



Västra väggar

Welcome to Omberg Ecopark and Sveaskog



The Omberg Ecopark is located on the eastern shore of Lake Vättern. When you visit you can be captivated by magnificent orchids, hike among giant oak trees or enjoy the fantastic view from Hjässan – Omberg's highest point.

The mythical mountain has been inhabited by man for thousands of years. Today, it is mainly the magnificent scenery that attracts hundreds of thousands of visitors every year. Lush beech forests, magical natural spruce forests and the dramatic steep scree down to Lake Vättern are some of the natural environments that strongly characterise the landscape. In order to preserve and develop the area's conservation values, Sveaskog has chosen to make Omberg an ecopark.

Quick facts

Opened: 2003

Don't miss: Beechwood forest reserve, Rödgavel grotto, giant oaks

Suggestions: Hiking, guided tours, canoeing

Interesting species: Marsh helleborine, golden eagle, hermit beetle

Size: 1,700 hectares

Location: On the eastern shore of Lake Vättern in Östergötland



Resting in a windbreak

Sveaskog's ecoparks – for nature and people

An ecopark is a large, contiguous landscape with high biological and ecological values. The ecoparks are one of Sveaskog's tools for nature conservation. Here we work to preserve, recreate and develop high conservation values. At least half of productive forest land is used for nature conservation. Forestry is conducted in most ecoparks but adapted to the conservation and cultural values in the area. In an ecopark, ecological values take precedence over financial considerations. At the same time, the importance of the forest in terms of outdoor activities and human well-being is centre stage. Sveaskog is developing a total of 37 ecoparks throughout Sweden. Together with the Swedish Forest Agency we sign special nature conservation agreements for all the ecoparks. The agreements aim to ensure long-term protection for conservation and cultural values. Omberg was our first ecopark and was inaugurated in 2003.



Mosaic of forests at Omberg

Omberg is one of the most species-rich forest landscapes in Sweden. The mountain contains a mosaic of broad-leaved deciduous, spruce and broad-leaved wetland forests and we work to strengthen these environments. There are also considerable numbers of giant oaks as well as deadwood. Timber production is still carried out in parts of the ecopark but with enhanced consideration for conservation, cultural and recreational values. The Omberg Ecopark comprises some 1,400 hectares of productive forest land. The table sets out our long-term nature conservation objectives for the Omberg Ecopark.

Nature conservation in Omberg Ecopark

Nature types with high natural values	Starting point 2003	Restoration	In the future
Broad-leaved deciduous forest	15%	30%	45%
Spruce forest	5%	10%	15%
Total forest with high natural values	20%	40%	60%
Production forest with intensified consideration	0%		40%
Production forest with general consideration	80%		0%

As a result of the intensified consideration for the natural and cultural environments, which are also left unmolested in the production forests, the total nature conservation area is approximately 70 per cent. Of this area, 2 per cent is nature reserve land.

The northernmost beech outpost

Throughout history, Omberg has been rich in broad-leaved deciduous forests but in the 20th century many deciduous trees were replaced by dense spruce plantations. Despite this, the broad-leaved deciduous forest remains a prominent feature at Omberg. Here, for example, the beech has its northernmost distribution in eastern Scandinavia. In the spring, visitors flock to Omberg to experience the new leaf growth in the beech forest as well as carpets of blue anemones that are unparalleled in Sweden. Our aim is to recreate broad-leaved forests in the ecopark.



Cattle grazing in the ecopark

Old spruce forests

Omberg's inaccessible scree slopes have allowed the spruce forests to remain relatively untouched and to develop freely. Some of the spruce trees are two hundred years old and there is an abundance of dead trees and deadwood in the forests in various stages of decomposition. This benefits a number of rare lichens and mosses as well as insects and woodpeckers. Omberg's lime-rich soil means that the spruce forests have a vegetation that differs from that we are accustomed to seeing in spruce forests. Here we can find plants that are normally associated with broad-leaved deciduous forests such as dog's mercury and the sweet-smelling wild garlic. We will preserve and recreate spruce forests with high conservation values.

Giant oak trees in the landscape

A large part of Omberg was previously an open grazing landscape. This favoured the oaks which were allowed to grow very large and old. Today, Omberg is home to some 400 giant

oaks. The oak is unquestionably the most biologically rich tree in our country. A single oak can house over a thousand species in its thick branches, cavities, coarse bark and underground roots. The oak also produces acorns which are important food for game. Our aim is to increase the number of giant oaks to 5,000 – a goal that will take several generations to achieve. You can see these activities in the form of clearance round the oaks in both young and old forests.

Queen Omma

Omberg's eternal sovereign is Queen Omma. Her most important duty is to safeguard and care for the mountain, its plants and its animals. She does this dressed in misty veils and a mask with the face of an owl. There are many myths about Queen Omma. For example, water seeps down into Lake Vättern through the roof of the Rödgvall grotto. According to legend, it is Queen Omma who mourns her dead suitor. During cold winters, Queen Omma's tears freeze to form long icicles inside the cave.

Omberg's exciting history

Back in the Stone Age, the mountain was used for cultivation and during the turbulent migration period, around 400–500 AD, the three hill forts were built. Many of the graves and burial grounds that can be seen on Omberg date from that time.

In the 12th century, the Omberg area became a centre for the Sverker dynasty. At around the same time, a nobleman from Östergötland, Sverker, was elected king of Sweden. The Alvastra Monastery was founded during his reign. The monastery was destroyed in 1527 when King Gustav Vasa confiscated church properties for the state.

During the 17th and 18th centuries, Omberg was one of Sweden's largest royal hunting grounds, enclosed by a 16-kilometre long and several metres high wooden fence. The area remained the king's private hunting ground until 1805.

In the spring of 1859 a state forestry school was established at Omberg and forestry became more organised. During the forestry school period a number of exotic tree species were planted such as silver fir and larch. The forestry school was closed in 1935. Traditional forestry was conducted in Omberg until 2003 when the ecopark was inaugurated.

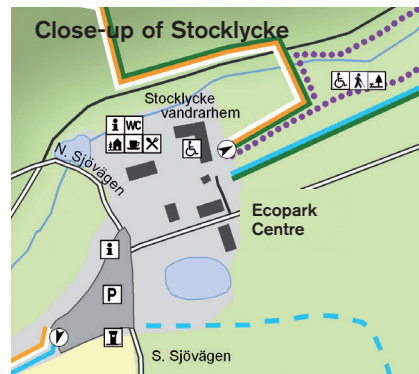
Outdoor activities

The Omberg Ecopark is a popular area for outdoor activities. Visitors can experience nature, exercise or pick berries and mushrooms. An extensive system of hiking trails takes visitors to most of Omberg's sights. For those who wish to find out more about Omberg's natural environments and culture, guided hiking tours are available during the peak season. Caves and bays that are inaccessible from land can be reached by kayak or canoe.


SIGHTS AND POINTS OF INTEREST

- 1 **The Ecopark Centre in Stocklycke** is a good starting point for a visit to the ecopark. Nature trails, hiking trails and guided nature and culture walks start here.
- 2 **Stocklycke äng** is a meadow with fantastic flowers. Rock roses, common milkwort and cowslips all grow here.
- 3 **Stocklycke harbour** was very important for forestry in Omberg until the 1950s. Timber from felling on the mountain was shipped from here to industries around Lake Vättern. Just south of the harbour, there is a visitor-friendly cave on the lake shore.
- 4 **Rödgväls grotto** is the largest of 15 caves on the steep banks of Lake Vättern. You can only reach the cave by boat.
- 5 **Bokskogen Nature Reserve** is an attractive beech and broad-leaved deciduous forest on the slopes leading down to Lake Vättern.
- 6 **Ellen Key's villa Strand** is located in an inviting spot by Lake Vättern, surrounded by beech forest. This is where the writer Ellen Key (1849-1926) lived towards the end of her life. The house was a meeting place for the best known artists and authors of the day.
- 7 **Sverkersgården** is a medieval site from the time of King Sverker and the powerful House of Sverker that ruled Sweden in the 12th century.
- 8 **The Alvastra Monastery** was founded by French Cistercian monks in 1143. Saint Birgitta experienced some of her most important visions here. The monastery fell into ruin as a result of the Reformation in the 16th century.
- 9 **Pålbyggnaden** is Sweden's only known pile dwelling from the late Stone Age and one of the oldest prehistoric sites in the country dating back to approximately 3100 BC. Today, nothing remains above ground but signs at the site describe how it looked.
- 10 **Hjässan and Hjässaborgen** are among the ecopark's most popular destinations. Hjässan, the highest point of the mountain, offers a magnificent view over Lakes Vättern and Tåkern and the Östgöta plain. Close to Hjässan are the remains of Hjässaborgen, the largest of Omberg's three ancient hill forts.
- 11 **Höje Lilläng** meadow contains Omberg's finest meadow flora. Sveaskog and the Östergötland County Administrative Board are recreating the ancient meadows through traditional hay making and grazing.
- 12 **Mörkahålkärret Nature Reserve** includes a limestone marsh with several different types of orchid such as the fly orchid and the common spotted orchid as well as many other plants that thrive on limestone.
- 13 **Oxbåset**, well worth a visit, is a steep slope that drops almost vertically down to Lake Vättern. It is possible to descend to the lake along a deep gorge. Limescale deposits create a mosaic-like pattern on the slope.
- 14 **Pers sten** is a large boulder at Sjövägen which according to legend was thrown there by the giant Per.

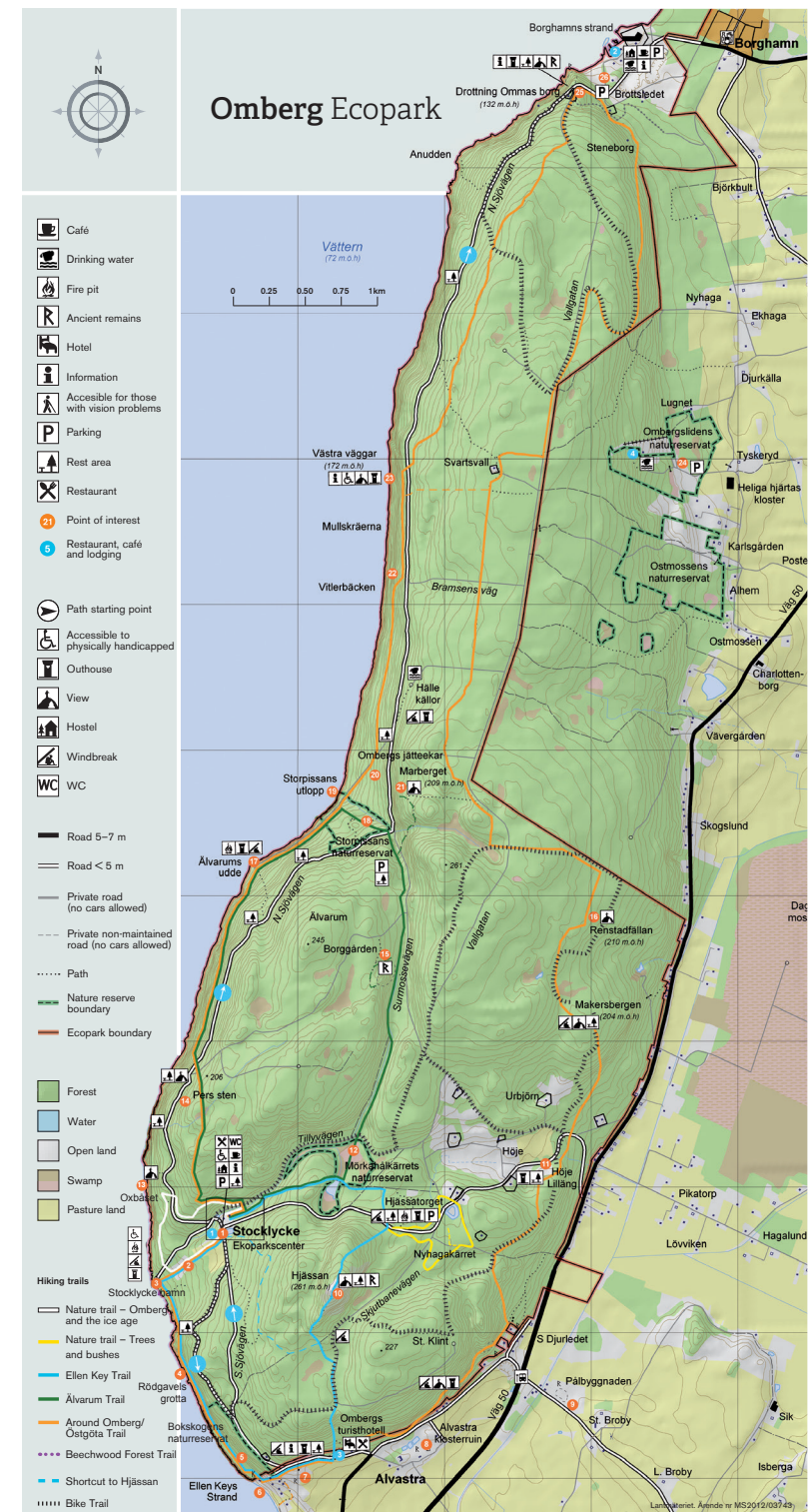
- 15 **Borggården** is the best preserved of the mountain's three ancient hill forts.
- 16 **Renstadsfällan** is a flowery natural pasture landscape where cowslips bloom in the summer.
- 17 **Älvarums udde** is an attractive place beside the lake with a barbecue site, wind shelter and opportunities for swimming and fishing.
- 18 **Storpissan Nature Reserve** is a rich spruce forest with big, ancient trees. The forest has many old windthrows and stumps at various stages of decomposition which benefits a large number of insects, lichens and birds.
- 19 **Storpissan's outflow** into Lake Vättern forms a powerful jet of water in the spring.
- 20 **Omberg's giant oaks** are found in a 16-hectare area. There are some forty centuries-old oaks here. Sveaskog is using clearance and grazing animals to create a grazing landscape just as it was more than 150 years ago. Many unusual wood insects are found in the area including the rare hermit beetle.
- 21 **Marberget** offers a beautiful view over the surrounding countryside.
- 22 **Vitlerbäcken** is a lime-rich stream where a lichen inventory has been carried out.
- 23 **Västra väggar** offers a fantastic view over Lake Vättern.
- 24 **Ombergsliden Nature Reserve** is home to some of Östergötland's foremost orchid marshes.
- 25 **Drottning Ommas fornborg** dates from the migration period in the 5th and 6th centuries.
- 26 **Bockakyrkogården cemetery** is a burial site for some 80 soldiers and prisoners who quarried rock for Karlsborg Fortress at the end of the 19th century.



Beechwood Trail ("Bokskogsstigen") ■

0.6 km  

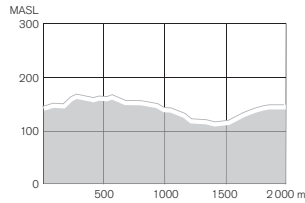
See the pillared hall of the beech wood outside the Omberg Ecopark Centre. This 650-m loop can easily accommodate wheelchairs, walking frames and prams. Visually impaired visitors can follow the path with the aid of a guide rope. There are two picnic places with tables along the path and benches on a bridge over the pretty stream. In the spring the birdsong in the forest is magnificent and wood anemones, lungwort and violas bloom. Keep a look out for the clearance cairns and the remains of ditches are passed on small "bridges".



Nature trail – Omberg and the Ice Age (“Naturstig – Omberg och istiden”)

2 km
Do you know what a glacio-fluvial channel, alluvial cone and a dead ice hole are?

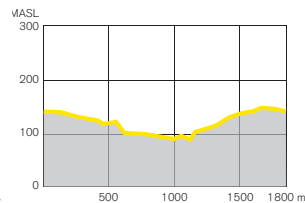
Signs at these unique finds tell the history of the Ice Age and its significance for the current landscape in Omberg. A side-path from the trail takes you out to Vätterbranten and the view at Oxbåset 13 and the former shoreline of the massive Baltic ice-locked lake.



Forest loop – Trees and bushes (“Skogsslingan – Träd och buskar”)

1.8 km
Along the trail you can see more than 40 different species of trees and bushes. Many of our native tree species thrive at Omberg and can be found here.

During the time of the forestry school many exotic tree species were introduced at Omberg. Today several of them are giant trees. The trail passes the old forestry school, the teacher’s house and the janitor’s house (now private homes). In the middle of the trail you can branch off and see Omberg’s, perhaps Sweden’s, highest fir.



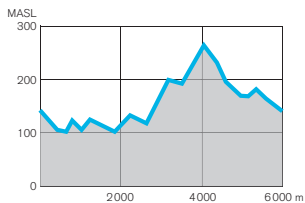
Ellen Key trail (“Ellen Keys led”)

6 km
This hike offers views for miles, forests that smell of wild garlic, scraggy shoreline forest and a meadow full of wild flowers.

The path goes down towards Vättern on the glacial ridge from the Stocklycke parking area. After 200 metres you reach a meadow 2 – one of the most species-rich and endangered habitats in Sweden.

From Stocklycke harbour 3 the path winds past the Rödgavel grotto 4 through a varied shoreline forest towards the Bokskogen Nature Reserve 5. Just south of the nature reserve, in 1910 Ellen Key built her tasteful home Strand 6 in the spirit of “a home for the soul”. Sverkersgården 7 just after Strand is an old crypt church. The path passes Omberg turisthotell 3 and then climbs steeply to Omberg’s highest point, Hjässan, where views of Östgötaslätten 10, Tåkern and Vättern await. Around Hjässan you will find the ruins of Hjässaborgen, the largest of Omberg’s ancient hill forts.

The pond in the Mörkahålkärret Nature Reserve 12 is home to toads, frogs and other water creatures. Keep an eye out for grass snakes hunting for frogs! The final leg of the trail goes through a beautiful beech wood.



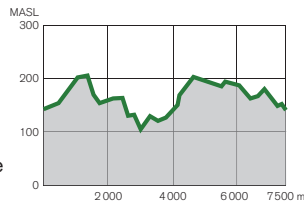
Älvarum Trail (“Älvarumsleden”)

7.5 km
On this hike you encounter the diversity of the steep slopes and the natural spruce forests, experience the drama of Lake Vättern and visit some fine viewpoints.

A few hundred metres from the start, the path enters a glaciofluvial channel – a remnant of the Ice Age. North of Pers sten 14 you follow a magical and very beautiful stretch down towards Älvarums udde 17. You can glimpse Vättern between the trees of the deciduous forest and stately spruces. At Älvarums udde you can go down to the pebble beach for a dip or catch a fish for dinner. Just north of Älvarums udde is the Storpissan Nature Reserve

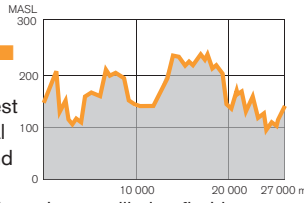
18. In the spring, the Storpissan stream, which runs along the northern boundary of the nature reserve, builds a powerful jet of water straight out into Lake Vättern 19.

Take a detour to the Marberget precipice 21 with its magnificent view over Vättern and the Omberg forests. The return trip passes Borggården 15, the best preserved of the mountain’s three ancient hill forts and the limestone marsh in the Mörkahålkärret Nature Reserve 12.



Round Omberg/Östgöta Trail (“Omberg runt/Östgötaleden”)

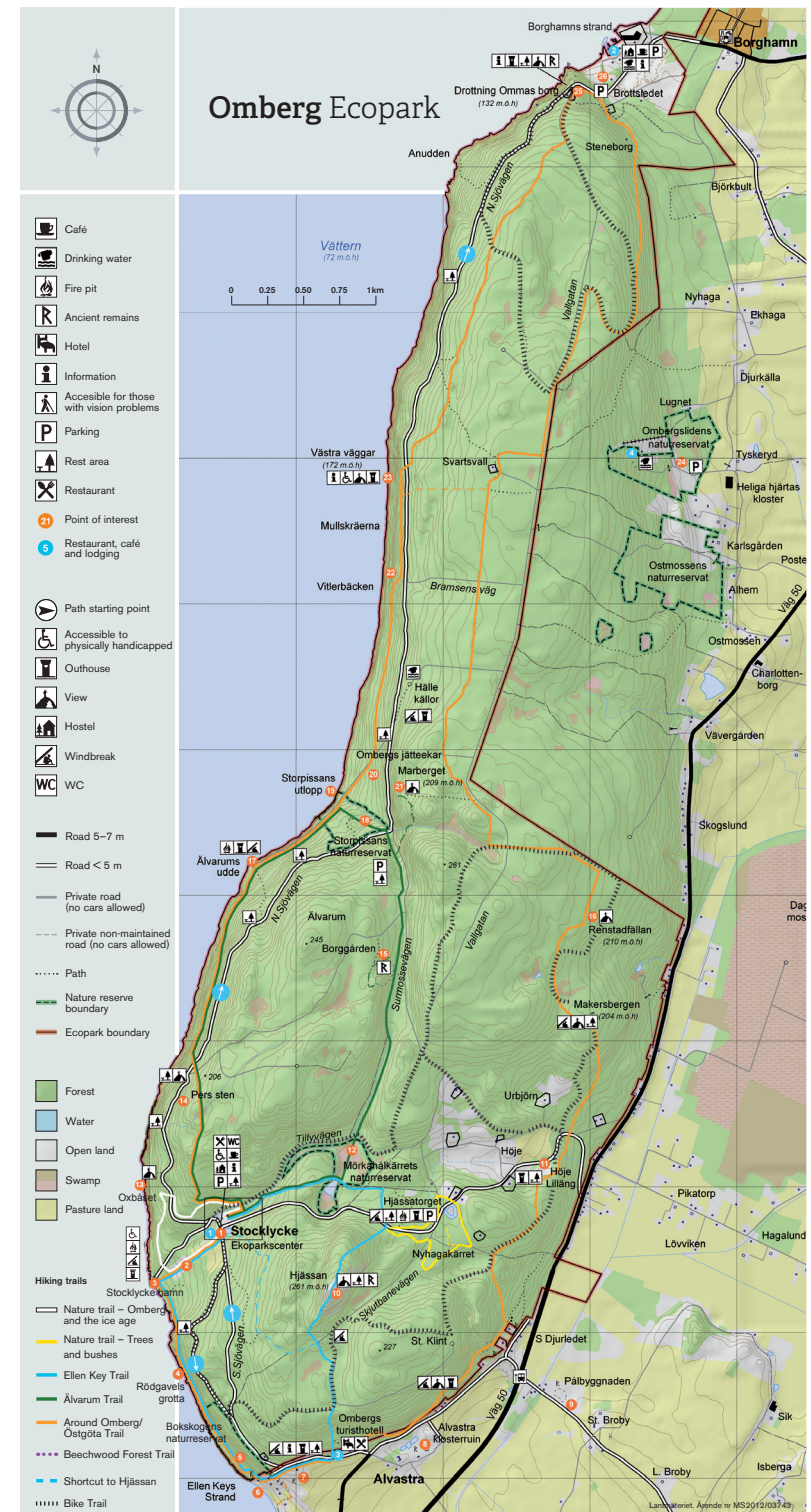
app. 26 km
This hiking path includes the very best of the mountain’s natural and cultural treasures. Västra väggar, Alvastra and Ellen Keys Strand are well known in Sweden and abroad, but along this path you will also find lesser known favourites, such as Bockakyrkogården and Renstadfällan. The path up to the Storpissan Nature Reserve 18 is described under “Älvarum trail”. North of the mouth of Storpissan 19 you will find an oak landscape 20 that is reminiscent of the time when the mountain was a royal hunting park. Livestock now graze here once more. The hike continues past the lime-rich Viterbäcken 22 towards the viewpoint Västra väggar



23. Here you can gaze down into the clear waters of Lake Vättern from a height of 100 metres. At Drottning Omma’s borg 25 you will find the ruined walls from a 1,500-year old castle. You will also get a view over the historical Borghamn with its limestone quarry, harbour and Bockakyrkogården 26.

Hiking along east Omberg you soon reach Östgötaslätten. You can make a detour to Ombergsliden’s Nature Reserve, home to some of Östergötland’s foremost orchid marshes. You will pass Renstadfällan’s 16 natural pastureland that is full of flowers and offers a view towards Tåkern and the plains. At Høje Lillång 11 you pass unique pasture and meadow environments. On the Omberg southern slopes you will meet extensive beech, ash and elm forests. Alvastra kloster 8 consists of the fine ruins of the medieval Cistercian monastery. The path from Omberg’s turisthotell and back to the Stocklycke starting point is described – in the opposite direction – under “Ellen Key Trail”.

Do take care, many trails close to the edge of Vättern go close to steep slopes and precipices.



GETTING TO OMBERG ECOPARK

By car

Omberg Ecopark is 8 km from Ödeshög on the E4. Follow the signs from road 50. The ecopark is less than one hour's drive from both Jönköping (80 km) and Linköping (70 km).



By train

Mjölby is the nearest railway station (45 km). See bus connections for onward transport.

By bus

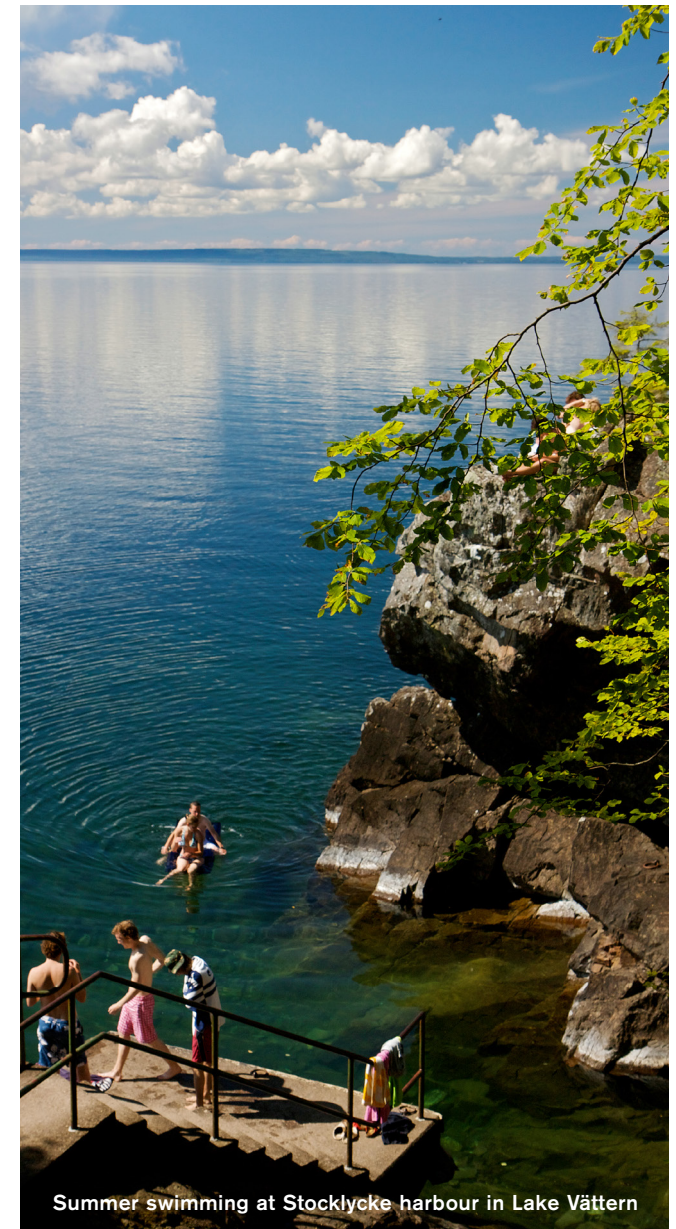
The bus between Ödeshög and Mjölby stops at the Alvastra crossroads (crossroads on road 50, just west of Pålbyggnaden). www.ostgotatrafiken.se



The Ecopark Centre in Stocklycke is a good starting point for discovering Omberg. Here you will find maps and information about the ecopark. The staff at the hostel are happy to answer questions and advise on sights and activities. Furthermore, most hiking trails start from the Ecopark Centre.

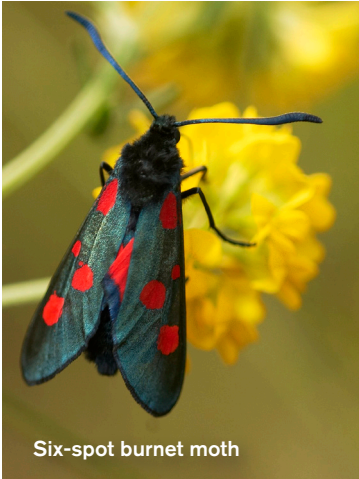
RESTAURANT, CAFÉ AND ACCOMMODATION

- 1 **Stocklycke vandrarhem – hostel**
Open from Easter to October, tel. +46 144 330 44
- 2 **Borghamn Strand**
Accommodation and conference centre, tel. +46 13 810 00
- 3 **Ombergs turisthotell – hotel**
Hotel and restaurant. Open all year round, +46 144 330 02
- 4 **Ombergsliden Mountain Lodge**
Accommodation for large and small groups, booked in advance.
+46 706 48 87 46



UPPLEV OMBERG

Upplev Omberg (Experience Omberg) is a cooperative of some twenty local companies which offer products related to nature, culture and health. These include kayak rentals, guided nature tours, accommodation, food, culture, art and handicrafts. Upplev Omberg has set up a 12-km cycling route connecting Omberg and Dags mosse. A map with the cycling route can be downloaded from their website www.upplevomberg.se



Six-spot burnet moth



Discover the ecopark from a kayak



Wild garlic



Chicken mushroom



Dragonfly

Right of public access – freedom with responsibility!

The right of public access is a privilege which allows us to move freely through forests and across land as long as we show respect for the plants and animals. The ground rule is don't disturb–don't destroy. The right of public access also applies in nature reserves but can be restricted by the regulations of a specific nature reserve. You can find out more information on the right of public access from the Swedish Environmental Protection Agency at www.allemansratten.se

Sveaskog

Sveaskog is Sweden's largest forest owner with sustainable development of forest as core business. This includes regeneration, wildlife management, and production of sawlogs, pulpwood and biofuel. Through land transactions, leasing and co-operation Sveaskog also develops the forest as a venue for nature-based experiences, hunting and fishing. Sveaskog is owned by the Swedish state.

Take care of yourself!

In the ecopark there are many steep slopes and precipices. Be alert when moving in the countryside.

Take care of nature!

No litter allowed! Throw away your rubbish in a designated place or take it with you when you leave Omberg.

För mer information:

www.sveaskog.se

Sveaskogs kundcenter 0771-787 100