



Rockebro



Botany footbridge in Rockebro (left). Rockebro holy well. (right) Photo: Thomas Eriksson.

In Rockebro, between Laxå and Askersund, the ice sheet created an exciting and remarkable landscape with esker ridges, hills and hollows. There are several kettle holes in the area. Kettle holes were formed when ice blocks broke off from the body of the glacier and embedded themselves in gravel deposits in an esker ridge. When they melted, large hollows were formed.

Today the largest kettle hole is a lake (Lake Gropsjön), while others are filled with water only at certain times of the year. A drainage system links the hollows, partly comprising temporary surface streams and partly underground water flows. Variation in the water level keeps the hollows free of trees.

Rockebrokarret marsh, west of the esker ridge, is one of Närke's classic habitats. It is renowned for a number of rare plants that normally have a westerly distribution, including bog asphodel, cross-leaved heath and bog pondweed, but also northerly species such as moor rush. The marsh also has no less than four species of the insect-eating bladderworts and several orchid species.

The great-crested newt lives in some of the ponds in the nature reserve. It spends most of the year on land but is dependent on the water for breeding. The newt spends winter in holes in the ground or in decaying wood. The numbers are falling in Sweden but the species is favoured by an environment like Rockebro where a water landscape is linked by older forest.

Diverse vegetation

The solid ground supports a spruce-dominated mixed

coniferous forest. The forest has abundant herbs, including liverleaf and marsh violet. In the far south of the area, a ridge of pine heath forms a headland jutting into Lake Östra Laxsjön. Between the rocks in the lake, water lobelia and bulbous rush grow.

In the area there is also the Rockebro holy well. The practice of throwing coins in a well has a long tradition. The well was considered to have miraculous powers – the reddish colour of the water probably contributed to this. The spring is fed by groundwater from the marsh north of the road, and the red colour derives from the iron deposits in the marsh, iron ochre. The name Rockebro comes from 'ochre'.

Several roads converge at the well. Many people passing have stopped and sacrificed a coin to ensure good health and a safe journey. The spring was restored in 1980, when it was dug out and lined with sandstone. Nearly 9,000 coins were found, the oldest of which was from 1720. Many of the coins were modern, indicating that the spring is still often used.





§ In the reserve, you are not permitted to:

- damage fenland, solid ground or ditches
- start fires except where designated
- pick flowers or damage vegetation in any other way by picking or digging up
- drive motor vehicles
- park anywhere other than in the designated car park
- camp or park caravans or camper vans
- moor boats for longer than 24 hours
- set up notice boards, placards, posters, signs, inscriptions or similar

How to get there

The nature reserve lies on the road between Askersund and Laxå. There is a car park, marked walks and a picnic spot at Lake Östra Laxsjön. There are also sections of planked paths that run past many interesting plants, including orchids.

Facts about the nature reserve

Established: 1974
 Area: 30 ha
 Landowner: Sveaskog AB
 Managed by: County Administrative Board
 Established by: County Administrative Board
 The area is part of the EU network Natura 2000