



Valsörarna

Valsörarna is located on the northwestern side of Replot and it belongs to the Korsholm municipality. As well as the main island, made up of Storskär and Äbb-skäret, the area includes about 65 islands and islets of different sizes. The landscape is characterized by the rocky and bouldery moraines, which were formed over the years with the withdrawal of the ice age and of which the mainly north-western and southeastern peninsulas and islands are made up of. The vegetation of the bleak moraine formations is mainly heath-like, but diverse. It is made up of marshy depressions, coastal fields, birch groves, junipers, beach alder groves, and large individual spruces. The sheltered bay areas are generally quite shallow.



THE LIGHTHOUSE KEEPERS HOUSE. PHOTO: TUIJA WAREN

Valsörarna was declared an official bird protection site in 1948 and the area was expanded in 1977 when the Björkögrunden region on the south side of Valsörarna, which had already been protected earlier, was joined with it. This is how the up to 17800 hectare Valsörarna -Björkögrunden wildlife protection site was created. Of the whole area about 17200 hectares are made up of water and about 600 of land. Apart from the path that goes through Storskär and Äbb-skär, the harbours on either side of them, as well as Malskäret and the western side of Malskärsören, landing of boats is forbidden during the bird nesting period between 1.5. and 31.7. Permissions from the ELY-center and the landowner is required for landing of boats or moving around in areas other than the above mentioned.

The clearest landmark of Valsörarna is the red-painted, 36 meter high iron lighthouse. It was designed in Paris in 1886 by the same company that later built the Eiffel tower. Although the lighthouse building had already been planned a long time before it was only after a tragic night when as many as five ships were shipwrecked in front of Valassaaret that it was finally built. At first the lighthouse was going to be built in Äbb-skäret, but because an appropriate place was not found, the decision was made to build it on the Storskär rock. Also a road had to be built in order to transport the different parts of the lighthouse from Äbb-skäret to Storskär. The road on Storskär carries the name Kärlekstigen or Lovepath.

Municipality

Korsholm

Coordinators

70508:32041

Driving directions

Coming from Vaasa first drive 20 km along Alskatintie (724) to the village of Replot, then continue about 17,7 km to the end of Björköväg (7240). The road ends in the Svedjehamn fishing harbour where there is a biggish parking place behind the boat houses. Many of the entrepreneurs that organize trips to Valsörarna use Svedjehamn as their leaving harbour. Depending on the route the boat journey is about 16 kilometers one way. There is also a well indicated route from Klobbskat to Valsörarna, but it is not marked in all sea maps.

Services

Nature trail, guest harbour, information boards.

Best time for excursions

In open water season, but especially between April and October.

Rarities

Manx Shearwater, King Eider, Steller's Eider, Little Grebe, Griffon Vulture Paddyfield Warbler, White Stork, Yellow-billed Loon, Pomarine Skua, Long-tailed Jaeger, Yellow-browed Warbler, Pallas's Warbler, European Bee-eater, European Turtle Dove, Lesser Grey Shrike, Montagu's Harrier, Black Kite, Purple Sandpiper, Great Snipe, Glaucous Gull, Common Murre, Bearded Reedling, Little Bunting, White-backed Woodpecker.



The Valsörarna coast guard station was built in 1948 and it was expanded along with the carrying out of general maintenance work in 1984. However, its activities were stopped in 2009 and the building has since turned into Senate Property. There is a biological research station (in Finnish) on Valsörarna that was created in 1967 mainly as a bird watching base and which is administered by Ostrobothnia australis rf. The main activities at the center are the observation of migratory movements of Rough-legged Buzzards and loons in the spring, the mapping of the region's nesting bird species every other year, and the ringing of Boreal Owls in the autumn.

Nesting species

There are at least 80 different species and 4000 pairs nesting in Valsörarna. The most numerous nesting species are: the Black Guillemot, Common Gull, Razorbill, Arctic Tern and the European Herring Gull. These make up over 50 % of the overall number of pairs. In the woods of the main island one can find a surprising amount of species that are not normally seen in outer archipelagos. Examples of these are the Wood Warbler and the Thrush Nightingale. More detailed information about the nesting species is found in the third Finnish bird atlas: grids 704:320 and 705:320 (<http://atlas3.lintuatlas.fi/tulokset/ruutu/704:320> and <http://atlas3.lintuatlas.fi/tulokset/ruutu/705:320> (atlas3.lintuatlas.fi, in Finnish).

<http://atlas3.lintuatlas.fi/tulokset/ruutu/704:320>

<http://atlas3.lintuatlas.fi/tulokset/ruutu/705:320>

Migratory species

Over the years at least 273 different bird species have been spotted in Valsörarna. The migratory route that goes along the western side of the islands is busy and it has been observed for a long time as part of the activities at the bird watching station. Especially loon-and Rough-legged Buzzard numbers are extremely high in the spring. Annual rarities are species, such as the Yellow-billed Loon, Black Redstart and the Ring Ouzel. Migration on the eastern side of the islands is often rather low, and there is no certain information about the extent of it in relation to that of the migratory route on the western side. The multiple biotopes of the island grouping ensure an incredible variety of species. In migratory periods one can even spot a Bluethroat or a Red-breasted Flycatcher, although neither belongs to the island's nesting species.



PHOTO: JOUNI KANNONLAHTI / VAASAN YLIOPISTO



PICTURES: JOUNI KANNONLAHTI / VAASAN YLIOPISTO

Kvarken Archipelago

- The Kvarkens archipelago was inscribed on the World Heritage list in July 2006.
- Total area 194 400 ha of which 85 % is sea.
- Metsähallitus, Natural Heritage Services is responsible for most of the maintenance of hiking trails and facilities in the area.