

THY – Denmark's First National park

Denmark's first national park

The Danish Parliament has appointed the area of western Thy as home to the first Danish national park. The official opening is expected to take place late in the summer of 2008.

The national park, which covers an area of 24.370 hectares is located along the coast from Agger Tange (offshore bar) in the south to Hanstholm in the north and is up to 12 kilometers wide.

The national park consists of coastlines, dunes, sand heaths, dune plantations as well as great lakes and is tied together with less extensive farm areas. The dunes and sand heaths are of great national and international importance.

The national park provides an opportunity to create a coherent nature area that will strengthen plant and wildlife and provide visitors with great nature experiences. The promotion of nature and cultural history will be improved and it is expected, that an increase in tourism will stimulate the local development.

Four ways of seeing the national park

The national park can be explored on foot, on bicycle, on horseback or from behind the wheel of your car. The decision is determined by the amount of time available as well as the desired level of comfort. It is not necessary to experience the entire national park at once though. In fact, it might be easier to digest the experience when it is split into smaller sections.

The West Coast Trail is both hiking and bike trails. The hiking trail is identical with the North Sea Trail and in general, it follows the old rescue road. Here, you are close to the ocean and dunes and you can truly sense the greatness of the scenery surrounding you.

The bike trail is located a bit further inland where it consists of smaller public roads and forest roads through the plantations.

Along the West Coast Trail there is a number of primitive campsites, all with 15-20 kilometers between them – which is roughly a day's walk.

They all contain shelters, a place to make a bonfire, toilet facilities and some of them have running water. If you prefer more comfort, you can spend the night either in inns or on campsites.

If you wish to experience the national park on horseback, you are allowed to ride on the beach (except in the period from June 1st to August 31st). From the beach, it is possible to make a detour to the plantations where – in general – you are permitted to ride on the forest roads. In Hvidbjerg, Nystrup and Vandet plantations, there are marked riding trails as well.

If you visit the national park by car, it is recommended that you drive along the coast, where you can experience the extensive sand heaths and plantations. There are plenty of parking areas, from where a number of hiking trails begin.

Attractions in National Park Thy

1. Hanstholm Lighthouse and Coastal cliff

The parking place by the lighthouse and the church.

Hanstholm Lighthouse is located on the far west of Hanstholm. It was built in 1843 and for a while, it was the strongest lighthouse in the world.

Hiking suggestion: Follow one of several roads through the Lighthouse garden (Hanstholm Garden Union) to the old coastal cliff, which is the northern border of the national park. From here, you have a magnificent view of the reservation's wide stretched sand heaths and the coastline where the wilderness of the beaches stretches more than 50 kilometres to the south to the southern point of Agger Tange.

2. Bird tower in Tved Dune plantation

Parking place at the end of Sårupvej in the northern part of Tved Dune plantation.

Hiking suggestion: Follow the yellow hiking trail, which after about two kilometers leads to a bird tower on the edge of Hanstholm Wildlife Reservation. The most important types of nature in

the national park are now right in front of you, as far as you can see – dunes, sand heaths, dune plantations and lakes. In March and April you might be lucky enough to experience cranes that are dancing and trumpeting, and in September this is a good place to see large herds of red deer and hear the roar of the deer.

3. Isbjerget

The parking area is located in the southwestern corner of Tved Dune plantation – at the end of Hindingvej.

In close vicinity to the parking area, you can find bonfire and barbecue facilities and by Bagsø, there is a fishing platform suited for the disabled.

Hiking suggestion: Follow the yellow hiking trail which twists steeply for about 600 meters up the old coast cliff to Isbjerget which is the highest point in Hanstholm Wildlife Reservation, 56 meters above water. From the top, you have a magnificent view of the reservation's wide expanses. Towards the west, you can see the North Sea in the distance and towards the south the clean and clear watered Nors Lake, which is the national park's eastern border to the farm land.

4. The swimming area of the lake Nors Sø

Drive two kilometers north from Vester Vandet on Agerholmvej. You will find the parking area close by the shore of the lake.

The swimming area, which is light and open and shielded from the westerly wind by the forest, has the finest and very child-friendly beach. The good quality of the water is due to the fact that it is a karstic lake (i.e. nutrient-poor lake with lime floor) and that water flows into the lake through fissures in the lime. Nors Sø is a part of Hanstholm Wildlife Reservation and therefore, sailing and surfing is prohibited.

The swimming area has toilets equipped for the disabled, a large number of tables and benches and three bonfire- or barbecue places.

Hiking suggestion: Follow the yellow hiking trail to the bird tower and return through the beauti-

ful and distinctive mixed forest from the year 1900.

5. Klitmøller

Parking areas are north of the town by 'Splittergab', south of the town by 'Trøjborg' or in the centre on Ørhagevej.

From the years 1600 – 1800, Klitmøller was the centre for 'skudehandel' (craft trade) with Norway, to where, grain and other foods were exported, while the return load consisted of lumber, iron and horses. A blooming period of fishing followed, and today many of the beautiful tool sheds are visible evidences hereof. Currently, Klitmøller is known throughout Europe for its outstanding conditions for surfing.

Hiking suggestion: Take a walk along the beach. Enjoy the light and the sea air and watch the surfers.

6. Bøgsted Rende

In Tvorup Plantation you turn away from Kystvejen towards the west. The parking area is between the plantation and the sea dune. Bøgsted Rende (gully) is an old recreational area in Thy and people come here to go swimming or for a walk on the beach. However, when it is windy, people tend to take cover in the plantation directly behind the sea dune.

There is a network of marked hiking trails from the parking area.

Hiking suggestion: The blue hiking trail follows the gully through a forest of centuries old trees that are wind-swept and stunted. Later on, the yellow trail goes through Thagårds Plantation – which is one of the first plantations in Thy from 1816 – and passes the sea mark, which is one of the few remaining beacons, that were established in 1884 to serve as navigational tools for the seafarers. Other beacons can be found in Vigsø and Stenbjerg. Today they are all preserved.

7. Stenbjerg Landingsplads

In the roundabout on Kystvejen you turn towards Stenbjerg Landingsplads (Landing Place). The picturesque tool sheds were built by the fishermen themselves in the years around 1900.

Today, they are used by the part-time fishermen. The preserved tool shed, which was built in 1931, contains a small exhibition that illustrates the local history and rescue service.

Hiking suggestion: Walk south from the landing place on the beach until trail number D102. Follow this trail through the dunes and past the preserved beacon. Let the walk take you through the village, past the church and the long row of tool sheds. You can also stop by the exhibition in painter Kate Lassen's house. The walk is 4.5 kilometers.

8. Lyngby

From Kystvejen just north of Svankjær you turn towards Lyngby. The parking area is at the end of the road.

Lyngby was established in 1864, when six families from Agger and Ålum decided to move to a place with better prospects. Fishing was the main occupation, but the area also provided the opportunity for small-time farming. The first vacation homes were already built during the period between the two world wars. Then, as now, Lyngby was an exclusive place for a vacation, ideally suited for those who sought tranquility, peace and authenticity.

Hiking suggestion: Walk south towards Lodbjerg on the West Coast Trail from the rescue center, which today serves as a primitive camp site. You can choose to follow one of the old wheel tracks towards the sea and walk on the beach on the way back.

9. Lodbjerg Fyr (Lighthouse)

Parking place near the lighthouse.

The preserved Lodbjerg Lighthouse was built in 1883 of granite blocks from Sweden. From the top of the lighthouse is an excellent view on the southern part of National Park Thy. Towards the north you can see the large sand heaths from Lodbjerg through Lyngby and all the way to Stenbjerg. If you turn south you can see Ørum and Flade lakes surrounded by green meadows and further south the border of the national park by Agger Tange and Thyborøn Canal. A moving white dune towards the north is evidence of the

havoc caused by the sand drift through centuries.

Hiking suggestion: Follow the blue hiking trail across the sand heaths to Penbjerg and back to the lighthouse.

10. Agger Tange

Agger Tange (bar) can be experienced either from the north-south coastal road or from the western sea dike. There are several parking lots in the area. In the town of Agger, a path allows the disabled access to the dike as well.

Aside from being one of the most important resting places in Northern Europe for water birds, the bar is also an important breeding location for endangered meadow birds.

In terms of cultural history, the bar is interesting as well. On the border between ocean and fiord many dramatic events have occurred.

Floods, break through, sand drifts and coastal preservation are all a part of the area's history.

Hiking suggestion: Go for a walk along the rescue path east of the dike and follow the beach on the way back.

