

The Great Reserve of “Mire of Astray”

Contributed by Administrator

Here in the heart of Southern Lapland are the Great reserve of “Mire of Astray”. The famous Swedish botanist Carl von Linné manage to go astray here in the beginning of june 1732 on his way through Lapland. His bad and inattentive guide led him wrong way out on the mire and he had to turn back and leave his business undone. Because of his privation on the mire he wrote in his diary. “The priest can never describe hell as bad as it is here”.

The soothing and paradisiac Juktan river make the northeast border of the reserve. The river flows and murmurs through a wild and untamed but beautiful landscape. Sometimes woods sometimes mire surrounds the easter parts of Juktan river.

Juktan river which starts it’s way in the reserve of the Vindel mountain, creates, on it’s way down to Ume river, beautiful formations in ice and snow.

The Great reserve of “Mire of Astray” was formed as a domain reserve in 1960 and was transformed into a nature reserve 1997. Because of the inaccessibility of the area, the nature has been able to act freely during many years.

Many pine trees carry marks from fire from more than 150 years ago. Here the trees are aloud to live and die as a part of the ecosystem. To the left a birch which has finally give up of age or illness and left space for a younger offspring to the right.

The aspen is a species which haven't been treated merciful by the modern wood industry. They had to leave room for pine and spruce and therefore are very rare in the swedish landscape, but for those who apreciate biological multiplicity they are joy for the eye when you find them.

Here the aspen has been aloud to coexist side by side with pine and spruce. On the picture a pine branch which have hooked in a dead aspen branch. The tree, aspen, is very popular among birds which like to have their nests in holes like woodpeckers.

Not only birds likes the aspen. The polypore which mostly are found in trees has grown out under a branch.

Far away from all industries and contaminations grows these lichens. This type grows only where the air is completely pure. If you want to find more pure air then here, you're going to have to search. The lichen doesn't have any roots and cling to the branch with help of small threads, which are called rhizines.

Lichens are a symbiosis between an alga and a fungus. The alga produces the carbohydrates and the fungus provide for the take up of water and minerals. Probably the leaf gives a little contribution of minerals.

These type of lichenes are found in many colours. Mostly in tones of brown and green, from dark to bright, but rust-red tones also occure. Several of different species can grow together and form a palette of different colours.

Here the trees are only bending under the force of the nature. On the picture a birch which has been pressed down under the weight of the snow.

The muscle power the only aloud engine here in the reserve. Skiis are excellent means of conveyance. Just make sure that you don't pass an ice bridge without a professional guide, for example a Mountain Leader, who can decide the strength of the ice. Without a guide you may end up on thin ice.

The guide takes a look out over the Juktan river. On the other side are the Great reserve of "Mire of Astray". We leave the reserve for this time and look forward to come back another time. The reserve have many secrets to show the visitors who knows the art of "not going astray".

Text and photo Josef Arnfjell / Mountain Leader