

Orsberget and Baljåsen



Welcome to Orsberget and Baljåsen

A trip to the highest point in Dalsland, Baljåsen, gives a taster of what the countryside east of Edslan has to offer. The Nature Reserves of Orsberget and Baljåsen consist of five square kilometres of the most rugged and wild countryside in Dalsland.

The highest point in Dalsland is worth a visit, if for no other reason than because it is the highest point. There is no other spot in Dalsland where you can have a cup of coffee at more than 300 metres above sea level. The view from the top is extensive and there is also a shelter if it is not suitable weather for an outdoor picnic. But there is much, much more to see. The two connected Reserves of Baljåsen and Orsberget stretch more than seven kilometres in a north-south direction and are criss-crossed by a system of walking trails, which provide a full day of walking for those not worried about working up a sweat. The landscape is very hilly, with rugged mountain ridges, steep cliffs and deep valleys, dark extensive woodlands and steep slopes with broadleaved woodlands and botanical rarities. There are more hilltops with views than just Baljåsen, almost as high and with extensive views over woodlands and glittering water to the west and the east. There is pretty much nowhere else where you can see so much of Skogsdal than from the top of Hinsknatten.

Orsberget

The road to the Reserve runs through a light, idyllic landscape with open pastures and well-managed meadows which are still cut with a scythe. If you are lucky you may see a pair of cranes grazing with their long-legged

offspring. On arrival, visitors are met by a magical spruce woodland. The water that runs down the slopes winds its way down to the lake between stones, tree roots and lush mosses.

Plant Riches

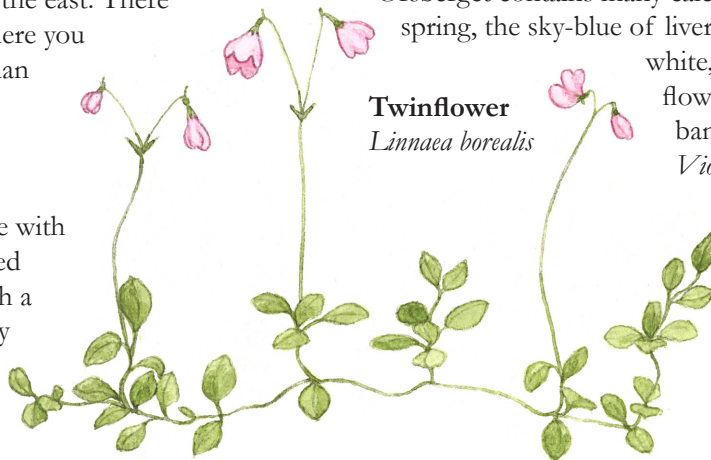
The winter-green leaves of twinflower weave their across the thick, green layer of moss. On thin stalks, the two light pink bell-shaped flowers, bend away from one another. This plant was the favourite flower of the "flower-king" Linnaeus and thus bears his name in Swedish. If you go down on your knees to this delicate flower you discover the purple veins and lovely smell.

The delicate fern maidenhair spleenwort grows here and there. Just in front of the barrier there is a stand of tall ostrich fern. On the virtually vertical cliffs, the rare calcicolous fern called wall-rue has been found. Beech fern which is much more common, has the lowest pair of leaves bent backwards. On damp ground, the panicles of wood fescue grass hang like well-brushed hair. The grass is rare and grows in tussocks.

Orsberget contains many calcicolous plants and in the spring, the sky-blue of liverleaf flowers shine and the white, lovely smelling woodruff flowers on the ground. Sanicle, baneberry, spring pea and *Viola mirabilis* are some of

the other species found here. Alpine enchanter's nightshade forms small stands on damp ground adjacent to streams and springs.

Twinflower
Linnaea borealis





Orchids

There are also several orchid species in the area. Bird's nest orchid has got its name from the fact that its root system is jumbled like a bird's nest. With its thick stalk, small leaves and yellow-brown leaves, the orchid resembles a pale asparagus. It is a saprophyte and with the help of a fungus, it takes up nutrients from dead plants and animals. The rare red helleborine has been found north of Korpflåget. This impressive orchid, just like bird's nest orchid and broadleaved helleborine can "go underground"; in other words they can grow for a long time without any shoots above the ground. Broadleaved helleborine is large, but the green flowers make it more difficult to spot. It can grow in the most diverse range of habitats.

Old Farm Woodland

The woodland in the site has been managed with care by selective felling and other traditional methods. The timber was extracted using horses and sledges and the animals grazed in the woodlands. The steep terrain and inaccessibility has saved the site from significant exploitation and the result is an old, formerly grazed woodland with a rich lichen and moss flora. Powdery kidney lichen, meal-rimmed shingle lichen and the large lungwort grow on the aspens. Some of the other species that have been found include green satin lichen, textured lungwort and glaucous leafy lichen. On the calcareous cliffs in the herb-rich spruce woodland silky wall feather-moss, different *Neckera* species, fox-tail feather



Broadleaved helleborine

Epipactis helleborine

moss and many other mosses grow. The rare *Nogopterium gracile* moss which grows on cliffs has been found in the area. The fungal flora is also rich.

Within the Reserve you can find the remains from former crofts in the form of clearance cairns and a drove road. At Mjölkkudden there is now a cabin where you can sleep over with an outdoor toilet, shelter and barbeque area.

The Nature and History of Baljåsen

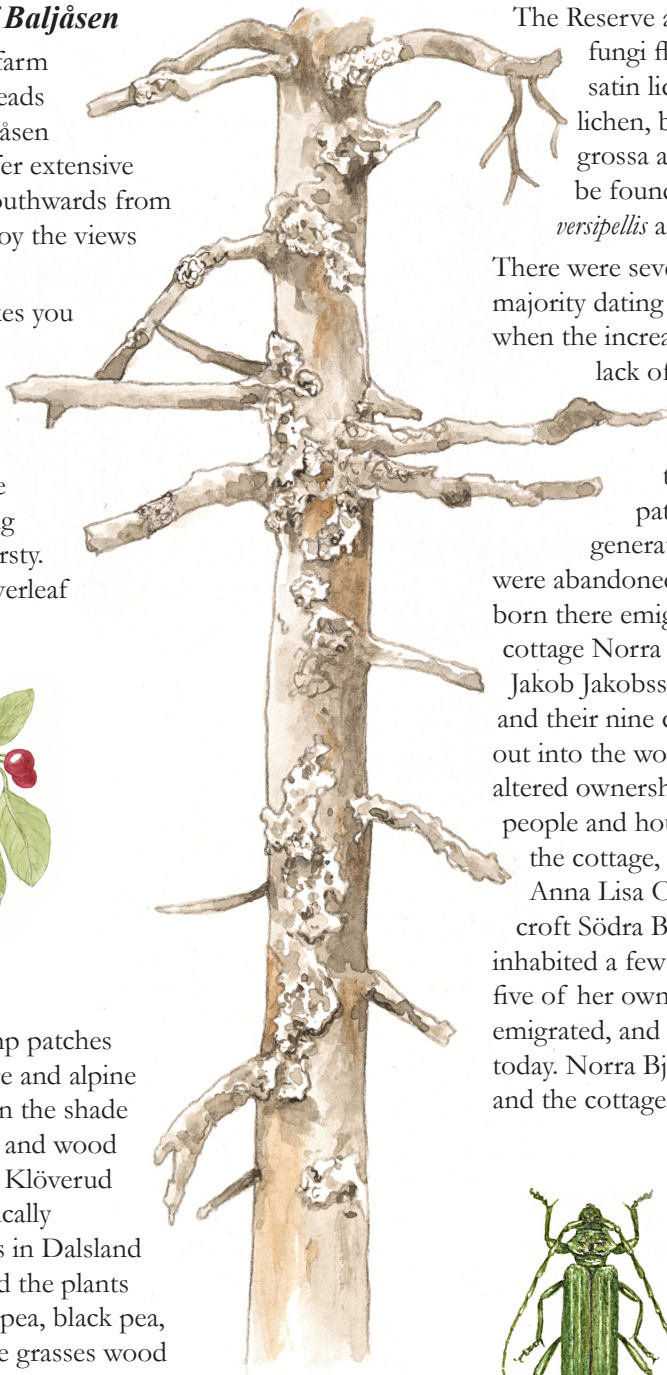
From the croft and traditional farm at Petersborg the marked trail leads you up to Björndalsberget, Baljåsen and Orsberget, all of which offer extensive views. If you choose to walk southwards from Petersborg instead, you can enjoy the views from Åmålsbergen.

Hiking through the Reserve takes you in places alongside streams which now and then, turn the colour of cognac in the sun's rays. Spruce roots creep across the path and on the edge of Björndalsberget a cold spring provides fresh water for the thirsty. The over wintering leaves of liverleaf



Fly honeysuckle
Lonicera xylosteum

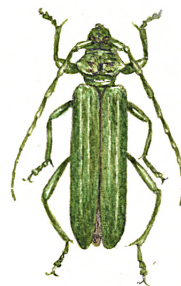
can be seen everywhere, in damp patches alternate leaved golden saxifrage and alpine enchanter's nightshade thrive. In the shade of the trees herb paris, may lily and wood crane's bill grow. The slopes by Klöverud contain one of the most botanically interesting herb-rich woodlands in Dalsland and in the Reserve you can find the plants such as fly honeysuckle, spring pea, black pea, sanicle and field gentian and the grasses wood fescue grass, lesser hairy brome and tor-grass that all require richer soils.



Standing dead pine,
Pinus sylvestris

The Reserve also has an interesting lichen and fungi flora with species such as green satin lichen, *Pectenia plumbea*, tree jelly lichen, blistered jelly lichen, *Megalania grossa* and lungwort. The fungi that can be found include spiny puffball, *Sarcodon versipellis* and *Hydnellum geogonium*.

There were several crofts in the area. The majority dating from the middle of the 1800s, when the increase in population resulted in a lack of arable land. People were forced out into the woodland to try and scratch a living out of the smallest, poorest, stoniest patches of soil. Two or three generations later the woodland crofts were abandoned. Many of the children that were born there emigrated to America. The small cottage Norra Björndalen was built in 1864 by Jakob Jakobsson. Him, his wife Anna Maria and their nine children were forced to move out into the woods when the Land Reform altered ownership boundaries and forced both people and houses to move. Whilst Jakob built the cottage, the family lived with the widow Anna Lisa Olsdotter at the neighbouring croft Södra Björndalen, which was built and inhabited a few decades earlier. Anna Lisa had five of her own children. Two of her sons emigrated, and their descendants live in Iowa today. Norra Björndalen was abandoned in 1898 and the cottage burned down a few years later.



Musk beetle
Aromia moschata



Pygmy owl
Glaucidium passerinum

Wildlife

The old growth woodland character and the amount of dead wood in both Reserves favours a rich birdlife. Hazel grouse, which is one of the smallest of the grouse family, is well established on the slopes down towards Edslan. It is also possible to see capercaillie, spotted nutcracker and the small pygmy owl. All species of woodpecker in Sweden have been observed and the threatened white-backed woodpecker also nested here previously. The white backed woodpecker's favourite food includes the larvae of the musk beetle and *Aegomorphus clavipes*. Both of these long-horned beetles have been found in Baljåsen along with other rare insects.

The slopes which are full of boulders are a good habitat for terrestrial snails which are dependent on calcareous bedrock and long term continuity in the woodland. *Macrogaster ventricosus*, plaited snail, lesser bulin, *Enomphalia strigella* and other species indicate that the area has high nature conservation values.

Orsbergetleden Trail, orange markers 10 km

Yellow Trail 3.5 km

Blue Trail 2.8 km

White Trail 2.5 km

Reserve boundary

Road

Small road

Path

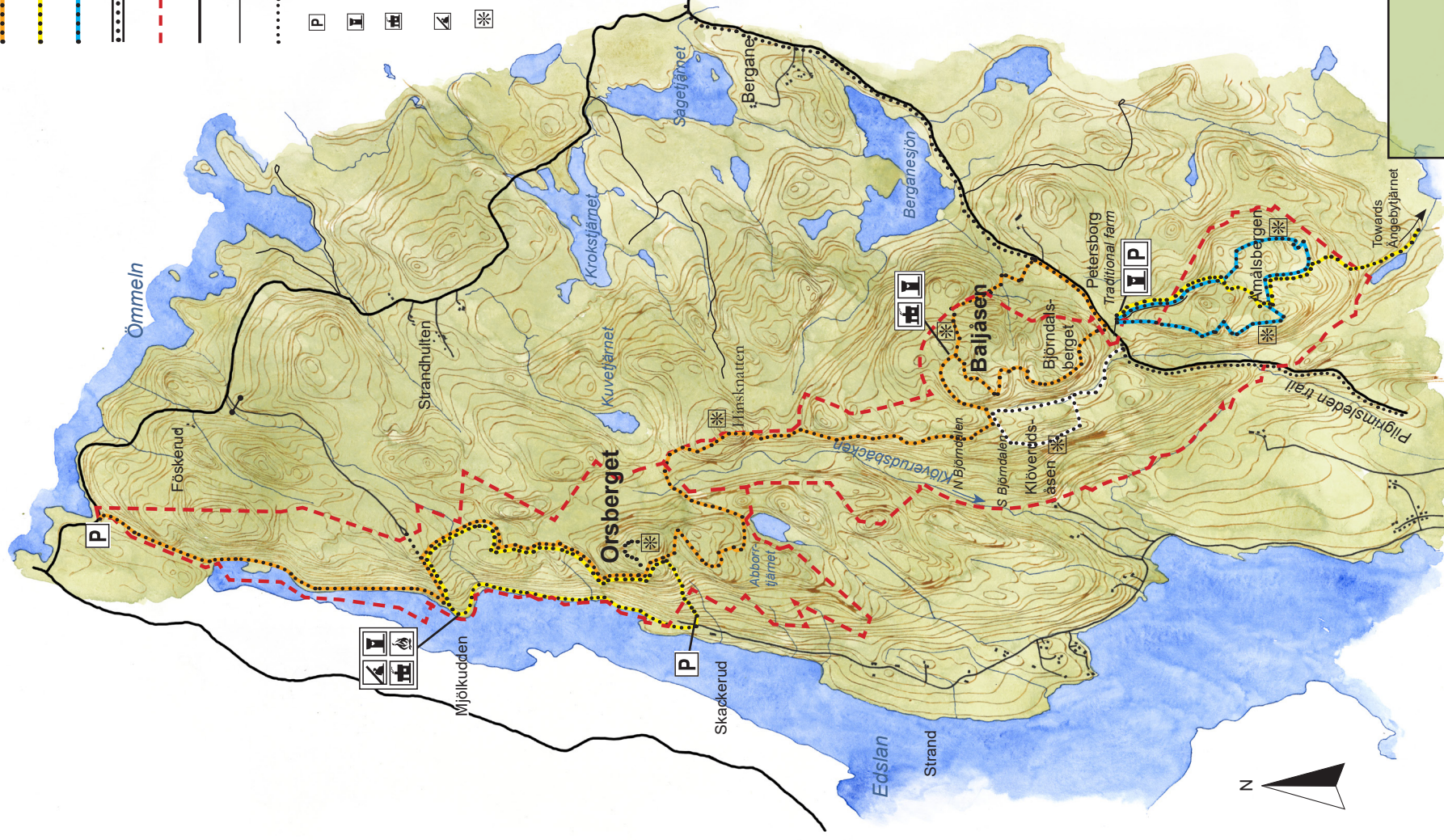
Car parking

Toilet

Cabin where you
can stay overnight

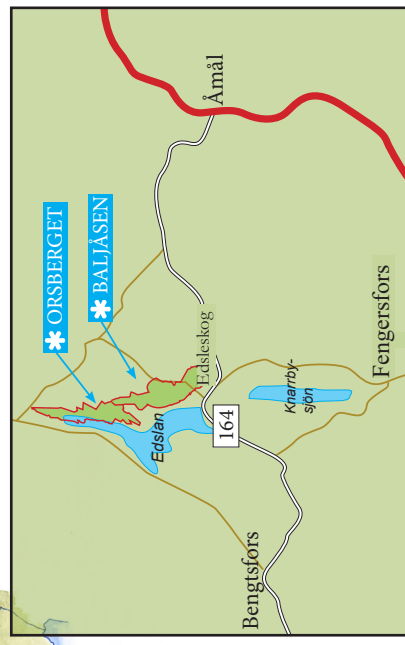
Shelter

View point



How to get to Orsberget and Baljåsen

The Nature Reserves lie east of Lake Edslan in the District of Åmål. To get to Orsberget you follow the road from Edleskog north towards Strand. After about 5 kilometres there is a car park for the Reserve. You reach Baljåsen by turning off towards Bergane in Edleskog. Paths lead from the car park by thecroft called Petersborg.



Text: Roger Olsson and Ulla Åshede
Illustrations: Kerstin Hagstrand-Velicu
Translation: Vikki Bengtsson

LÄNSSTYRELSEN
VÄSTRA GÖTALANDS LÄN