



### Hermit beetles *Osmoderma eremita*

Hermit beetles grow to a length of 3 cm or so. They live in old hollow trees, preferring oak, though they can also be found in other broadleaf species, such as beech, ash and lime.

The female hermit beetles lay their eggs in the hollow tree, and their larvae inhabit the mulm. They subsist on the rotten wood inside the tree. The larvae normally remain for three years inside the tree before pupating. The adult beetles hatch out in July, and then live for 2-5 weeks. Hermit beetles are native to much of Europe, and, in Sweden they are found primarily in the south of the country. They are a rare species, for two main reasons. One is that their habitat is being destroyed and is vanishing. It takes 150 – 200 years for an oak to hollow out and develop sufficient mulm. Another contributory factor is their limited ability to spread. The adult insects probably don't travel more than a couple of hundred metres.

Their alternative name, Russian leather beetle, reflects the fact that the adult beetles smell like old leather.

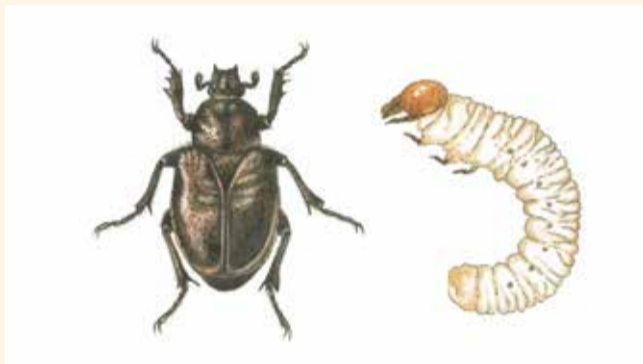


Illustration Kerstin Hagstrand-Velicu

## How to get to Torpanäset

Torpanäset is situated in the Municipality of Tranemo. Follow the signs for Torpa stenhus/Hofsnäs. The nature reserve is signposted from Dannike and from Route 27 through Långhem.



To ensure everyone's enjoyment and to preserve the local environment, the following are not permitted in the nature reserve:

- damaging living or dead trees, bushes or other vegetation
- collecting or picking plants or animals (but you are allowed to pick berries and edible mushrooms)
- disturbing wildlife
- pitching tents or caravans
- lighting fires other than in the places provided
- putting up signs, posters or similar items
- riding off the road
- driving vehicles off the road
- letting dogs off the lead
- allowing dogs to swim in the bathing areas between 1 May and 31 August

The nature reserve is managed by the City of Borås and Väst kuststiftelsen.

WEBSITES [boras.se/friluftsguiden](http://boras.se/friluftsguiden) och [vastkuststiftelsen.se](http://vastkuststiftelsen.se)

PHOTOS Dag Ekelund och Kjell Johansson

TEXT Kjell Johansson

MAPS GF Konsult AB/Göran Berg och City of Borås The Town Planning Department

GRAPHIC DESIGN Borås kommuntryckeri

PRINTING Responstryck AB, 2017



# Torpanäset



Every year, 30,000 visitors come here to enjoy the beautiful countryside and the historic setting. Walking, open-water swimming, fishing or going for a picnic – the choice is yours. Torpanäset hosts many events every year, and you are more than welcome to join us. The nature reserve even has a youth hostel and a restaurant. The Torpanäset Nature Reserve was created in 2002, and covers an area of 156 hectares.

### The purpose of the nature reserve

The aim is to conserve a valuable, traditional farming landscape. Pastures dotted with old oak trees offer a unique habitat, and this is the home of some rare creatures, such as the hermit beetle, very much an endangered species. To create optimum conditions for its survival and that of other species, one of the goals has been to create "eternity trees".

### Background

The area is extremely valuable. It is classed as a site of national interest for nature conservation, open-air recreation and for the preservation of a traditional farming landscape. The reserve is part of a Natura 2000 area.

### Geology

At the north-west end of Torpanäset stands a ridge made from calcareous glacial till. This ridge is part of the "Ulricehamn Ridge". It is a far more fertile habitat than the surrounding moraine.

### History

There is a wealth of ancient remains in the area. Some examples are marked on the map. There are tracts of ancient farmland, including clearance cairns

from the early Bronze Age and late Iron Age. The land which makes up the nature reserve belongs to the Mediaeval Torpa stenhus and Hofsnäs Manor. There are many old maps of the area. The landscape has remained untouched for hundreds of years.

- 1 Torpa stenhus is a stone-built manor house built in the 15th Century.
- 2 Many of the large blocks of stone which rise slightly above the surrounding terrain feature a type of rock carving known as cup marks or "älvkvarnar" (fairy mills). The best example of this can be found on a large block of stone split into several pieces. The cup marks are clearly visible on top of the block. There are 80 cup marks and at least five footprints.
- 3 Hofsnäs Manor has been known since the 16th Century. The current building dates from 1923, while the oldest house "Gammalgården" dates from the 17th Century.
- 4 The foundations probably date from the 13th Century.
- 5 The burial ground features at least 45 individual graves from the Bronze and Iron Age (1800 BC – 1050 AD)
- 6 The Oxaban walking trail follows the line of the old horse/ox-drawn railway between Lake Yttre Åsunden and Limmared, which was used to carry goods between the Limmareds glassworks and Ulricehamn. Goods were transported by boat across Lake Åsunden, and the railway operated between 1880 and 1902. The railway was not strong enough to take an engine, so the wagons were pulled by oxen and horses.

### Plants

The area is characterised by broadleaf deciduous forest, with oak as the preeminent species. The conifers planted in modern times will gradually be replaced by broadleaf trees. Parts of the pastureland are grazed, and other species thrive there. Wood anemones dominate in the spring, but if you look a little more closely you will see lily of the valley, liverwort and yellow anemone.

Common milkwort and the lesser butterfly orchid also grown in the reserve. As massive broadleaf trees have flourished here for a very long time, it is not surprising that many different species of fungi, mosses and lichens are present. Spike lichen and other lichens, including *Schimatomma pericleum*, *Calocoplaca lucifuga* and *Bactrospora corticola*, thrive on the large sunlit oaks.

### Wildlife

Many of the old deciduous trees in the reserve are hollow, as the wood is broken down by invading fungi. They provide a unique habitat that is rare in the modern landscape. The inside of the hollow trees contains mulm, which looks like a mixture of sawdust and earth, and consists of the partially degraded wood, animal droppings and the remains of dead animals. Many animals that are rare today need this type of habitat. The hermit beetle is the most widely known of these species.

### Recreation

If you are attracted by beautiful countryside and historic locations, Torpanäset is irresistible. There are waymarked tracks which present little difficulty to the walker. Take advantage of our barbecue facilities or enjoy an al fresco picnic. Have a swim or rent a boat and buy a fishing permit.

### Management

Maintaining this historic landscape requires a lot of work. The pasture and animals must be carefully tended. The tree cover must not be allowed to become too dense, so thinning is required. It is also essential to ensure that new generations of oaks are raised over time, so that they can take over when the old trees die.



# Welcome to Torpanäset

