



HALLINGSKARVET

ENORMOUS AND BEAUTIFUL





Strandavatnet (MOF)

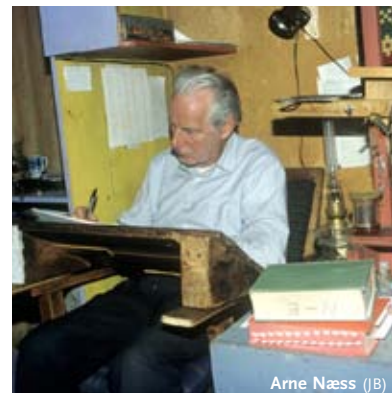
A man who used to farm in Raggsteindalen, but emigrated to America in 1889, wrote when he was homesick in 1921:

"Up there, I dreamt between scree and ice of a wonderful natural paradise. In Strandavatn, the monster entwined itself round Lambeholmen and the siren sunbathed and gazed at her reflection in the crystal-clear lake. Elves danced at Raggsteindøla, Ynglesdøla and Faugelidøla.

Thousand-year-old giants stood clothed in diamonds. If you've had gold fever and not found gold, go up to Hallingskarvet and enjoy the fantastic view, drink the pearl-clear water and breath in deep draughts of the mountain air, and I'm sure you'll feel rich."

(Ola Tolleivson Raggsteindalen)

Norway's famous philosopher and climber, Arne Næss, built a hut, Tvergastein (crossing the stones), 1500 m a.s.l., below the summit plateau in the southern part of Hallingskarvet. He built it in 1937 and it was his favourite retreat. In 1995, he wrote a book about Hallingskarvet entitled "Det gode lange livs far" (The father of a good long life).



Arne Næss (JB)



Folardskardet (MOF)



Skarverennet - a cross-country skiing race (JB)



ENJOY THE SCENERY

Outdoor recreation

The national park offers many splendid opportunities for walking and skiing. The terrain is varied. In the south, gentle slopes take you to the high plateau that is Hallingskarvet itself. Its close proximity for people living or holidaying in Myrland, Sudndalen, Hovet, Geilo, Ustaoset, Haugastøl and Finse, and the extensive network of paths and ski tracks, bring many visitors to the national park on day trips and for hikes or ski trips lasting several days. Taking the track from Finse via Geitrygghytta to Raggsteindalen and back to Finse is an unforgettable experience. The route from Prestholtsætra up to Prestholtskarvet is popular for those seeking the highest peaks. Ustaoset and Haugastøl are suitable starting points for families with children. The view from Folarskardnuten, the highest peak on Hallingskarvet, is breathtaking, offering a panorama over Skarvet and from Gaustadtoppen in the south to the Jotunheimen massif in the north.

Most lakes and rivers have good stocks of trout, and there are plenty of places to buy fishing permits. You can also hunt ptarmigan, willow grouse, hares and wild reindeer.

A number of long ski races and hikes are arranged in the park and surrounding area every year. Skarverennet is a long trek that attracts some 10 000 skiers to ski from Finse through Lengjedalen to Ustaoset on the last Saturday in April. Recently, it has been possible to choose a shorter route starting at Haugastøl. The Lord's March is a hike that follows a Norwegian Trekking Association path from Vestre Raggsteindalen to Haugastøl, and Fjellkallrennet is a race on ordinary tracks in the Sudndal area.

The Navy Trail is just beyond the national park boundary and is an old track made for access when the Bergen-Oslo railway was being built more than 100 years ago. It goes from Haugastøl via Finse to Myrdal, and is very popular with cyclists. Some 30 000 make the trip every year.



Hallingskarvet seen from the south (JB)



GEOLOGY AND LANDSCAPE

Hallingskarvet dominates the national park. The plateau stands just over 1800 m a.s.l., and several peaks rise above it. Folarskardnuten (1933 m a.s.l.) is the highest, and others include Storeskuta (1870 m a.s.l.) and Prestholtskarvet (1859 m a.s.l.).

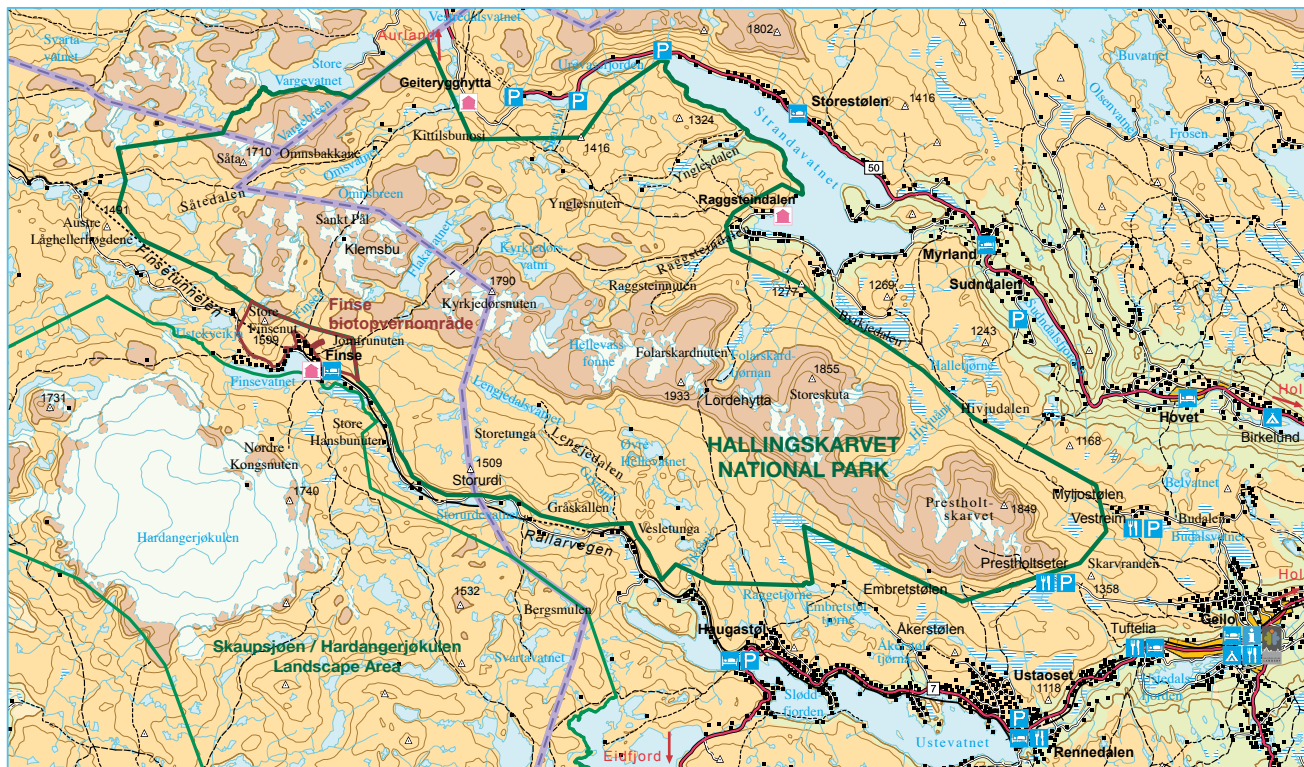
The Hallingskarvet plateau is a result of geological processes that have been going on for more than 1.5 billion years. The geological evolution has taken place in three stages. First, the basement rocks were formed more than 1 billion years ago, and these were eroded down to a flat landscape some 540 million years ago. The area was then covered by an ocean which deposited marine clay, sand and carbonates. The Caledonian orogeny followed some 400 million years ago, folding and recrystallising the rocks, and emplacing huge thrust sheets of gneiss. Subsequent erosion has given Hallingskarvet its present characteristic landscape features. Skarv means "naked mountain".

The most characteristic landscape feature on the south side of Hallingskarvet is the steep cliffs that plunge 400-500 metres down from the plateau. Towards the east and west, the gneissic sheets have been eroded and the landscape is flatter.












On the north side, several corries have been gouged out by glaciers, which almost succeeded in carving their way right through Hallingskarvet at Storekvelve, Folarskardet, Ljøtebotn and Kyrkjedøri, and managed it at Flakavatn.

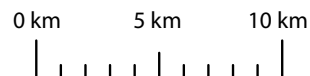
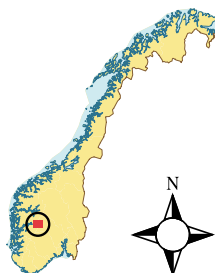
Remains of old shacks overlooking Skarvet (JB)





Legend

-  County boundary
-  National Park
-  Protected Landscape Area
-  Protected Biotope Area
-  Parking
-  Overnight accommodation
-  Cafe / restaurant
-  Camping
-  Information
-  Staffed lodge
-  National Park Village





Alpine gentian (JB)

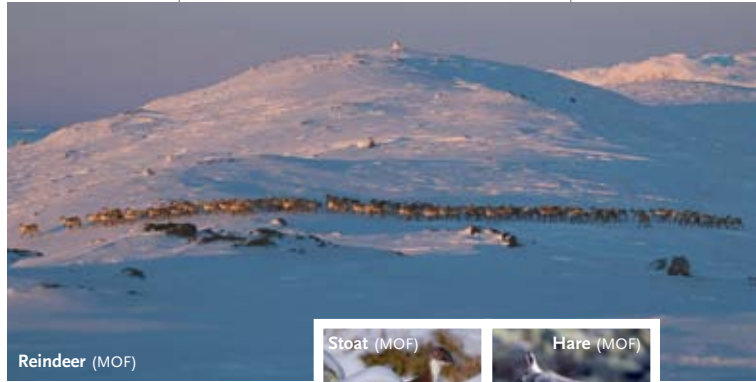


Mountain avens (JB)



PLANT LIFE

The occurrence of plants varies with the geological and climatic conditions. Conditions on the plateau are so extreme that few species can survive. Block fields and bare rock give only scarce pockets of soil for hardy plants like arctic buttercups. In other places, as in the east on Skarveranden, the climate is more amenable, and phyllite and limestone produce better soils, enabling a rich alpine flora to thrive, including small-white orchid, alpine gentian, field gentian and alpine speedwell. The same conditions occur on the steep escarpment further west, and from the north up towards Folarskardet and the Lord's Hut, the vegetation is very rich, featuring lime-demanding species like crimson-tipped lousewort, alpine rock-cress, alpine catchfly and tufted saxifrage. As many as 134 species have been found in Lengjedalen, and a number of these are demanding alpine plants. The Finse district is especially well investigated and 309 species have been recorded there.



Reindeer (MOF)



Stoat (MOF)



Hare (MOF)



ANIMAL LIFE

Hallingskarvet is part of the home range of the Nordfjella wild reindeer herd. These reindeer once had natural contact with the Hardangervidda plateau, but the construction of the Oslo-Bergen railway reduced this contact. The reindeer now graze north and south of the actual Hallingskarvet plateau. Calving used to take place in parts of the national park, but the reindeer now calve further west and in the Aurland district.

Wolverines are established north of the national park and are becoming increasingly active within the park, too.

The steep cliffs and hillsides offer favourable habitats for a number of breeding birds, including golden eagles and gyrfalcons. Several rivers and bogs inside the park, such as in the valleys of Lengjedalen and Folarskardet, offer valuable haunts for wetland birds, including Temminck's stint, purple sandpiper, dunlin and wood sandpiper.

Hallingskarvet is one of the few places in southern Norway where arctic foxes may be seen. Other common species are ptarmigan, willow grouse, hares, red foxes, elk and red deer.

HISTORY

Former and present uses of the mountains

Pitfalls, bowmen's hides and Stone Age habitation sites show that the area has long been used for hunting and fishing. People lived in the valleys of Ynglesdalen and Raggsteindalen in the 18th and 19th centuries.

In the 17th-19th centuries, cattle were sold on a large scale from western Norway to south-eastern Norway. In early summer, large numbers were taken into the mountains to graze before being driven in late summer to markets in south-eastern Norway, such as at Kongsberg and Drammen. There are many remains of simple shelters connected with this activity. These old drove roads over the mountains were widely used as trade links between Aurland and south-eastern Norway. There were drove roads on either side of Hallingskarvet. Markets were held in several places and attracted merchants from Hardanger and elsewhere in western Norway.



Lengjedalen (JB)



Lord's Hut in Folarskardet (HB)

Foreign tourists began visiting the Norwegian mountains from the mid-19th century. It was mostly Englishmen who came to hunt and fish in Hol. The first Lord Garvagh, an Anglo-Irish Member of Parliament, hunted on Holsfjella for several years in succession and built several huts there. His son followed in his footsteps, and built what became known as the "Lord's Hut" in Folarskardet around 1880. It has now been restored and is used for shelter and emergency overnight accommodation.

The University of Oslo has a research station at Finse, and the surrounding area is widely used for teaching and research in alpine ecology.

Finse Biotope Protected Area

The Finse Biotope Protected Area, 6.7 km², was set up at the same time as the Hallingskarvet National Park. It is entirely on state-owned land close to Finse. The area is important for protecting land that could not be part of the park due to a power line.



Burnet moth (MOF)

You are Nature's guest in a national park

- You may go wherever you like on foot or skis, but remember that anything motorised is basically forbidden.
- Stop wherever you wish and you are welcome to camp, 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. Do not collect firewood indiscriminately.
- You may pick berries, edible fungi and common plants for your own use. Take care not to damage cultural heritage remains, vegetation and animal life; please take special care in the nesting and breeding seasons. Do not approach or pursue the reindeers, if you are so fortunate to spot some.
- Take advantage of the opportunities for hunting and fishing. Remember to purchase hunting and fishing licences. Do not use live fish as bait, nor take live fish from one river to another.
- You may bring a dog, but remember to keep it on a lead from 1 April to 20 August.

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Front cover photograph: Hallingskarvet (JB)



Print: GRØSET™



Hallingskarvet National Park in brief

Where

The borough of Hol in the county of Buskerud
Ulvik rural district in the county of Hordaland
The borough of Aurland in the county of Sogn & Fjordane

How to reach the Hallingskarvet National Park

Cycle along the Rallarvegen (Navy Trail) from Haugastøl to Finse.
Train to Finse, Haugastøl, Ustaoset, Hallingskeid or Geilo.
By road along Rv. 7 or Rv. 50.

Information on overnight accommodation and other services

Each local authority has a tourist information office:
Geilo Tourist Information Office: phone + 47 32 09 59 00, www.geilo.no
Aurland Tourist Information Office: phone + 47 57 63 33 13, www.alr.no
Ulvik Tourist Information Office: phone + 47 56 52 63 60, www.visitulvik.no

Maps

Hardangervidda Øst 1: 100 000
Skarvheimen, Cappelen Map 44, Aurlandsdalen/Rallarvegen, 1: 100 000
Hallingskarvet Ramblers Map 1:50 000 Norwegian Mapping Authority

Cabins

Many cabins and huts are available close to and within the national park. They have a variety of owners, such as the Norwegian Trekking Association (DNT), the Norwegian Forestry Company (Statskog) and the Norwegian Association of Hunters and Fishermen (NJFF). Enquire in advance about the standard, who owns it and whether it is unlocked.

Designated 2006

Area 450 km²

Neighbouring protected areas

Finse Protected Area Biotope, designated 22.12.2006
The Finse Protected Area Biotope and the Hallingskarvet National Park are very close to the Skaupsjøen-Hardangerjøkulen Protected Landscape Area; just a couple of hundred metres away at Lake Finse.

Management and supervision

Local Board for the Hallingskarvet National Park
County Governor of Hordaland
County Governor of Buskerud
County Governor of Sogn & Fjordane, www.fylkesmannen.no
Norwegian Nature Inspectorate Rødberg, Geilo, phone + 47 971 07 771

More information www.norgesnasjonalparker.no



NORWAY'S
NATIONAL PARKS



Norwegian national parks are our common natural heritage

We set up national parks to safeguard large areas of countryside – from the seashore to the mountain-tops. 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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