

# Protected WETLANDS in Rogaland



COUNTY GOVERNOR  
OF ROGALAND



**Jæren  
Wetland Centre**

MOSTUN · ORRE · KVASSEHEIM

# What are wetlands?

Wetlands include lakes and tarns, marshlands, rivers, estuaries, shallow marine tidal mudflats and rocky coastlines. Plant and animal life in such habitats is very diverse, biological production is high, and they often contain many rare species.

## Marshlands, rivers, streams, lakes and tarns

There are many food-rich wetlands along the Figgjo River, including Grudavatn lake. The lake is shallow, rich in food, and is one of the most biologically diverse sites in the whole of Jæren. It is home to a rich diversity of insects, plants and animals, and salmon, sea trout and eels migrate through its waters.



In 1974, Grudavatn in Klepp municipality became the first wetland reserve established in Rogaland

## Estuaries and deltas

The Hå River flows across a flat alluvial plain before it empties into the North Sea. At high tide the sea enters the estuary bringing valuable nutrients which support high levels of production of plants and animals which in turn become food for the birds. Unfortunately, most of the river estuaries in Rogaland have been developed.



The Hå River estuary

## Tidal mudflats and other shallow marine areas

The coastal inter-tidal zone is among the richest of all our wetland habitats. Extensive mudflats exposed at low tide in shallow water coves and inlets are especially rich in nutrients. Such sites attract large numbers of migratory and overwintering water birds during the autumn, winter and spring.

## Rocky coastlines and small islands

Shallow-water rocky coastlines and small islands also come under the definition of wetlands. The sea is rich in fish, shellfish and other prey which provide food for many nesting seabird species, several of which spend the winter in these nutrient-rich waters.

# Wetlands are under threat!

For thousands of years, people have been draining lakes and marshlands for agricultural use. The destruction of wetlands has been particularly dramatic during the last hundred years. Wetlands represent some of the most biologically diverse habitats on Earth. If they disappear, we will also lose the plants and animals that depend exclusively on these habitats to live and feed. Wetlands are also important sources of water.

About half of the world's wetlands have been either partly or completely destroyed since the start of the industrial revolution in the mid-nineteenth century. This also applies to Norway and the Jæren area in particular. Urban expansion and the intensification of farming methods have brought wetland habits to the brink of extinction.



Destruction of a wetland in Jæren by in-filling

## The Jæren Wetland Centre

The Jæren Wetland Centre (JWC) was established in 2012 to provide information and education about wetland habitats and species. The JWC consists of three separate sites - the **Mostun Nature Information Centre** in the heart of Stavanger, and the two coastal outdoor activities centres at **Orre in Klepp** municipality, and the converted lighthouse at **Kvassheim in Hå**. The Mostun centre is run by the Rogaland branch of *Friends of the Earth Norway* (Naturvernforbundet), and the coastal centres by the *Jæren Outdoor Activities Council* (Jæren friluftsråd). All three centres have free exhibitions and offer teaching and a variety of events and activities. **Information about the centres** can be found at [www.mostun.no](http://www.mostun.no) and [www.friluftsfyret-kvassheim.no](http://www.friluftsfyret-kvassheim.no) (both in Norwegian). If you would like to contact the Jæren Wetlands Centre, call us on +47 51 52 88 11/+47 977 12 253 or send an e-mail to [post@mostun.no](mailto:post@mostun.no)

Contact JVS: +47 51 52 88 11 /  
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The Mostun Information Centre, Stavanger



The converted lighthouse in Kvassheim, Hå



The activity centre in Orre, Klepp



Orrevatn is a lake in Klepp municipality, and one of Jæren's 23 Ramsar sites

## RAMSAR – the world's most important wetlands



In 1971 the first agreement to protect the world's wetlands was signed in the Iranian city of Ramsar. The agreement has come to be known as the "Ramsar Convention" and has been signed by Norway and, as of 2014, 167 other countries. As of 2014, Norway (including Svalbard) has 63 individual areas or wetland systems which have been designated Ramsar status, and which are protected under the Norwegian Biodiversity Act.

## The Jæren Wetlands System

The Jæren Wetlands System is a collective term for Jæren's 23 protected Ramsar sites consisting of nine lakes, three marshlands, and nine marine shallow water and rocky coastline locations (see map). These wetlands are very important stop-over sites for birds on migration to and from their wintering grounds in Europe and Africa. In protected areas, the birds find food and a place to rest before continuing on their journeys south. Jæren's relatively mild climate also attracts overwintering ducks, geese, swans, grebes and waders to the area's shallow, food-rich lakes, estuaries and tidal mudflats. The Ramsar sites are protected from human interference which can reduce or destroy their value to birds and other plant and animal life.



Migratory waders finding food and a place to rest on the seaweed banks along the Jæren coast



# Protected WETLANDS in Rogaland

## PROTECTION REGULATIONS

- All vegetation on nature reserves is protected.
- Causing damage or disturbance to wildlife is prohibited.
- Hunting and trapping is prohibited in many protected areas.
- Development, road-building and drainage is not permitted in nature reserves.
- Camping and the use of motorised vehicles are not permitted.

A full overview of the statutory regulations governing protected areas can be found on the websites of the Norwegian Environment Agency at [miljodirektoratet.no](http://miljodirektoratet.no), the County Governor in Rogaland at [fylkesmannen.no/rogaland](http://fylkesmannen.no/rogaland), and the legal website [lovdata.no](http://lovdata.no) (in Norwegian).

If you see any contraventions of the protection regulations you can call the Norwegian Nature Inspectorate (SNO) at +47 51 56 89 13/+47 959 67 239, or contact the nearest police station.

## Protective status under Norwegian law

### Nature reserves

Nature reserves are defined as sites unspoiled or almost unspoiled by human intervention, and/or which represent a special collection of habitats with major scientific or educational value. This is the strictest form of environmental protection in Norway.

### Areas of Special Protection for Birds and Plants

These are areas designated to protect specific rare species or biological communities.

KEY:  
 R= Nature reserve  
 F= Area of Special Protection for Birds  
 P= Area of Special Protection for Plants

- The Jæren Wetlands System comprising 23 reserves and Areas of Special Protection for Birds, designated under the Ramsar Convention
- Marshland Nature Reserves
- Wetland Nature Reserves and Areas of Special Protection for Birds
- Boundaries of protected areas

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