



ØVRE PASVIK

VIRGIN FOREST IN THE BORDERLAND
BETWEEN EAST AND WEST





Virgin forest (EF)



THE BORDERLAND BETWEEN EAST AND WEST

Øvre Pasvik has the northernmost virgin forest in Norway, and the park is a patchwork of ancient woodland, bogs and lakes. The area occupies the north-western corner of the Siberian taiga. Easterly species are found here that occur nowhere else in the entire length of Norway. The ancient pinewood in Øvre Pasvik is home to species that depend upon such woodland, and there is also a strong population of brown bears.



Hiking (ETA)



ENJOY THE SCENERY

Silence in the wilderness

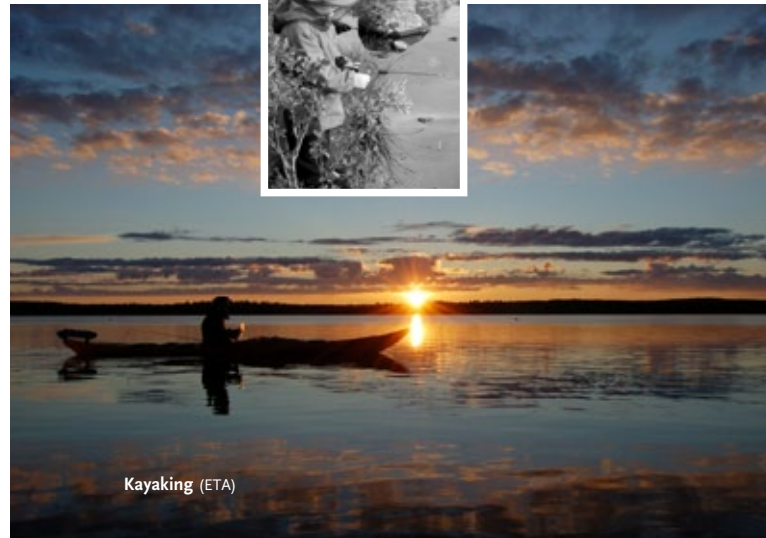
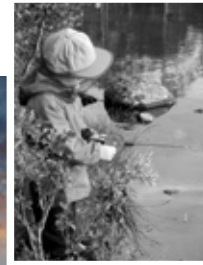
Øvre Pasvik offers fantastic wilderness experiences whether you are on foot, skiing or in a canoe. In the forest, you can revel in the intense stillness, just broken by an osprey or bird song. One of the gateways to the park is at Sortbrysttjern, a tarn beside which several open-air hearths have been provided. A marked path leading to Ellenkoia starts here and it continues to Piilolakoia on the Finnish border. Both these huts are unlocked all the year round. If you want to go further into the wilderness, you can follow the Piilola path further west to the Vätsäri Wilderness Area in Finland. The park is easy to hike in, but the flat terrain may make it difficult to find your way, so map and compass are often essential.

Border cairn

If you drive to Grensefoss, the waterfall at the southern end of the valley, you can take the path to the cairn (Treriksrøysa) that marks the point where the borders between Russia, Finland and Norway meet. The path is well made, but may occasionally have very wet parts. An alternative, if you want a real wilderness experience, is to walk to the cairn from Sortbrysttjern. You can start from the car park by taking the path towards Ellenkoia, or a canoe to the southern end of the lake, Ellenvann, before starting to walk.

With a canoe and a fishing rod

The network of big lakes makes canoeing and kayaking an excellent way of enjoying the national park. The many islands on Ellenvann offer good spots to spend the night, and mosquitoes are often significantly less dense than elsewhere. The good fishing is certainly to be recommended. Visitors who do not live in Finnmark must have a fishing licence. This can be bought at www.inatur.no, or locally, such as at the shop in Skogfoss.



Kayaking (ETA)



Virgin forest (MG)



Virgin forest and a lake (EF)



LANDSCAPE AND GEOLOGY

Shaped by the ice

The flat landscape in Øvre Pasvik was shaped by the Fennoscandian ice cap. Almost the entire park is blanketed by ground moraine left by the melting ice. Bedrock is visible in just a few places. It is largely composed of gneiss, which weathers to give nutrient-poor soil. The precipitous sides of Revsaksskardet are the only marked rock formation and were carved out by meltwater at the end of the last Ice Age. The ice left vast numbers of erratics in Øvre Pasvik, and in some places they can make it difficult to get around. Flat scree is another characteristic feature left by the ice. It was probably formed when water in rivers on the surface of the glacier poured down and washed away all the sand and gravel.

Wooded ridges, bogs and lakes

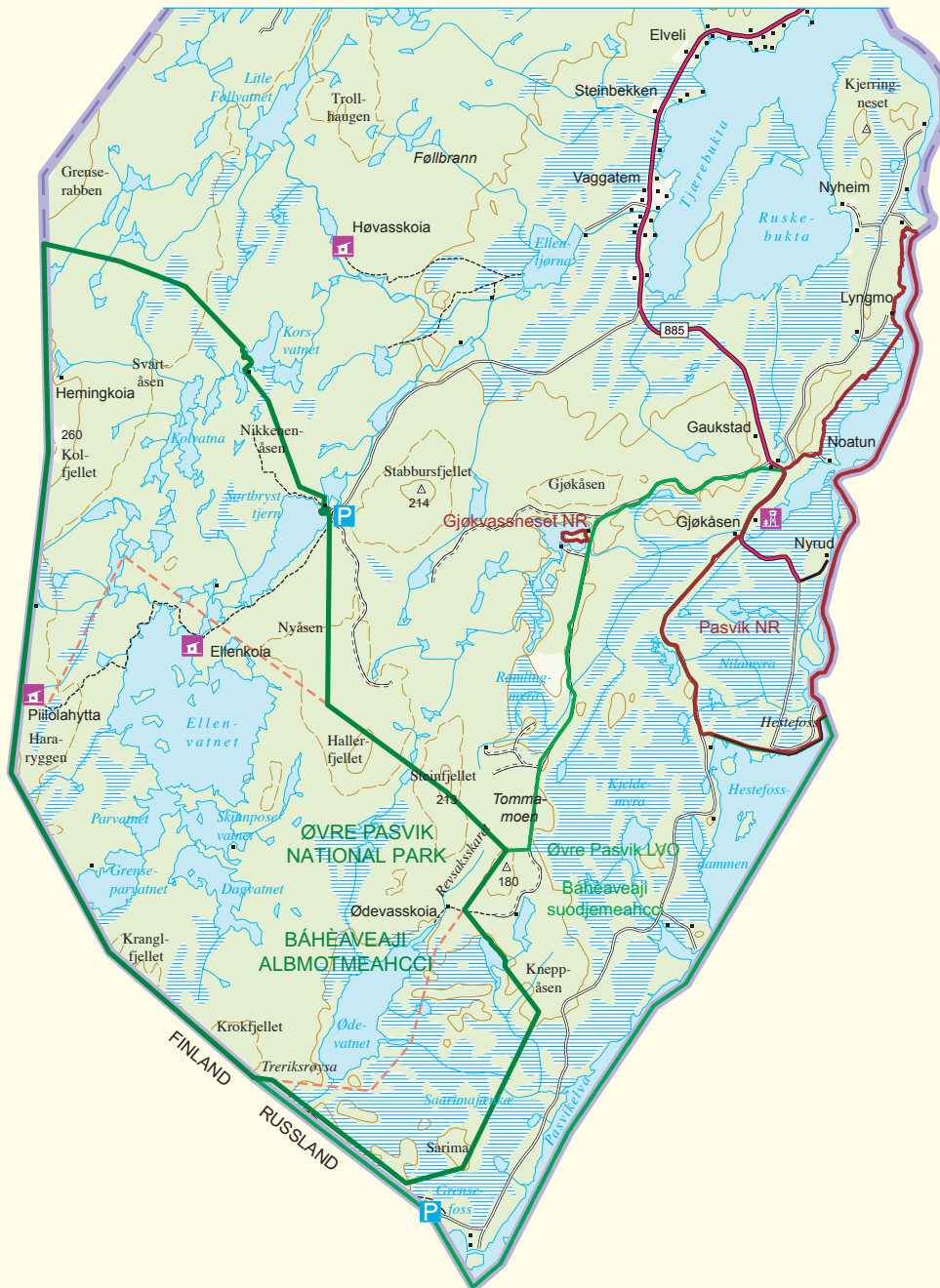
The landscape in Øvre Pasvik is dominated by wooded ridges and a myriad of bogs and lakes. During the last Ice Age, the ice remained stationary at Øvre Pasvik because of the flat landscape. Its lack of movement and power to excavate explains why nearly all the lakes in the park are very shallow and many small lakes are becoming overgrown and transformed into bog.

Legend

- National border
- National Park
- Protected Landscape Area
- Nature Reserve
- - - Area where hunting is banned
- P Car park
- B Bird-watching tower
- H Hut



0 km 1 2 3 4 5 km





Great grey owl (TK)



Smews (ETA)



BIRD LIFE

Øvre Pasvik has an abundance of rare birds which have drawn nature lovers here for more than a century. While rambling through the pristine forest there is a good chance you will see Siberian jays and Siberian tits, and with luck hear black-throated divers and whooper swans calling from tarns and lakes. An outstanding aspect of the bird life in Øvre Pasvik is the diversity of easterly species, including the handsome smew and the majestic great grey owl. Some of the birds that regular breed in the Øvre Pasvik National Park are:

Species with an easterly range

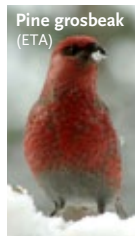
Bar-tailed godwit
Great grey owl
Pine grosbeak
Siberian jay
Siberian tit
Smew
Spotted redshank
Whooper swan

Other species

Black-throated diver
Black woodpecker
Bluethroat
Broad-billed sandpiper
Capercaillie
Crane
Hawk owl
Hazel hen
Jack snipe
Lesser spotted woodpecker
Osprey
Parrot crossbill
Red-throated diver
Red-necked phalarope
Three-toed woodpecker
Waxwing



Hawk owl chick (ETA)



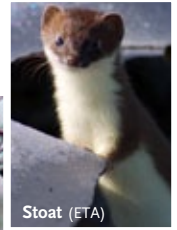
Pine grosbeak (ETA)



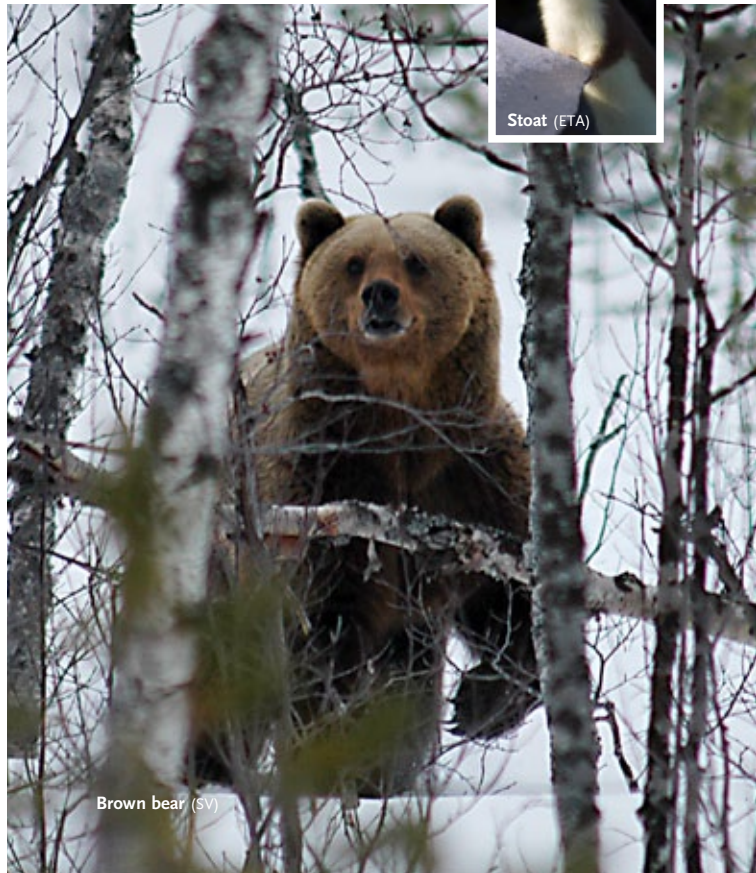
Red-throated diver (SW)

ANIMAL LIFE

Pasvik has a stable brown bear population, which is part of a common Russian-Finnish-Norwegian population. Breeding is recorded every year in Pasvik, and the bears thrive well in the park. Other predators like wolverines and wolves, as well as golden eagles, are regularly observed. The park also has one of the northernmost elk populations in the world, and some 2500 semi-domesticated reindeer graze in and around the park in winter.



Stoat (ETA)



Brown bear (SV)



Northern Labrador tea (MC)



Large collar-moss (ETA)



PLANT LIFE

The pine forest in the park has been able to develop without significant human disturbance. Thousands of years of autumn storms and forest fires have created varied woodland with trees that differ greatly in age. Many are several hundreds of years old. There are also many dead trees, which are very favourable for woodpeckers and wood-dwelling insects. Some deciduous trees occur here and there in the pinewood. Silver birch, for instance, has its northern limit in Pasvik. There are a few scattered Siberian spruces within and outside the park. Other easterly plants include arctic bramble, blunt-leaved sandwort, swamp willow, red cottongrass and Lapland buttercup. In July, the woodland floor is snow-white with sweet-scenting northern Labrador tea.



HISTORY AND CULTURAL HERITAGE RELICS

The meeting of folk groups

The oldest traces left by man in this area are about 10 000 years old. These Early Stone Age people were itinerant hunters, gatherers and fishermen with seasonal settlements.

The Eastern Sámi, the indigenous people in Pasvik in historical times, had their winter settlements in the southern part of the Pasvik valley. There has probably never been any permanent settlement in what is now the national park, but the excellent fishing and hunting has been much used. Even after the border was demarcated in 1826, the area was used by the Eastern Sámi, the Finnish colonists in Russia and the Enari Sámi from Finland. Information boards along the path from Sortbrystjern to Piilolakoia tell about several of the cultural heritage relics in the area.

Many names in the park relate to former commercial activities. Such names as Tørrfiskholmen (Dried Fish Islet) and Sauholmen (Sheep Islet) derive from the activities of those living at Piilola, the nearest farm in Finland.

Adjacent protected areas: Øvre Pasvik Protected Landscape Area, Pasvik Nature Reserve (RAMSAR), Pasvik Zapovednik (nature reserve in Russia) and Vätsäri Wilderness Area (Finland) border up to the Øvre Pasvik National Park. Together, they form the Pasvik-Inari Trilateral Park, which has a EUROPARK certificate. Pasvik also has two more nature reserves, Gjøkvassneset and Store Sametti-Skjelvatnet.



Cultural history trail (EF)



Dragonfly (ETA)

In a national park, you are one of Nature's guests

- Go wherever you want, on foot or on skis, but anything with an engine is basically banned.
- Stop wherever you want, and camp for the night if you wish, but tidy up and take your rubbish home.
- You may light a fire, but remember the general ban on fires in woodland between 15 April and 15 September. Show consideration when you gather firewood. Do not fell or damage dead pine trees.
- You may pick berries, mushrooms and common plants for your own use. Show consideration for cultural heritage sites, vegetation and animal life. Take extra care in the breeding season.
- Take the opportunity to hunt and fish, but hunting is forbidden in part of the park. Remember to buy hunting and fishing licences. Do not use live fish as bait. You must not take live fish from one river or lake to another.
- You may have a dog with you, but remember to keep it on a leash from 1 April to 20 August.

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Cover photo: Straumdalen (ETA)



Print: GRØSET™



Øvre Pasvik National Park in brief

Where:

The borough of Sør-Varanger in Finnmark.

How to reach the Øvre Pasvik National Park:

Leave E 6 at Hesseng, 5 km south of Kirkenes, and drive south on Rv 885 for 90 km along the Pasvik valley. 40 km up the road is Svanvik, where the Øvre Pasvik National Park Centre is situated. The park is signposted at Vaggetem, from where a 9 km long forestry track takes you to a car park at Sortbrystjern. Another possibility is to take Rv 885 to Gjøkåsen and continue on a forestry track southwards to a car park at Grensefoss. The snow is not cleared from either of these tracks in winter. Give yourself plenty of time as the state of the tracks varies.

Information on overnight accommodation and other services:

Øvre Pasvik National Park Centre, Bioforsk Svanhovd, phone +47 464 13 600, www.pasvik.no

Øvre Pasvik Café and Camp Site, phone +47 78 99 55 30, www.pasvik-cafe.no

Kirkenes Tourist Information Office, phone +47 78 99 25 44, www.kirkenesinfo.no

Tips:

Take a canoe, tent and fishing rod with you and spend the night on one of the many islands in Ellenvannet, or go to the southern end of the lake and spend a day hiking to the border cairn. Take the marked nature and cultural history trail from Sortbrystjern past Piilolakoia, and continue on the path into Finland.

Huts:

Ellenkoia, Høvasskoia and Piilolahytta. Enquire at the Norwegian Nature Inspectorate office in Kirkenes.

Maps: Norge 1:50 000: Krokfjellet 2333 II

Hiking map 1:100 000: Sør-Varanger-Pasvikdalen

Designated: 1970. Extended in 2003.

Area: 119 km²

Adjacent protected areas:

Øvre Pasvik Protected Landscape Area

Pasvik Nature Reserve (RAMSAR)

Pasvik Zapovednik (national nature reserve) (Russia)

Vätsäri Wilderness Area (Finland)

Management and supervision:

Local Board for Øvre Pasvik National Park

Norwegian Nature Inspectorate, Kirkenes, phone +47 78 99 00 44

More information:

www.norgesnasjonalparker.no

www.nasjonalparksenter.no

www.pasvik.no

www.pasvik-inari.net



Norwegian national parks are our common natural heritage

We set up national parks to safeguard large areas of countryside – from the seashore to the mountaintops. For Nature's own sake, ourselves and future generations. National parks boast magnificent scenery with varied animal and plant life, waterfalls, glaciers, lofty mountains, endless plateaus, deep forests and lush woodlands, and beautiful fjords and coasts.

You will also find cultural heritage remains showing how the areas were used in the past. The national parks offer a multitude of opportunities for thrilling encounters with natural history.

Make use of our magnificent nature – on its own terms. Welcome to Norwegian national parks!



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