



Risö and Sundominlahti

Risö is a rich forest area between Vaasa's motorway and Sundominlahti, in the Tuovilanjoki delta. The area is made up of ancient and rugged spruce forests, young and often thinned mixed-and birch forests as well as rocky pine woods. The name Risö dates back to the 17th century when the area was still a separate island.

Sundominlahti is an almost two kilometer wide and green gulf which is both an important resting spot for migrating birds as well as a nationally important area of water for birds.

The diverse forest landscape of the area can be admired best from along the road networks and paths. Risö's forest area limit touches the residential area of the Old



SUNDOMINLAHTI.
PHOTO: TUIJA WAREN

port in the north, the motorway in the east, Tuovilanjoki in the south and Sundominlahti in the west. On the Sundominjoki side there is a low observation platform and in Ryövärinkari there is a bigger bird watching tower. Sundominlahti is comprised of the whole southern part of the Southern City Bay. It is an almost two kilometer wide-and green gulf by the city of Vaasa to which the rivers Laihianjoki and Sulvanjoki, for example, are connected. Sundominlahti is both an important resting spot for migrating birds as well as a nationally important area of water for birds.

The bird watching tower close to Ryövärinkari, built by Metsähallitus, offers a great view to Sundominlahti. Next to the tower there is also a campfire site and a firewood shelter.

The dense formations of lake reeds and phragmites tend to grow high before the end of the summer effectively covering up the view to the bay. Water bird-hunting, which starts in the autumn, already by the end of August, drives away many of the hiding waterbirds, and therefore the spring and beginning of the summer is definitely the best time for excursions in the area.

Municipality

Vaasa

Coordinators

70065:32323

Driving directions

The most direct route from the center of Vaasa is to take Kaup-papuuistikko to the south and drive along the motorway until you arrive at the Vanha Vaasa (Old Vaasa) Ramp after about 4,6 km. Drive straight from the ramp and turn right onto Yhdystie.

Drive about 400 meters along Yhdystie and turn right towards Gamla Hamnvägen. Continue about 650 meters until you see a sign indicating the bird-watching tower to the right.

Drive about 450 meters along the forest road until you get to the parking place of the old shooting range. You can either leave the car here or continue right after the crossroads and drive about 1,3 km to the parking place at the tower of Tuovilanjokisuu. The road might be partly in bad shape.

Services

A campfire place and the two bird-watching towers can be found in the western part of the area.

Best time for excursions

Springtime and in the summer between April and July when the wildlife is in its full glory and the bird singing-season is at its busiest.





One of the identifying characteristics of Sundominlahti is the thousands of geese, swans and cranes that gather there to eat in autumn and spring time. On the eastern side of the gulf there is the state-owned Risö woodland, of which a part is more or less conserved in its natural state. This area consists of aged coniferous- and mixed forests, with a considerable quantity of spruces. In the years following the millennium there have been initiatives to conserve the younger part of the woods through forest thinning practices and by increasing the amount of deadwood.

Nesting Species

The nesting species of the Risö forest mainly include species typically found in coniferous- and mixed forests. The most numerous are The Common Chaffinch, Willow Warbler and the Tree Pipit. Other common species are, for example, the Chiffchaff, Coal Tit, Goldcrest, European Pied Flycatcher and the Lesser White-throat. Of grouses especially the Hazel Grouse and of pigeons the Common Wood Pigeon are commonly both seen and heard in the Risö forest. One of the most interesting and rarest summer guests in Merenkurkku is possibly the Greenish Warbler. All in all up to 130 nesting bird species are found within an about five kilometer radius.

The most common nesting species in Sundominlahti are those typical in wetlands, such as duck- and gull species, as well as waders and passerines. The most common are the Sedge Warbler, Reed Bunting, Mallard and Eurasian Teal. The most exceptional of the passerines is the Bearded Reedling and of the birds of prey the Western Marsh Harrier. As a new addition in Sundominlahti a Eurasian Penduline Tit was spotted in the spring of 2011 building a nest. All in all up to a 130 different species nest on a radius of about 5 kilometers in Sundominlahti.

More detailed information about the nesting species can be found in the third Finnish bird atlas:

<http://atlas3.lintuatlas.fi/tulokset/ruutu/700:323>

Migratory Species

Sundominlahti is an important migratory resting spot especially for waterbirds and waders. As soon as the ice melts the whole of the bottom of the gulf is taken over by swans and hundreds of Eurasian Coots, Greylag Geese, Mallards, Eurasian Wigeons, Eurasian Teels and other anseriformes and duck birds join in. Also hundreds of Common Mergansers, for example, converge in open water. On the other hand the Sulvajoki delta and the muddy beach on the northern side of Ryövärikari attract hundreds of shorebirds, such as Ruffs, Wood Sandpipers and Common Greenshanks in the beginning of May.

Regularly, at the end of the summer, Grey Herons arrive from the south to feed in the north. At that time one can spot up to twenty of them on the shore at once. As well as thousands of ducks, a group of more than two thousand Greylag Geese congregates on the shore in autumn time. They start their migration in the beginning of the duck hunting season at the end of August (20.8). In the autumn after the bird singing-period bird spotting becomes more difficult, but an observant hiker just might encounter, deep in the forest, a small, but 'feisty' Eurasian Pygmy Owl collecting food supplies into hollows and Woodpecker holes.

Rarities

Greenish Warbler, Red-breasted Flycatcher

