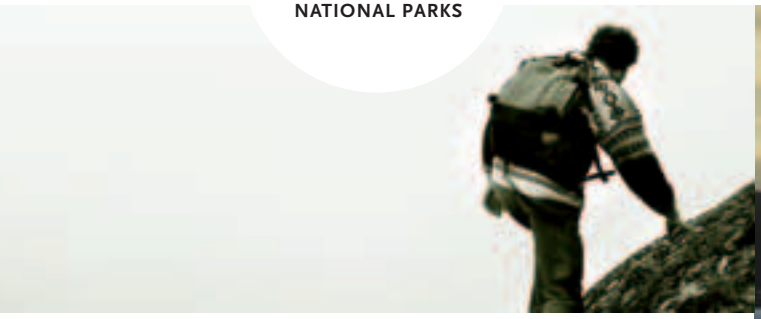
NORWAY'S
NATIONAL PARKS



Norway's national parks – nature as it was meant to be

Norway's national parks are regulated by the laws of nature. Nature decides both how and when to do things. National parks are established in order to protect large natural areas – from the coast to the mountains. This is done for the benefit of nature itself, for our sake and for generations to come.

The national parks offer a wide range of opportunities and experiences. The natural surroundings are beautiful and varied. There is hunting, fishing, plants, birds, animals and cultural monuments.

Accept our invitation – become acquainted with nature and our national parks.

Directorate for
Nature Management
www.dirnat.no

TE1190
Gori Jernstad AS. GIROSET™

Photo: Knut Nylend, Tom Schandy and Ove Bergersen/NN/Samfoto, Mari Lise Sjong. Front page: Evening fishing on Hardangervidda.



HARDANGERVIDDA NASJONALPARK

HARDANGERVIDDA

THE LARGEST HIGHLAND PLATEAU IN NORTHERN EUROPE



A coffee break in Kvennadalen

The largest highland plateau in Northern Europe

Hardangervidda is a particularly valuable highland area and the largest national park in Norway. The area is important as the home of the largest wild reindeer herds in Europe and the largest sub-populations of many species of birds that are comparatively rare in southern Norway. The plateau has a large diversity of plants in the boundary area between western and eastern species (coastal and inland species). The thousands of lakes make the plateau an eldorado for hikers with tents and fishing rods. Evidence of how people have utilised the natural resources is prominent on Hardangervidda in the form of paths, tracks, shelters and transhumance summer dairy farms. The hunting and fishing resources are still actively used by people living in the surrounding area.



Spending the night on the plateau



EXPERIENCE NATURE

With a tent and a fishing rod

Hardangervidda is an eldorado for hikers with tents and fishing rods. The area is famous for its many lakes and rivers abounding in fine brown trout. There are numerous marked paths and a number of staffed lodges and self-service huts. Hunting is permitted on Hardangervidda. Remember to have your fishing and hunting licences.





THE LANDSCAPE

From sea bed to highland plateau

Hardangervidda is a typical highland plateau with extensive, undulating plains. Only in the west are the mountains more dramatic. The hard bedrock in the south-eastern part of the national park is the remnants of a more than 1 billion-year-old mountainous landscape. The mountains were eroded and the sea inundated the lowland plains. The calcareous bedrock in the north-western part of the area formed from sediments deposited on the sea bed 450-600 million years ago. These strata were later overridden by a continuous sheet of rock thrust from the west and both units were pressed together and folded. A new mountainous landscape had risen from the sea. Hårteigen and the mountains around the Hardangerjøkulen ice cap are monadnocks remaining from this mountain chain, which was otherwise eroded down to the basement rocks, particularly during the glacial period.



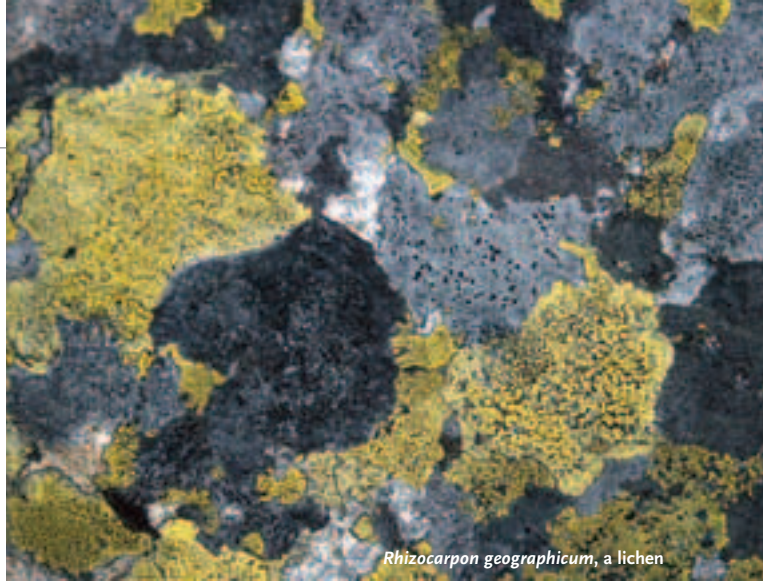
Autumn



VEGETATION

Windy heaths

The variations in bedrock and climate mean that the vegetation varies from western to eastern parts of the plateau. Plants grow more vigorously in the west where there is more precipitation and a more even temperature. The eastern part is much less lush. Windy heaths are common in areas with little snow and poor bedrock.



***Rhizocarpon geographicum*, a lichen**



Stoat

An old house site



LEGEND

- County border
- National Park
- Protected Landscape
- Nature Reserve
- Parking
- Accommodation
- Café/restaurant
- National Park Information Center
- Camping
- Tourist Cabin, staffed
- Tourist Cabin, self service
- Tourist Cabin, unstaffed

N

0 km 5 10 km

Digital cartography: Gåsvatn kart-tjenester, www.kart-tjenester.no Digital map data: Statens kartverk N250. Order no. MAD12002-R125240



A wild reindeer herd on Hardangervidda

Lapland bunting



ANIMAL LIFE

The largest wild reindeer herds in Europe

Hardangervidda became ice free about 9000 years ago. Lichens began to grow on the bare ground, providing food for reindeer. Every spring, the large herds of wild reindeer migrate westwards from their winter grazing on the eastern part of the plateau to where high precipitation and nutrient-rich soils provide good summer grazing with succulent grass for both reindeer and domestic livestock. Early in May, the pregnant females reach their calving grounds in southern and western parts of the plateau. Disturbing them then may prove disastrous. The males and juveniles migrate to lower ground and graze in the birch woods.

The reindeer need to escape from mosquitoes and warble flies later in the summer, and several thousands may then gather on snowfields on higher ground. After the rutting period in autumn, the animals migrate eastwards again to the windy lichen heaths. The availability of winter grazing limits the size of the reindeer stock on Hardangervidda. The objective of the wild reindeer management is to stabilise the winter population to accommodate it to the grazing resources.

The flat landscape with its numerous lakes and wetlands distinguishes Hardangervidda from other mountainous areas in southern Norway. This habitat forms the basis for the largest and most important populations of many kinds of ducks and other wetland species in southern Norway. The breeding populations of black-throated divers, scaups, velvet scoters, common scoters, dotterels, Temminck's stints, great snipes and shore larks are particularly valuable.


Kvitno


Fish caught on the plateau


Grazing ponies, with Hårteigen in the background

HISTORY

People and the plateau

People probably came to Hardangervidda at the same time as the reindeer, after the last Ice Age. About 250 Stone Age sites have been found, the oldest dating from 6300 BC. The people probably led a nomadic life, following the reindeer migration routes. Many of the sites are close to bottlenecks in the landscape, where migrating reindeer herds became compacted to cross lakes and rivers. The early hunters just used bows and arrows, but later they also drove the animals into traps and pitfalls. Botanists have shown that, at times during the Stone Age, Hardangervidda had woodland and scattered trees as high as 1100 – 1200 m. Finds from excavations of Stone Age sites show that the people hunted reindeer and ptarmigan; elk and trout bones were also found.

The old paths crossing the plateau were important routes linking southeast and west Norway. Nordmannsslepa, which links Veggli in Numedal with Eidfjord, with branches to Hol and Uvdal, is a particularly well-known path. Shelters used by hunters and fishermen, cattle pens and transhumance summer dairy farms scattered over the plateau take our minds back to the hard times when people had to utilise the resources on Hardangervidda to survive.

In our day too, the natural resources on Hardangervidda are very valuable for the surrounding settlements. Hardangervidda National Park differs from other Norwegian national parks because it has been used a great deal by local people, has many buildings and much privately owned land. Consequently, there is a considerable amount of motorised traffic associated with the harvesting of resources, the upkeep of buildings and the running of lodges and huts for hikers and skiers. Large flocks of sheep are taken there to graze each summer, and for many people fishing and hunting are highly valued forms of relaxing recreation and sources of food.



You are a guest of nature in a national park

- You may go wherever you like, on foot or ski, but the basic rule is that anything with an engine is prohibited.
- You can stop wherever you like and pitch a tent. Always tidy up after yourself and don't leave litter.
- You can light a fire, but remember the general ban on lighting fires in forests from 15 April to 15 September. Be considerate when collecting firewood.
- You can pick berries, mushrooms and common plants for your own use. Be considerate of cultural relics, vegetation and fauna. Be extra careful during the breeding and nesting season.
- Make use of the hunting and fishing opportunities. Remember a hunting/fishing licence. Never use live fish as bait, or transfer live fish from one watercourse to another.
- You can take your dog with you, but remember to keep it on a lead from 1 April to 20 August.



Sunset over Hardangervidda

The Hardangervidda National Park in brief

Where: Odda, Ullensvang, Eidfjord, Hol, Nore & Uvdal, Tinn and Vinje municipalities in Hordaland, Telemark and Buskerud counties.

Foremost distinctions: Extensive plateaus, a great deal of use, especially in the past, wild reindeer.

Outdoor recreation: 7 staffed lodges, 5 self-service huts; good opportunities for long hikes, ski trips, hunting and fishing.

How to reach the Hardangervidda National Park
By train to Geilo, Ustaoset or Haugastøl.
By coach or car on Route 7 across Hardangervidda; several convenient stops and branch roads to the national park.
By car on Route 40 from Nore Uvdal to Geilo, several stopping places and branch roads to the national park.
By car on Route 364 to Tinn Austbygd, branch off to Breisetdalen and park at Stegaros or Synken; boat across Mårvatnet from Synken to Mårbu.
By car on Route 37 to Møsvatn and continue by boat to the lodge at Mogen.
By coach or car on E 134 from Haukeli to Jøsendal, several stops and branch roads to the national park.
By car from Jøsendal to Brimnes, several stops and branch roads to the national park.

Information on overnight accommodation and services:
Each municipality has a tourist information office.
Destinasjon Eidfjord AS, Tel +47 53 67 34 00 and www.visiteidfjord.no provide more general information.

Maps: Map for walkers and skiers: Hardangervidda 1:100 000, with the western and eastern parts on separate sides. Several 1:50 000 scale maps.

Designated: 1981

Area: 3422 km²

Adjacent protected areas: Skaupsjøen/Hardangerjøkulen Protected Landscape, Møsvatn Austfjell Protected Landscape, Bjoreidalen Nature Reserve.

National Park Centers:
Hardangervidda Natursenter, Eidfjord, Tel +47 53 66 59 00, www.hardangervidda.org
Hardangervidda Nasjonalparksenter, Møsvatn, Tel +47 35 09 57 00

Management and supervision:
County Governor of Hordaland, Tel +47 55 57 20 00
County Governor of Buskerud, Tel +47 32 26 66 00
County Governor of Telemark, Tel +47 35 58 61 00
Supervising Committee for Hardangervidda in Hordaland, Tel +47 53 67 15 00
Supervising Committee for Hardangervidda in Buskerud, Tel +47 32 74 27 00
Supervising Committee for Hardangervidda in Telemark, Tel +47 35 08 11 70
Norwegian Nature Inspectorate at Rødberg, Tel +47 32 74 46 85
Norwegian Nature Inspectorate at Skinnarbu, Tel +47 35 08 12 51
Norwegian Nature Inspectorate at Eidfjord, Tel +47 53 66 51 75

Visit www.norgesnasjonalparker.no for more information.