



# Vejlerne



Aerial photo of the eastern part of Vejlerne, as seen from the Limfjord.



Photos: Jan Skriver, White-tailed eagle: Frank Wille / Published June 2018

The foundation's objective is to preserve and develop Vejlerne as a nature area. Vejlerne is a Natura 2000 area. Vulnerable natural habitats, as well as rare plant and animal species, must be given optimum protection and care. In 1960, Vejlerne was designated as a scientific reserve by the Danish government. Aage V. Jensen Naturfond is collaborating with the public authorities to establish improved water quality and optimum water levels, which are required for a richer and more natural flora and fauna in Vejlerne's wetlands. Nutrients from expansive fields and watercourses around Vejlerne are channeled into many of the large lakes, which can impede the well-being of plants and animals.

### A foundation for Denmark's nature

Aage V. Jensen Naturfond is dedicated to supporting nature conservation and wildlife protection. The foundation provides support to many nature projects in Denmark, particularly those involving dissemination of knowledge, and has purchased a number of Denmark's most important natural areas.

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[www.avjf.dk](http://www.avjf.dk)  
Read more about Vejlerne and the foundation's numerous other nature projects at [avjf.dk](http://avjf.dk).

## AAGE V. JENSEN NATURFOND





Bygholmskjulet



The walk to Østerildtårnet



Avocet



Pied avocet



Kraptårnet

**Vejlerne is Denmark's largest scientific reserve, measuring approximately 5,600 hectares and home to Scandinavia's largest reed bed and Denmark's largest grazing meadows.**

### Rare bird species

The name "Vejlerne" means "the fords". Until 130 years ago, Vejlerne was two shallow inlets stretching from the Limfjord to the north. Today, following the damming of the area, Vejlerne remains two separate areas, eastern and western Vejlerne, separated by the original peninsula of Hannæs.

A dense reed bed measuring nearly 2,000 hectares covers more than a third of Vejlerne. This reed bed is a habitat for rare bird species such as Eurasian bitterns, western marsh harrier, spotted crane, crane and bearded reedling. The

### Visiting Vejlerne

Vejlerne's rich birdlife can be experienced from a Nature Centre and Widgeons, teals and mallards are particularly common. Using the large telescope in the hut, visitors can often view from 7 lookout towers and bird watching huts. Each site offers extensive information about the many bird species. The area can also be seen from public roads, cycle paths and 15 vantage points. No other forms of public access have been permitted since 1960, in accordance with an executive order by the Prime Minister's Office. These limitations aim to protect the unique diversity of birds.

The seven lookout towers and huts offer distinctive nature experiences:

season, visitors can experience diving ducks such as common goldeneye and large common merganser, as well as coots, whooper swans and mute swans on the open waters of Han Vejle.

From **Kærup Holmeskjulet**, summer visitors can experience Eurasian bitterns, particularly between March and June, as well as many western marsh harriers in the skies. This site is especially known for its colony of black terns. Great egrets are regularly seen in late summer and early autumn. Many different duck species inhabit the shallow Kogleakssø during the winter season.

In the **Tømmerby Fjordtårnet** lookout tower, summer guests can see and hear Eurasian bitterns, as well as western marsh harriers in the skies.



White-tailed eagle



Dunlin



Otter

For many years, oystercatchers have used the low-lying nest platform in the reed bed as a nesting place. Red-necked grebes, coots and mallards are often seen in the reed bed's open waters. During the winter season, only a few birds are seen in this corner of Vejlerne.

From **Arup Vejleskjulet**, visitors have a good opportunity to view the meadows on the eastern side of Arup Vejle. There is also a good view of the bird island Melsig in the middle of Arup Vejle, where spoonbills frequently breed. Great cormorants are often the most visible birds flying in the sky, but summer visitors can also see breeding waterfowl, such as lapwings and snipes, in the narrow meadows. During the winter season, geese, dabbling ducks and diving ducks often rest on the water and adjacent meadows and islets. Early in the winter season, thousands of golden plovers can be seen on their way from the high Scandinavian fells.

**Østerildtårnet** lookout tower is the newest lookout tower in Vejlerne, located at the foot of Tømmerby Brook, with a view over Østerild Bay and Arup Vejle. The tower is accessible by foot or cycle. The tower is approximately 1.5 km from the car park. Spoonbills are common during the summer season. During the spring and autumn, the partially flooded meadows are a gathering place for large flocks of barnacle geese. There are also excellent opportunities to view white-tailed eagles all year round.

### One of northern Europe's most important areas for breeding waterfowl

At the request of the Danish Ornithological Association and Northern Jutland and Viborg Counties, Aage V. Jensen Naturfond purchased the Vejlerne nature reserve in 1993, which covers approximately 5,600 hectares by the Limfjord, between Thisted and Fjerritlev. Since then, improvements to the area have made it one of Northern Europe's most important habitats for breeding waterfowl. More than 300 bird species have been recorded in Vejlerne and around 130 species have been recorded as breeding.

salt meadows and freshwater meadows are also home to an interesting array of flora and fauna. Here you may see breeding ruffs, pied avocets, dunlins, black-tailed godwits, redshanks and Arctic terns. Other interesting breeding birds include red-necked grebes, gadwalls, garganeys, little gulls and black terns.

### The crane and greylag goose are also eye-catching

The wide range of migrating and wintering birds contribute to the ever-changing nature experiences. There are dabbling ducks, diving ducks, geese, swans, waders and various birds of prey.

The crane is an eye-catching bird in Vejlerne. The reserve is home to Denmark's largest breeding population, with an estimated 10 to 15 pairs. From August, visitors can often see more than 100 cranes flying to and from their overnight resting places in Bygholm and the eastern part of Vejlerne. The crane populations peak in October, prior to their usual migration towards southern Europe in November.

The greylag goose is also prominent in Vejlerne. With about 1,500 breeding pairs, Vejlerne is the Danish "capital" for greylag geese. Otters are much less visible in the landscape. Vejlerne is believed to be the home of Denmark's largest otter population.

**Bygholmskjulet** by the Nature Centre provides a view of the southeastern part of Bygholmengen and the shallow Midtsø, which is a brackish lake. Roosting ducks and waders can be observed here during the summer season. The population of dabbling ducks peaks in the winter season.

During the summer season, **Han Vejleskjulet** offers visitors the opportunity to walk through a reed bed along a footbridge and take a close look at reeds, water-plantain, skirret, bulrush and other marsh plants. In high summer and in autumn, starlings can darken the evening sky, causing a "black sun", before they go to rest in the reed beds.

This footbridge is one of the best places in Denmark to see bearded reedlings – often at close range. During the winter



Family trip to Han Vejleskjulet