

Kosterhavet



One of Sweden's largest populations of harbour seals is found in Kosterhavet. Show respect for the fact that the seals require peace and quiet, particularly in the early summer when their young lie up on land to suckle.

Kosterhavet National Park was established in 2009 and is the first national park in Sweden which protects marine wildlife. The majority of the almost 39 000 ha of the park is water, less than 900 ha is land. It is one of the largest national parks in Sweden, and stretches from the Norwegian border in the north and south to the waters outside of Grebbestad. All of the land and water is owned by the State. The aim of the national park is to conserve the distinctive and species rich marine and archipelago area as well as adjacent land in an essentially unchanged condition. Kosterhavet National Park is managed on behalf of the County Administrative Board by the Kosterhavsdelegation.

Additional information:
The Swedish Environmental Protection Agency tel +46 (0)8 698 10 00
www.naturvardsverket.se
www.kosterhavet.se



The aim with the national parks in Sweden is to conserve large areas in their natural condition with valuable habitats, flora and fauna etc. They should be made accessible for the public without the loss of their original character.

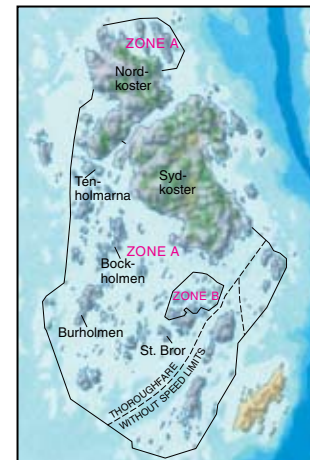


Consider the following

For the benefit of everyone and for the consideration of sensitive wild-life there are certain rules, including:

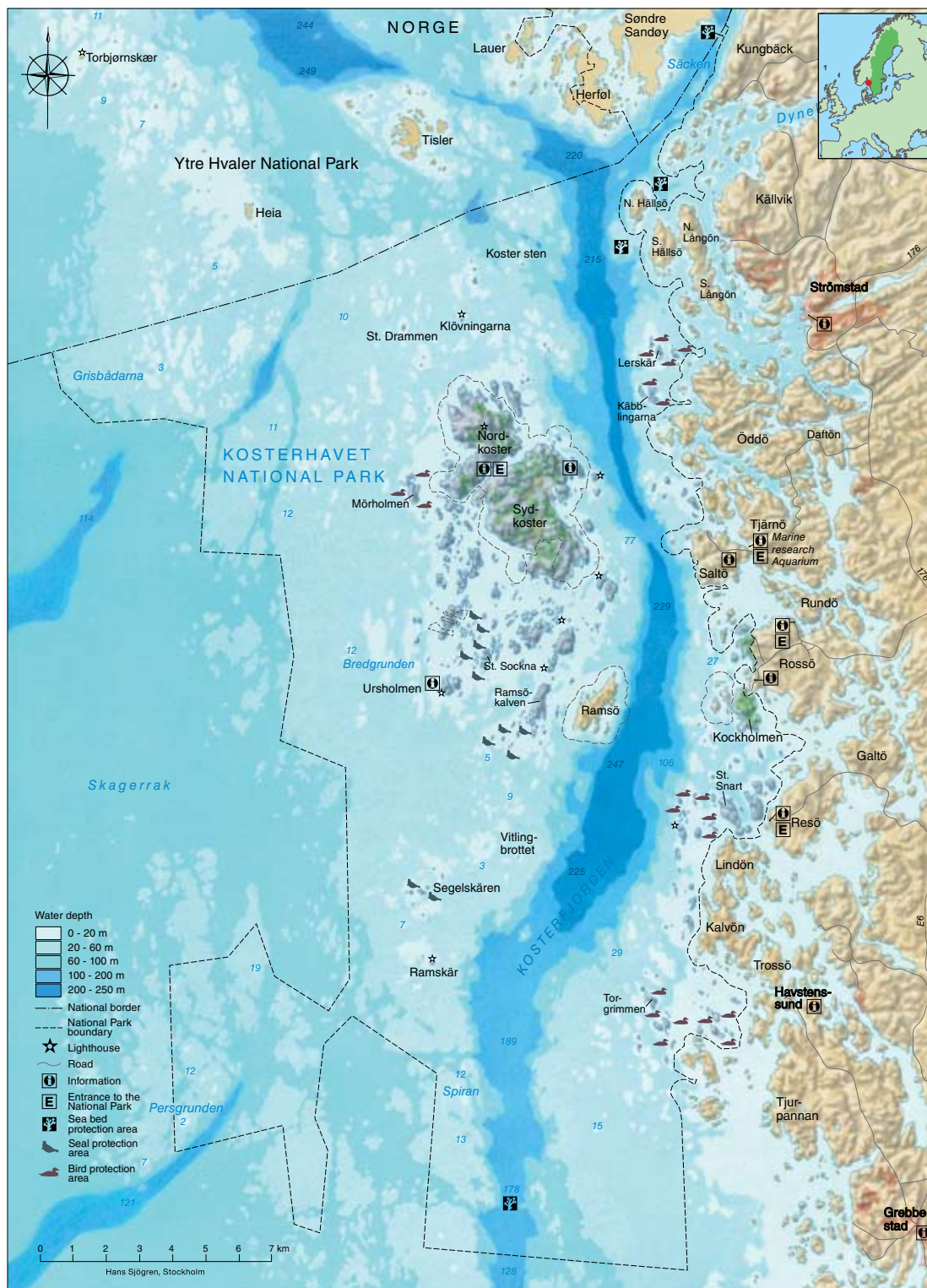
- You are not permitted to dig up plants, pick oysters, remove or rearrange stones.
- Your dog must be on a lead.
- You may not light a fire other than at the designated areas.
- You may not cycle or operate motor vehicles other than on roads.
- You may only camp two days in a row at the same place. On Sydkoster camping is not allowed, nor between the hours of 10.00 and 18.00 on Tenholmarna, Burholmen, Bockholmen and Store Bror between the 1st July and 15th August.

Regulations can be found on the information signs in the national park. Adjacent to the park there are areas which are nature reserves, including Nord- and Sydkoster. Other regulations may apply to visitors in these areas, see the signs in the respective reserves.



Within **zone A** motorised vehicles must not be driven faster than 5 knots between the 15th May and 31st August.

Within **zone B** motorised vehicles must not be driven other than to and from mooring sites.



Kosterhavet National Park

– the most species rich sea in Sweden

Kosterhavet is the first marine national park in Sweden. Under the surface you meet woodlands of seaweed and meadows of swaying eel grass. Crabs and lobsters crawl about on the sea bed, and shoals of mackerel shoot like arrows through the salty water. Hidden in the dark depths are lamp shells, tall sea pens and *Lophelia pertusa* the cold water coral.

Kosterhavet is the most species-rich marine environment in Sweden with over 6000 different marine animals and seaweed. All of the underwater species from the west coast are found here, as well as a large number of species which have their main or only known distribution just here.

Many of the rare and unique species are associated with the deep trench in the Koster Fjord. It runs through the national park from north to south and has a maximum depth of 247 m. The trench continues all the way out to the North Atlantic continental shelf, from where oceanic water with a high salt content and low temperature comes into the Koster Fjord. This makes it possible for many deep water animals to live here, very close to the coast.

Geology of the archipelago

The islands of the national park rise up out of the sea like barren rolls and elongated loaves of bread. West of the Koster Fjord they are made of ancient forms of gneiss, in contrast from the coast and inner archipelago where the much younger bohus granite dominates. On the exposed bedrock it is obvious to see how the rocks from different epochs have been kneaded together during the long geological history of the area. Giant hollows and impressive shingle beaches can be seen in several places.

Dry land – both national park and nature reserve

As well as the large marine environment which makes up the national park, parts of the island of Rossö and a large number of islands and islets, especially in the archipelago southwest of Koster are also included. Syd- and Nordkoster are not included in the national park, apart from a couple of small areas on Sydkoster. The rich wildlife of Koster has long been protected as a Nature Reserve and will continue to be so. The island of Ramsö is not included in the park.

Boundless protection

The unique underwater wildlife of Kosterhavet continues north over the border and on into the Norwegian national park Ytre Hvaler. Here there are several large coral reefs, including Tisler-reef which is the largest cold-water reef in the Atlantic so close to the shore. Genetic studies have shown that the only living coral reef in Kosterhavet, which lies in Säcken, originates from one of the Norwegian reefs. Together both parks create a protected marine environment of almost 800 square kilometres.

Places to visit – some tips

There is always something to do at Kosterhavet; swimming in the summer, the stillness of the spring and autumn and the roaring storms of the winter. Here are a few gems:

Resö harbour – living fishing village

Rossö harbour – historical shellfish centre

Kockholmen – hiking and bird watching

Tjärnö – marine research station and aquarium

Saltö – coastal pine woodland and rocky beaches

Långevik on Sydkoster – excellent snorkeling waters

Brevik on Sydkoster – coastal meadows and heathlands

Ursholmen – seals, geology and wide horizons

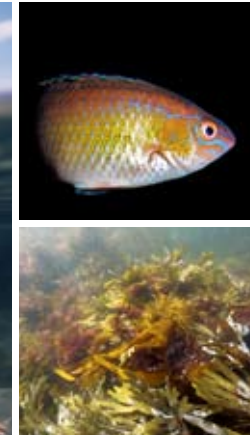
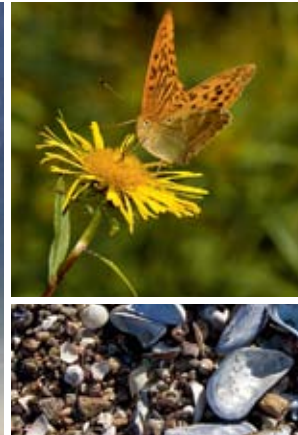
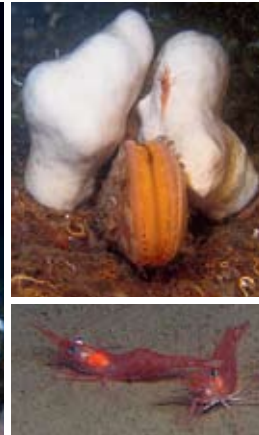
With your own boat

There are huge opportunities to discover the rich wildlife and archipelago of the national park if you have your own boat. Remember to keep your speed down for the consideration of both other people and wildlife – waves, exhaust fumes and engine noise increase the faster you drive. Respect the seal and bird protection areas.

- You may moor or lay anchor in the same place for a maximum of two days in a row.
- You may not drag up or moor boats or lay anchor closer than 50 metres from sandy beaches. Canoes and kayaks can be dragged up onto the beaches if they do not block the swimming areas.
- It is forbidden to allow engines to idle and use motorised generators in the whole of the national park.

How to get to Kosterhavet

Kosterhavet National Park lies in northern Bohuslän and can be reached from several of the coastal towns. Take the train along the Bohusbana or follow the E6 motorway north towards the Norwegian border. Koster boats leave from Strömstad throughout the year, which on their way to the Koster Islands pass through the national park. From the islands of Resö, Rossö and Tjärnö there are lovely views over Kosterhavet and you can also find information there.



The cold water coral *Lophelia pertusa* is one of over 200 species which have their main or only Swedish distribution in Kosterhavet. The European giant file clam and the sponge *Geodia barretti* do well in the deep Koster Fjord. Prawns are fished using specialised equipment and in particularly sensitive areas trawling is forbidden. The elegant sea pens can be up to 170 cm tall.

The silver-washed fritillary is one of many butterflies found on the beaches in Kosterhavet. Mussels enrich the soil with chalk which favours a magnificent display of flowers. The dark ribbons of diabase were formed following a volcanic eruption 1400 million years ago.

There are lots of things to discover for those who keep their eyes open under water. For example the rock cook, a small colourful fish which is found amongst the seaweed. There it hunts small crustaceans and other tasty morsels.

The shallow outer archipelago of Kosterhavet is very exposed to both waves and the wind. It is an unusual marine environment for Sweden and offers visitors amazing experiences regardless of the season.