

Right of public access – a unique opportunity





The right of public access is a fantastic opportunity for all of us to roam freely in nature.

You make use of the right of public access when you go for a walk in the forest, paddle a kayak, go climbing or just sit on a rock and think.

Usually it is completely natural for us. In order for everyone to enjoy nature, we need to take care of nature and wildlife and show consideration for landowners and others who are outdoors.

We can sum this up with the phrase "Don't disturb – don't destroy"

Hike, bike, ride...

We have a wonderful opportunity to experience nature and pursue many different activities. Swedes are extremely interested in outdoor life and nature.

So that everyone can enjoy nature, it is good to keep some things in mind:

- Remember that crops, replanted forest or other vulnerable land should not be damaged.

- To avoid disturbing those who live in the area, do not cross over or occupy someone's lot. Residents have a right to be undisturbed.
- Do not interfere with the activities of landowners.
- When you ride or cycle in terrain, there is a risk of damaging the ground. Do not ride or cycle over soft, fragile ground or on designated jogging tracks, ski tracks or hiking trails.
- If you cross enclosed pastureland, do not disturb animals or damage fences. Close the gate after you so that livestock does not get out.

Camping

By all means pitch a tent for a night or two in the countryside!

Remember to pitch it in a suitable place – in other words, where farming is not carried on and not too close to a residence. Indeed, the greater the risk of disturbing someone, all the greater reason there is to ask for permission. Consideration is especially important when camping with caravans and motor homes outside designated areas. Such camping is governed by off-road vehicle use laws.

Take rubbish with you

We all want clean nature, free of litter. So take rubbish with you. Glass, tins, plastic bags and bottle caps can injure both people

and animals. Therefore, never place a rubbish bag next to a full dustbin.

Fire

The campfire adds spice to our outdoor life, and you are allowed to build a fire in nature. But fires cause concern among many landowners because much valuable forest goes up in flames every year due to carelessness with campfires.

To minimise the risk of fire spreading, it is good to keep some things in mind:

- Do not start a fire if there is the least danger of it spreading – in dry weather the lighting of fires often is prohibited.
- Choose a place where there is no risk of the fire spreading.
- Do not build a fire directly on or right next to rocks. They can crack, causing scars that never heal.
- When you are done with the fire, make sure that it is thoroughly extinguished.
- Leave no trace of the fire in the form of a fireplace or such.





Picking flowers, berries, mushrooms, twigs...

You are free to pick flowers, berries, mushrooms, twigs and branches from the ground.

To avoid damaging nature, it is good to keep some things in mind:

- Remember that certain plants are protected by law and they may not be picked. The county board can provide information on protected plants. Orchids are protected throughout the country.
- Do not take twigs, branches, birch-bark and other bark from growing trees. They can be damaged.

Dogs

Obviously dogs may accompany you in nature. March 1 to August 20 is a sensitive period for wildlife, and dogs are not allowed to run loose then. During other times of the year, you also must have your dog under sufficient control so that it does not disturb or damage wildlife and other people. In some parts of the country dog leash laws are in effect.



Swimming and boating

The right of public access applies both on land and water. You may swim by the shore, boat almost everywhere, moor your boat and spend a day or two on board. The same rules for consideration of your surroundings apply as on land. In other words, don't disturb – don't destroy.

To be able to enjoy nature by and on the water, it is good to keep some things in mind:

- Do not moor your boat or go ashore by a dwelling or where there is no admittance, such as a sanctuary for protection of birds and seals.
- It is okay to moor a boat temporarily at someone else's jetty if it does not interfere with the owner. But not if it adjoins the grounds of a house, of course. It is preferable to contact the landowner.
- Special rules, such as speed limits and no admittance, may exist.
- Remember that motorboat operators need to be more considerate than quieter boaters.

Hunting and fishing

The right of public access does not cover hunting and fishing. But you are free to fish without a licence with a rod and certain other hand gear along the coasts and in Sweden's five largest lakes: the Vänern, the Vättern, the Mälaren, the Hjälmaren and the Storsjön. Fishing in other waters requires a fishing licence or other permit. Along the Norrland coast, the west coast and Skåne's southern coast certain other fishing methods are allowed without a licence. Otherwise fishing with nets, trolling or tip-up fishing is not permitted without a licence, nor is salmon fishing by the Norrland coast.

So that everyone can enjoy nature and avoid damaging it, it is good to keep some things in mind:

- Remember to always take note of the rules that apply in the place you want to fish.
- Do not leave hooks and lines behind you in nature. They can be death traps for wildlife.
- Remember to leave wildlife's young and nests or dens alone.
- You are not allowed to take bird eggs. That is considered hunting. All wild animals and birds are protected by law. Hunting may be carried on in accordance with hunting regulations. Species threatened with extinction, such as frogs and snakes, are protected.



Organised outdoor life

Adventure tourism and other organised outdoor life have tremendous opportunities to make use of the right of public access for activities. The right of public access can be used commercially and by many users simultaneously. Those who organise activities on another's land bear a great deal of responsibility.

The very best way to proceed is for the organiser to make contact with the landowner, municipality and county board before the activities begin.

- Obtain the necessary proficiency
- Choose a suitable location
- Implement measures for security and prudence
- Inform participants about the right of public access



In nature close to population centres

In nature close to population centres the right of public access is all the more important. It enables many people to take part in nature activities close to home without going away. In populated areas many people live side by side, sometimes in crowded spaces. The right of public access makes it easier for all of us to coexist in nature in a respectful manner and to avoid conflicts and wear and tear on the land.

No motor vehicles on the ground

There is no right of public access for motorised vehicles. According to Terrängkörningslagen (terrain vehicles law), it is forbidden to drive cars, motorcycles, mopeds and other motorised vehicles on bare ground in the terrain. Nor is it permitted to drive motorised vehicles on private roads that are closed to motorised traffic. Such restrictions must be indicated by road signs.

Protected nature areas

In national parks, nature reserves, Natura 2000 sites or other protected areas, special rules apply. Sometimes the right of public access is limited, sometimes expanded. Information is posted at the entrances to the parks or other protected areas.



More information

www.naturvardsverket.se/allemansratten

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