

Right of public access – paddling





” *Don't disturb –
don't destroy* ”

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

This right applies both on land and water. You can go almost everywhere along our coasts and on our lakes and waterways, and you may swim along the shore.

So that everyone can enjoy the outdoors and damage to animals and nature is avoided, we need to take care. We can sum this up with the phrase "Don't disturb – don't destroy".



Observe wildlife without disturbing it

A black-throated diver with young. Osprey soaring high above the water. Perhaps a glimpse of a beaver. Wildlife adds extra spice to nature experiences. To avoid damaging wildlife and nature, it is good to keep some things in mind:

- Do not paddle close to birds or animals to photograph or approach them.
- Canoes move quietly, and it is easy to get too close to breeding birds on islands and along shores. Be especially careful during spring and summer when the birds are brooding or raising young. If the parents are scared from the nest or bird broods are scattered, the young can have a difficult time surviving.
- If birds or other wildlife appear nervous, you are too close. Black-throated divers that often breed on islands are especially vulnerable to disturbances. If they are swimming beyond the shore, they probably have nests nearby.

- Avoid taking a break or setting up camp near the nesting places of birds. Osprey often have a nest at the top of a pine tree by the shore or on some islet. If the bird hovers high in the air above the nest, you are too close.
- Do not crowd broods of birds in front of the canoe! Particularly in narrow waterways without protective shore vegetation, there is a great risk that the brood will scatter. Stop and allow the birds time to get away. If there are many in your group, it is best to gather the group together and pass the brood as quickly as possible.
- To inhibit spreading of the crayfish pest, it is important to allow the canoe and other gear to dry thoroughly before moving from one body of water to another.





Protected areas

Certain places with especially sensitive bird life are protected as bird sanctuaries. It is forbidden to go ashore there and to stay in the vicinity.

The right of public access may also be limited through special rules in other places, such as within protected shore areas or in national parks and nature reserves. In such areas it can be forbidden, for example, to build a fire or pitch a tent.

Leave campsites without a trace

It is delightful to go ashore and pitch a tent after a day of paddling.

Here are some things to keep in mind:

- It is preferable to spend the night in established campsites. There are fireplaces, dustbins

and earth closets there. Otherwise choose a place where you will not risk disturbing people who live in the vicinity.

- If you want to stay in a place for more than a 24-hour period, ask the landowner. Larger groups should always ask for permission.
- Leave the campsite without a trace. Take out all rubbish. Do not leave rubbish bags beside full dustbins. Otherwise wildlife can injure itself or scatter the rubbish.
- Use the campsite WCs. Otherwise dig a hole and cover it thoroughly. For this reason, you should take along a small spade in the canoe. Creatures such as badgers and magpies can drag around bathroom tissue, in which case the campsite can look messy even if it was fine when you left it.

Practice fire safety

The campfire adds an extra dimension to outdoor life, but it causes concern among many landowners. Much valuable forest goes up in flames every year due to carelessness with campfires.

Remember that:

- Fire bans are common during the summer. That is when the risk of forest fires is great, and at such times you may not build a fire, even in campsite fireplaces. At tourist offices and canoe rental outlets, you can find out if fire bans are in effect. Even if they are not, there can be a fire risk. Bring along a small field stove. You can always use that.
- If you still are going to start a fire, choose a good place with stony or gravelly ground without vegetation next to it. Make sure you have water to extinguish the fire. Look out for wind that can carry sparks over the forest. Allow the fire to burn itself out and carefully extinguish embers with water.
- Do not build a fire directly on rocks – they can break apart!



- Do not put foil packaging or other incombustibles in the fire that will remain as rubbish.
- Leave no traces of a fire in the form of a fireplace or such.
- You may pick up branches, twigs and cones from the ground to use as fuel, but you may not remove bark or in any other way damage growing trees.

Some things to keep in mind when you are ashore

- If you have to carry or pull a canoe between waterways, do not cross people's lots or fields.
- If you pass through gates, remember to close them after you.
- If you are going to use private roads to haul your canoe to the water, look to see if there are signs posted that forbid car traffic.
- If you wish to park your car or caravan overnight beside a private road, you must ask the landowner.

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/allemanratten

