to one metre.

We don't know the real cause, but it is a genetic defect which could be linked to viral or bacterial attack. The growths are probably harmless to trees.

According to folklore tumours were the result of diseases, particularly rashes and rheumatism, which were transferred to the tree by a special rite.



A tumour on the tree trunk.

Kopparhatten meadow (6)

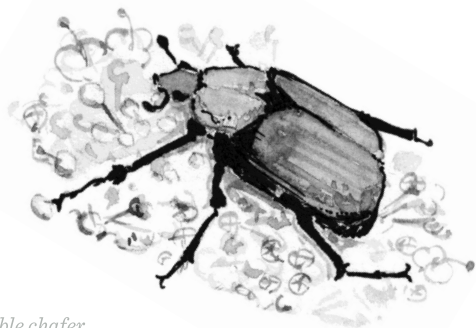
A veritable restaurant for beetles and butterflies

See the Kopparhatten meadow opening into the forest on the other side of the brook. A veritable restaurant for beetles and butterflies. Söderåsen farmers created the meadows when they threshed the meadow hay and it is still needed today.

On the tips of meadowsweet and greater meadow-rue you can see robust, metallic shiny green noble chafers, black and yellow, hairy bee beetles, slender longhorn beetles and many others in search of nectar.

Insects and plants need each other. Insects get food and in return help the plants with reproduction.

The combination of open meadowland and unmanaged forests with dead wood mean that both flora and insect fauna are unusually rich in Söderåsen National park.



Noble chafer

End moraine (11)

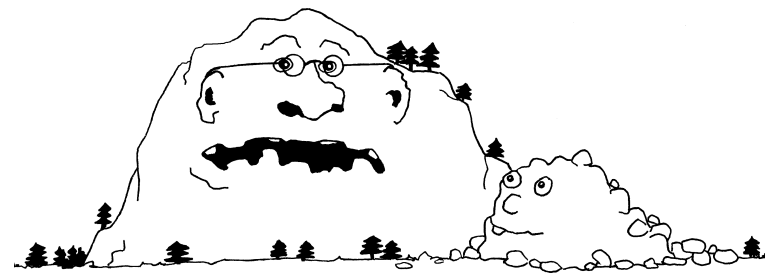
Geology with traces from our last ice age.

The small elongated ridge between the brook and the path was created by a glacier which had been in the valley during the recent ice age.

When the glacier grew during the winters it pushed all the loose material, such as stone and gravel, in front of it and end moraines were formed.

End moraines and boulder ridges are small and relatively young relics from the latest ice age. They are 2-10 metres high and 50-100 metres long.

They should not be confused with mountain ridges, horsts, like Söderåsen. They are much bigger and older, around 200 million years old!



Big old mountain ridge Söderåsen & small young boulder ridge Åsa.

Railway ramp (10)

Do you see the two small parallel dikes? A launch platform – for railway wagons!

During the First World War they were allowed to build temporary, narrow-gauge railways here, a so called Decauville railway, in order to transport timber out from the valley to Skärälid station.

The waggons were pulled uphill by hand. At "the launching platform" the foreman gave the fully-laden wagon a little push so that it got just enough speed to roll itself to the railway station in Skärälid.

With a strong push the journey ended at the stone quarry wall, for trailing. With too little speed they had to pull the waggons by hand the last part of the journey.



The launch platform – for railway wagons around 1920.

Opposite Kopparhatten meadow (7)

Life-giving dead wood

On this side of the brook there are dead and dying trees; both lying down and standing, on the ground and in the water. On the trees you can see tree fungi, bracket fungi, and different sized holes. The small round holes with wood meal, are the exit holes of the wood beetles after a life as larvae in the passages in the tree.

As fully-formed beetles they reject the wood diet to instead search for flowers packed with nectar on the edge of the forest or in the meadows.

In addition to being food and dwelling for many kinds of beetle larvae, the old sick tree is the woodpecker's favourite restaurant. The larger holes are the result of their pecking in search of scrumptious larvae. Dead and dying trees teem with life!



Dead tree and a woodpecker searching for larvae.

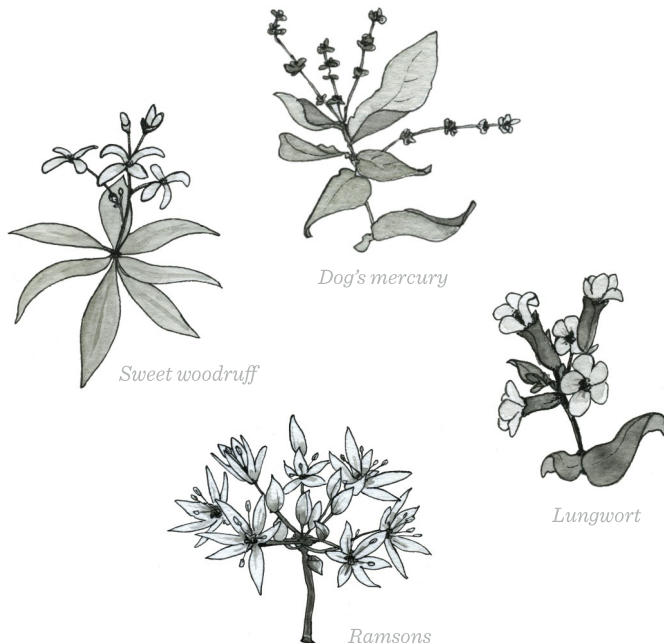
Strip of diabase and rich flora (8)

Do you see the rock under the vegetation? No, but we can still figure out the nature of the rock.

In the summer the land here is covered with a green carpet of lush vegetation. Mainly consisting of the nutrient-demanding dog's mercury (which can be seen on the old Swedish hundred crown banknote). A break from the otherwise rather bare ground with decaying leaves and small bilberry sprigs.

This is because you are standing on a diabase dike! The nutrient-poor bedrock under your feet here has cracked up and filled with lime and nutrient-rich lava which hardened into diabase rock.

Isn't it fascinating that just by looking at the plants the composition of the bedrock can be ascertained!



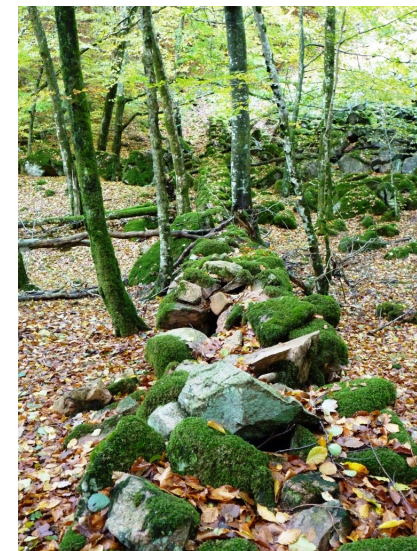
Stone walls (9)

Stone walls? There must be another reason other than plenty of building material...

The stone walls along the river can be up to 1 000 years old. They were built to keep grazing animals from the meadows at the bottom of the valley. In older times there were open grassland along the river where the farmers harvested hay.

The forest on the slopes and on the plateau were used as pastureland and for wood and timber. Here maids and boys herded the village's sheep, goats and cows.

The transverse stone walls on Skäralid's slopes are younger, about 150 years old, and were built as "boundaries" after a change in the law, which meant the beginning of the end of meadow use and the grazing era.



Stone wall from about 1850.