

## 13. Hovaskog

**The Hovaskog village in the parish of Ölmstad is in a beautiful biological small-scale agricultural landscape, the ecological value of which was largely created by farming.**

Hovaskog is at the top of the Östra Vätterbranten slope and its conservation value is primarily connected with the mosaic-type landscape. Here is a diversity of biotypes and trees of conservation value, including long stretches of deciduous forest edge, woodland dominated by ash, lopped trees old and new and solitary deciduous trees. In the area is, for example, an enormous lime tree with indicator species such as pendulous wing-moss and *Homalothecium sericeum*.

The area is characterised by traces of the former agricultural landscape through the occurrence of lopped trees, stone walls and field plots. Here are several species of lichen and moss, flora which have benefited from traditional cultivation, and an interesting

insect fauna. Other groups of species are bats, birds and land snails.

There are solitary trees and groves, lime and elm on the steep slope and at the areas of flat rock. Here are some 50 lopping trees, primarily ash and lime. On their bark one can find red-listed lichens such as elm gyalecta, dotted lichen and *Sclerophora* lichens.

The occurrence of old lopping trees and the fine lichen flora indicate a long continuity of trees within fenced fields, meadows and gardens of bygone years. Combining tree cutting with collection of leaves and twigs was practised in the village until the mid 20th century by felling entire trees, ash and birch, at the root. The proportion of leaves taken from lopped trees was probably greater in former times (before 1850)

because the collection of leaves and twigs was then of greater importance for provisioning livestock and there was a shortage of deciduous trees. The time for “breaking leaves” or “felling ash” which are the local expressions, are during July, August and September.

Brooks and springs and the influence of lime give a special character to the flora. In damp places are coral-root bittercress, spring vetchling and remote sedge. Livid entoloma is also said to be present. There is dead wood everywhere.

The bush canopy is extensive and forms valuable edges. Where the pressure of pasture is low, the tree canopy is dense. Among hay and pasture plants in the more open areas are species such as burnet saxifrage, quaking



#### WORTH KNOWING

Hovaskog is a core area of the Biosphere Reserve East Vättern Scarp Landscape for lopped trees. Part of Hovaskog has biotope protection, the remainder has nature conservation agreements.

**HOW TO GET THERE:** Turn off from the E4 road at Vättersmålen towards Ölmstad and take the second road on the left at the sign Öland and Wettershus. After about 3 km you reach Hovaskog with its open fields, pasture, wetland and woodland.

**PARKING:** There is no car park.

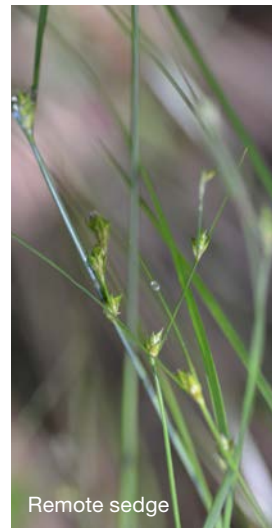
**DIFFICULTY:** ● Easy

grass, common milkwort, oxeye daisy, pyramidal bugle, *Hypochoeris maculata*, viper's-grass, speedwell, maiden pink and saw-wort.

In the west, between Hovaskog and Gunneryd is a woodland brook in a rift valley with deciduous woodland; the slopes are often damp and wet. The tree canopy is dominated by ash. High, level humidity allows a moss flora including lanky moss, rustwort, flat neckera and old wood rimmed lichen.



Dogrose



Remote sedge



Pyramidal bugle