

IN THE WAKE OF EBBE SKAMMELSON



Bath and recreation

The Tira Islands offer excellent opportunities for swimming and recreation. The area on Storö, where camping is allowed, is located at a wonderful beach.

The islands will remain attractive if we all take our litter away with us. Please bring back even the smallest things. A chewing gum on the wrong place may destroy the pleasure for humans and kill birds. There is no toilet at the smaller beaches, so plan the visit accordingly. Please, do respect the restricted access within the bird sanctuaries!

Högaholm

Högaholm is the southern-most of the Tira Islands. It has a separate brochure well worth a read.

How to get there

A boat or a canoe is required. Canoes can be hired at several places around Lake Bolmen. Be careful, the lake is big and the waters can sometimes be rough.

Rules and regulations to be observed in the reserve

The objective of the reserve is to maintain the natural forest with the relatively virgin vegetation and rich fauna. The geological, ornithological and social values of the area are all important.



Within the reserve, visitors are not allowed to

- enter the designated bird sanctuaries from 1 April to 15 July every year.
- use a boat or any other kind of craft at a higher speed than 5 knots within the area that is indicated on the map.
- disturb the fauna by, for example, taking photos of nesting birds at a close distance.
- damage the vegetation by, for example, digging up or picking flowers.
- make fires (grills brought along may, however, be used but ensure to take all your litter away with you).
- bring dogs or cats which are not on the lead.
- use radio or other music devices in such a way that it is disturbing.

Camping is only allowed within a restricted area at the beach on Storö and maximum for 24 hours at a time.

Illustration on cover: From Björkö. **Main sources of information:** The County Administrative Board of Halland; "En vit fläck på Götalands karta" by Otto von Friesen, published in the magazine "Sveriges Natur", 1932. **Research:** Bo and Karin Tengnäs. **Text:** Karin Tengnäs. **Photo:** Karin Tengnäs. **Bird illustrations:** Karl-Otto Schander. **Logotype:** Lars Lidman. **Design:** Tecknargården/Willy Lindström. **Production:** Naturbruk AB/Bo Tengnäs. **Project coordination:** Bitte Rosén Nilsson, Hylte kommun. **Copyright:** Naturbruk AB. **Year:** 2006.

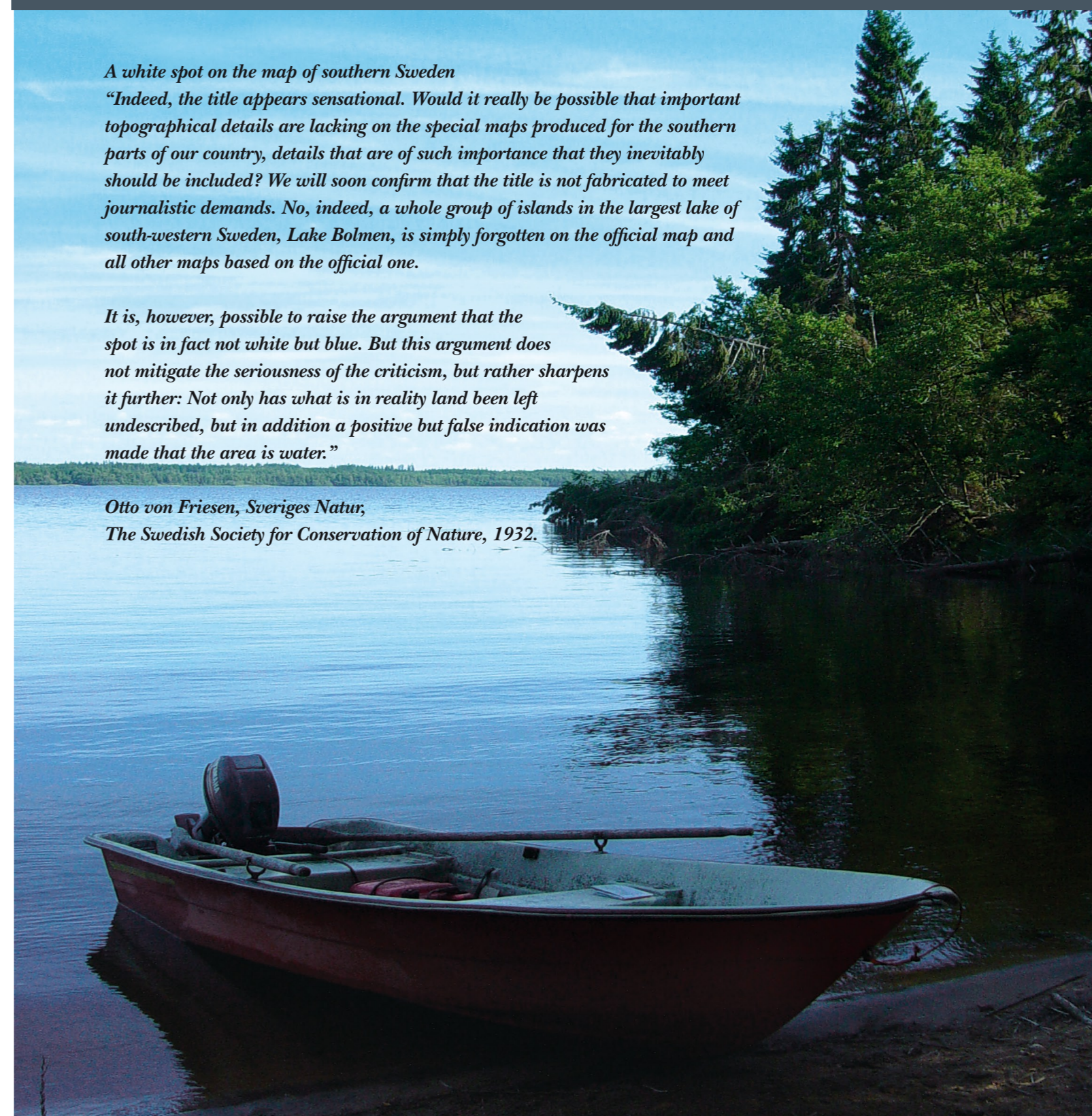
The brochures "In the Wake of Ebbe Skammelson" are available on www.unnaryd.com and www.hylte.se

A white spot on the map of southern Sweden

"Indeed, the title appears sensational. Would it really be possible that important topographical details are lacking on the special maps produced for the southern parts of our country, details that are of such importance that they inevitably should be included? We will soon confirm that the title is not fabricated to meet journalistic demands. No, indeed, a whole group of islands in the largest lake of south-western Sweden, Lake Bolmen, is simply forgotten on the official map and all other maps based on the official one.

It is, however, possible to raise the argument that the spot is in fact not white but blue. But this argument does not mitigate the seriousness of the criticism, but rather sharpens it further: Not only has what is in reality land been left undescribed, but in addition a positive but false indication was made that the area is water."

Otto von Friesen, *Sveriges Natur*,
The Swedish Society for Conservation of Nature, 1932.





“The white spot...”

In 1932, Otto von Friesen surprisingly discovered that a close to five kilometres long group of islands had escaped the sharp eye of the land surveying authority. Von Friesen notes, however, also that this is a “white spot” on the map only for the geographers, while for the local “natives” it is as well known as many other past and present white spots on Earth. Von Friesen’s observation was correct. No Tira Islands are indicated on the official map of 1931. A total land mass of 34 hectares with the highest points reaching 12–13 metres above the water level of Lake Bolmen had failed to attract the surveyors’ attention!

Part of a long boulder ridge (esker)

The Tira Islands consist almost entirely of sand, gravel and stones left there long ago at the mouth of a glacial river. It is only on the most easterly of the islands that the bedrock is visible. There, it consists of gneiss. The Tira Islands are, in fact, “peaks” of an area with glacial deposits of sand and gravel that stretches over an area of at least 80km: From around Kulltorp in the north via Horn on the island Bolmsö through Tira Islands and Löckna on the south-western side of Bolmen and further towards the south west. Von Friesen described Tira Islands geologically as “a conglomerate of ridges, hills, washed submerged reefs, sandy fields and sandbanks and at the southernmost point a cone of gravel, the island Högaholm”. All these deposits date back to the glacial period more than 10,000 years ago.

A Nature Reserve

The Tira Islands is now a nature reserve with an area of 735 hectares. The land area is 34 hectares divided into 16 larger or smaller islands located in the western part of Lake Bolmen. The islands are covered with natural forest which is in some parts a virgin forest little influenced by man. The oldest forest stands are about 150 years old. The predominant tree species are pine and spruce but there is also deciduous forest in some places. The island Högaholm is covered with lime-tree forest. The shores mostly consist of stone and gravel but there are also several sections with sandy beaches. Alder and other leaf trees grow along the lake shores.

A large island

The largest island, Storö is located at the centre of the reserve. Near the present shore line an older shore line is clearly visible which dates back to the time before the water level was lowered in the first half of the 19th century. The old shore

The beach on Storö.



line is about 2m higher than the present water level. On Storö, the orchid ‘creeping lady’s-tresses’ grows quite profusely. The oldest forest in the reserve, which is pine forest, is found here. The hurricane that hit southern Sweden in January 2005 caused many trees on Storö to blow over. As a result, parts of the island are now difficult to access. The forest in the wetter, central parts of the island was not so badly affected as the trees there are not so tall. Now, these are the parts that are most suited for exploratory visits. It is also fairly easy to reach the northern tip. Moose, roe deer and hare are frequent visitors to the island. The largest sandy beach of the Tira Islands is located on Storö. There are some basic facilities like toilets, a jetty and information signs. A visit to the island should be planned to take quite a while. This is an excellent place for relaxation and, if the weather is nice, a refreshing swim in the clear water of Lake Bolmen is highly recommended.

Several interesting smaller islands

Korpö, Mossö and Björkö are smaller but still significant islands. There is a lot to discover there too, and both Korpö and Björkö offer nice beaches although much smaller than the one on Storö. The hurricane in 2005 affected the trees on all forested islands. The fallen trees will be left where they are since the islands are within a nature reserve that was declared with one of its objectives to protect the natural forest. It will therefore remain difficult to reach some areas for quite a long time to come. Many species of birds and other animals will have even better conditions there with the abundance of dying trees and dead wood that the hurricane ensured. The islands will gradually become even more interesting for ornithologists.

An ecologically sensitive bird fauna

The reserve has an interesting but ecologically sensitive bird fauna. The species that occur vary with the seasons. Several birds of prey, such as osprey, nest or occur regularly in the area. The common sandpiper is the commonest wading bird. Ducks that nest in the area include black-throated diver, goosander, goldeneye, mallard and teal. Herons are quite frequent but temporary visitors in the summer time. Other birds that occasionally occur are hazel hen, great as well as lesser spotted woodpecker and black woodpecker. It is essential that the birds are not disturbed during the nesting time (April–July for most species). Only very cautious and sensible behaviour from humans is accepted here!



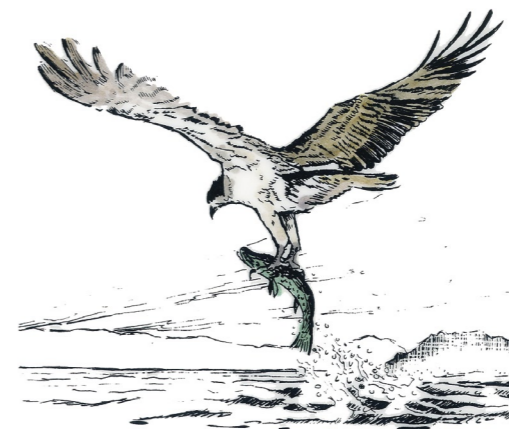
Honey buzzard

Nests in dense forest. Migrates to tropical Africa in August–September and returns to Sweden in late May. Larvae of earth wasps constitute their favourite food.



Heron

In the summer herons seek food in shallow bays around the islands. They eat fish, frogs and larger aquatic insects.



Osprey

Fish-eating bird of prey. Migrates to tropical Africa in August–September and is back again in March–April.



Goldeneye

Nests in hollow tree trunks. Feeds mainly on small aquatic animals.



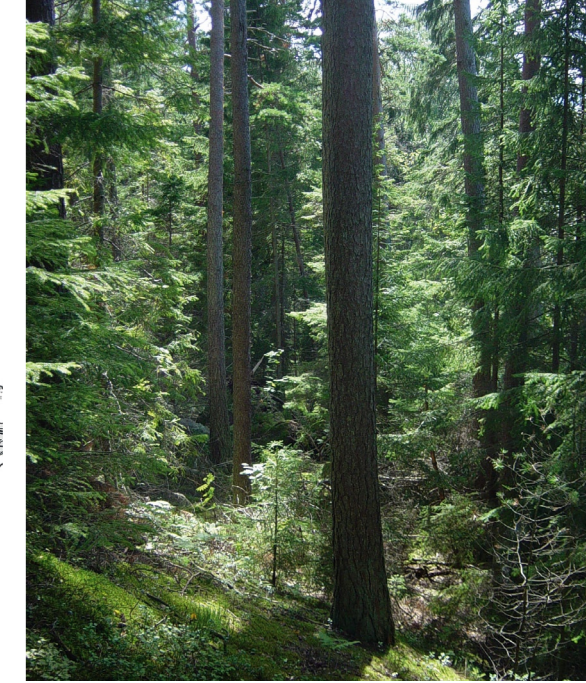
Common sandpiper

Wading bird. Nests along the shores of the islands. Wags its tail characteristically.



Goosander

Large, fish-eating duck. Usually nests in hollow trees.



Goshawk

Shy bird of prey that hunts with agility among trees.



Great spotted woodpecker

This is the commonest woodpecker around.



Lesser spotted woodpecker

The smallest woodpecker in the Swedish fauna. Prefers unmanaged, moist deciduous forest.

Hobby

Rare bird that largely feeds on dragon flies. Migrates to tropical Africa and returns by mid-May.



Black-throated diver

Skilful fish-eating diver that can remain submerged for several minutes. Their characteristic sound is often heard at night time.

A hectare is 100m x 100m, corresponding to about 2.5 acres. The area of the reserve, 735 hectares corresponds approximately to 1,000 football grounds.

A boulder ridge or an esker is a long ridge that consists of rounded stones, gravel and sand. Eskers were formed by glacial rivers when the glacier melted. The most recent glacier melted about 12,000 years ago from southern Sweden.