



REINHEIMEN



WILDERNESS WITH TRACES LEFT BY FORMER HUNTERS

The Reinheimen National Park is in the next largest area lacking major infrastructure in southern Norway, and wilderness best characterises this very varied mountain area. The highest mountains in the park tower more than 2000 m above sea level, while the lowest point in the protected area, at the foot of Trollveggen, is about 130 m a.s.l. Much of the original alpine ecosystem, including wild reindeer, wolverines, golden eagles, gyrfalcons and ptarmigans, is still intact.

Reinheimen has numerous cultural heritage traces from the former hunting of wild reindeer, including pitfalls, mass trapping systems, bowman's hides and habitations where the hunters lived.



Approaching the summit of Digervarden (PJ)



ENJOY THE SCENERY

You can take a great variety of enjoyable hikes in Reinheimen. Most of the area is wilderness with few facilities provided for outdoor recreation, but the mountains around Tafjord and the western part of the Skjåk district have some marked paths and cabins inside or close to the park. There are also some cabins that can be rented. To protect the vulnerable wild reindeer, the policy has been not to market the area or persuade more



The Kjølén mountains (PJ)



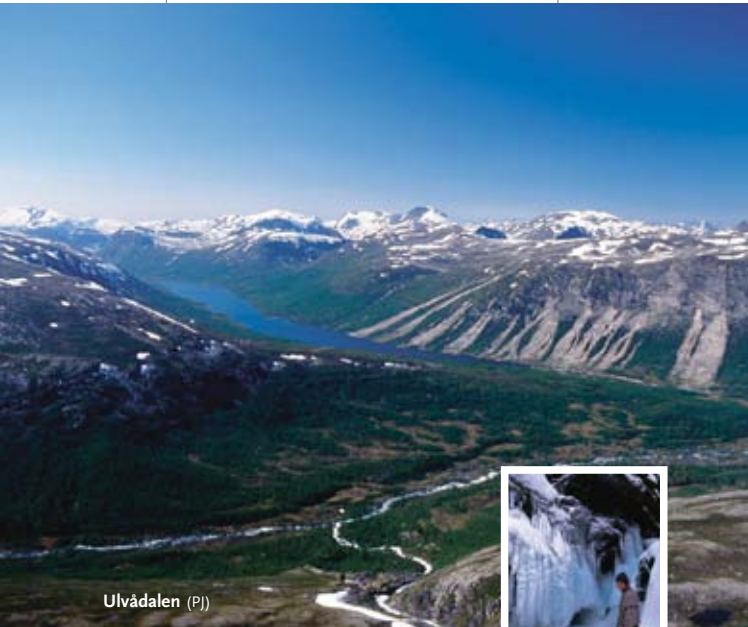
Shooting willow grouse (PJ)



Setting the net (PJ)

people to visit it. If you want to spend more than a day walking here, you will have to carry a tent, your food and other camping gear. People living in the surrounding settlements and farms have always used the area for grazing and seasonal farming, fishing and hunting reindeer and small game. Trout have been released in many lakes in the mountains. Visitors can buy fishing licences, but only local people generally have the right to fish with nets. Ask them for good advice on where the fishing is good.

You need a licence to hunt small game and reindeer. Reindeer hunting is very popular, and there are many more applicants than licences. The wild reindeer in Reinheimen are descended from semi-domesticated reindeer and are therefore less timid than the genuinely wild reindeer strains.



Ulvådalen (PJ)



River Ulvå (PJ)

LANDSCAPE AND GEOLOGY

The landscape in Reinheimen is extremely varied. In the west, it is very dramatic, with sharply pointed peaks and knife-edge ridges, corries, screes and rapidly flowing rivers. If you venture out to Bruraskaret on the side facing the Romsdalen valley, you will find a sheer 1000-metre drop down Trollveggen. Glaciers and tarns blink at you in the corries. Towards the east, the terrain is more gently sloping, plateaus occur, valleys are broader and rivers flow more slowly.

Differing bedrock, climate and land uplift in these two parts of Reinheimen explain the differences in the terrain. Most of the area is dominated by light-coloured gneisses which release few plant nutrients, but in the east these are replaced by younger, nutrient-rich rocks like phyllite and mica schist. Bodies of dunite are found locally towards Tafjord and in a zone between Grotli and Asbjørnsdalen.

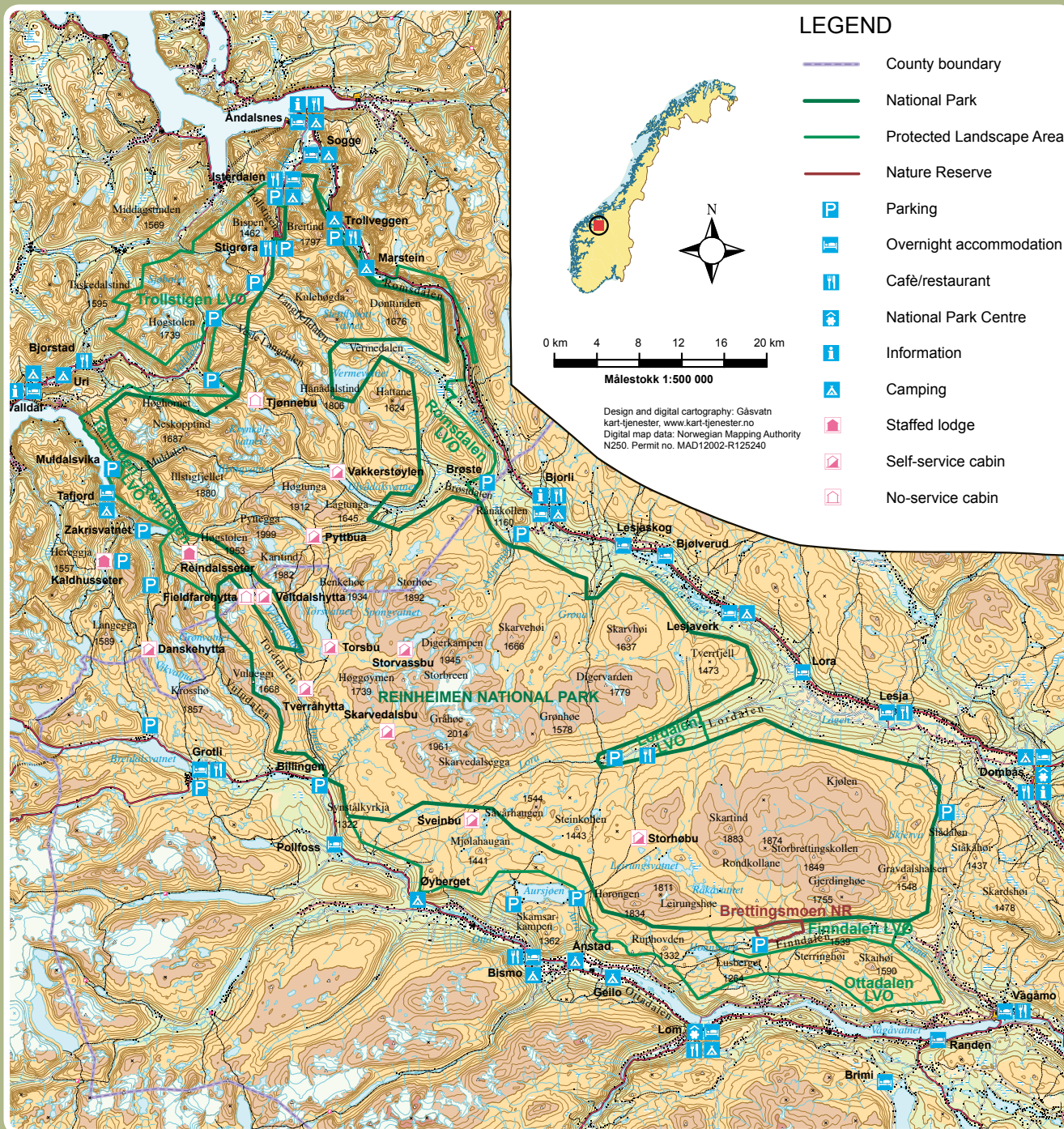
Land uplift has been greater in the west and, along with higher precipitation, the rivers have a greater fall and more power to excavate the terrain. This greater erosive force means that rivers which used to flow eastwards have been captured and now drain westwards.

The highest mountains are covered by block fields produced by weathering of the bedrock, but most of the eastern part is covered by moraine. Steeper parts in the west frequently have avalanche soils. On Børa, a mountain west of Marstein, the water drains along an extensive system of fractures on the mountainside. Many interesting landforms produced by the erosion and deposition of glaciers and glacial rivers can be studied in Reinheimen, for instance on Sponghøi and in Vesleskjervdalen, a valley in the far east of the park.

A number of valuable rivers, such as the Istra, Rauma, Lora, Finna/Skjerva, Valldøla and Tora/Føysa, have their sources in Reinheimen. They contribute greatly to the magnificent, wild and beautiful scenery.



Autumn in Reinheimen (ØL)





Trailing azalea (PJ)



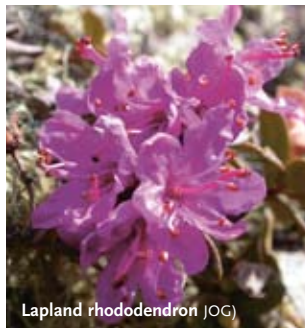
Diapensia (PJ)



PLANT LIFE

Variations in the geology, altitude and climate mean that the vegetation in Reinheimen varies greatly. The highest mountains have little vegetation, and screes and block fields are mostly just lichen covered. Dry, nutrient-poor, heath and ridge communities are found in eastern parts, and they provide the most valuable winter grazing for the reindeer. Further west, lush snow-patch vegetation and more grass and herbs offer valuable summer grazing for reindeer and sheep.

Near Slådalsvegen, a toll road bordering the park in the east, you can find many alpine plants that depend upon calcareous soil. Only the most famous, classical localities in southern Norway have more rare species.



Lapland rhododendron (JOG)



Wild reindeer (PJ)



Golden plover (PJ)



Tengmalm's owls (PJ)



ANIMAL AND BIRD LIFE

There is a rich fauna in the area. Reinheimen is one of the best and most productive areas for wild reindeer in the country. The reindeer reach high weights and produce many calves, because they can find good grazing at all times of the year. The area has few major infrastructure facilities and few people visit it and hence disturb the reindeer. If you should chance on a group of reindeer, sit down and let them pass, or move away and walk round them at a distance of at least 400-500 metres. Keep downwind from them to avoid them catching your scent.

Wolverines have returned to these mountains, and breed here regularly.

Reinheimen is also valuable for a number of endangered birds. Golden eagles and gyrfalcons are widely dispersed here and their nesting sites are easily disturbed.

Other species that are typical for mountain areas are shore larks, scaup, long-tailed ducks, velvet scoters, purple sandpipers, dotterels and dunlins. Nearly 20 species of wetland birds have been observed nesting near two lakes in the area, Råkvatnet and Leirungvatnet.

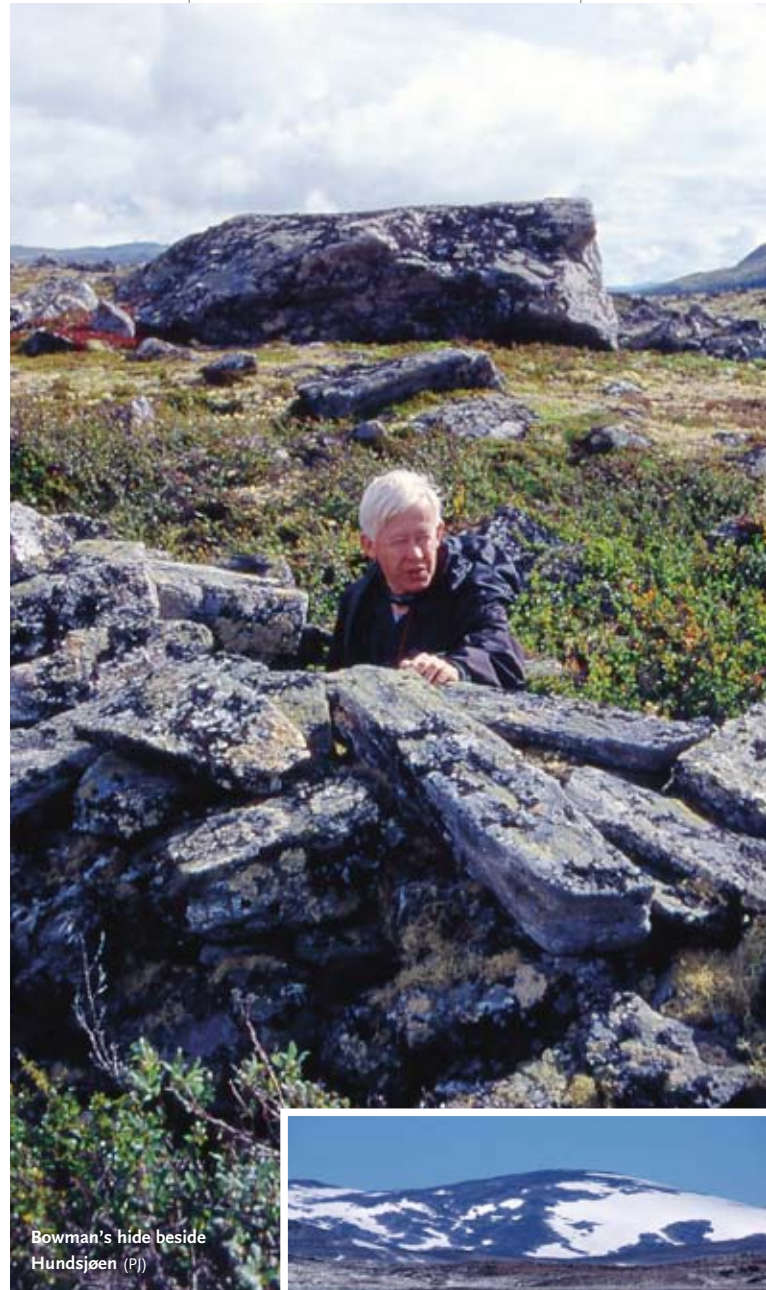
Ptarmigan and willow grouse are found over large parts of the area, the former high on the mountains and the latter in the birch woods.

HISTORY AND CULTURAL HERITAGE TRACES

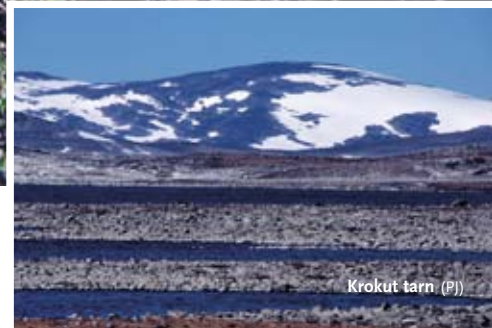
The people living around Reinheimen have always been closely associated with the mountains, and the valleys bordering the park have many seasonal farms. The grazing resources for sheep and cattle here are still valued.

Reinheimen is one of the most important areas in Scandinavia for cultural heritage traces related to trapping and hunting in the Iron Age and the Middle Ages. Traces left by the early hunters can be seen in many places in the mountains, and include pitfalls, bowman's hides and kilometre-long trapping systems for reindeer. The wild reindeer were also driven into lakes to be caught there. More than 1000 such trapping sites can be found in this district. In addition, several sites where live falcons were trapped for falconry are known, as well as other traces related to hunting and trapping. Along with these from prehistoric and medieval times, there are huts and other shelters used by hunters and fishermen in the last few centuries.

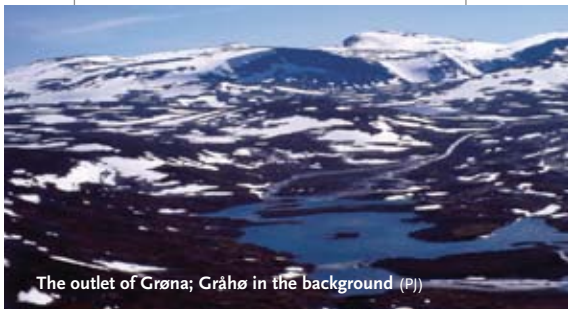
The routes used by the migrating wild reindeer have changed very little and still pass close to the former trapping systems making it easier for us to understand these prehistoric sites. The reindeer is still being hunted here, making this is an unbroken tradition that has lasted for ten thousand years. Tales of hunting and trapping feature strongly in the storytelling tradition kept alive in the settlements around Reinheimen.



Bowman's hide beside
Hundsjøen (P1)



Krokut tarn (P1)



In a national park, you are one of Nature's guests

- Go wherever you want, on foot or on skis. Anything with an engine is basically banned.
- Stop wherever you want, and camp for the night if you wish, but tidy up afterwards 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. Take care when you gather firewood.
- You may pick berries, mushrooms and common plants for your own use. Show consideration for cultural heritage sites, vegetation and animal life. Take extra care in the breeding season.
- You may hunt and fish like in other places, but remember to buy the licences. Do not use live fish as bait. You must not take live fish from one river or lake to another.
- You may have a dog with you, but remember to keep it on a leash at all times.



Reinheimen National Park in brief

Where: In the municipalities of Norddal and Rauma in the county of Møre & Romsdal, and in Lesja, Lom, Skjåk and Vågå in Oppland.

How to reach the Reinheimen National Park:

By plane to Molde or Ålesund airports and continue by bus. By train to Otta, Lesja, Bjorli or Åndalsnes and continue by bus and/or taxi. By bus or car: Rv 15 between Otta and Grotli, E 136 between Dombås and Åndalsnes, or Rv 63 over Trollstigen (closed between November and May). There are many (toll) roads in the valleys leading to the park, and you can park a car along most of them.

Information on overnight accommodation and services:

Tourist information offices in the municipal centres: Bjorli – Lesja Reiseliv AS, phone +47 61 24 56 45 www.bjorli.no, Åndalsnes og Romsdal Reiselivslag, phone +47 71 22 16 22 www.visitandsnes.no, Destinasjon Geirangerfjord – Trollstigen, phone +47 70 26 38 00 www.dgt.no and Nasjonalparkriket, phone +47 61 21 29 90 www.nasjonalparkriket.no

Cabins: You can use many cabins and huts in and near the national park. They have a variety of owners, such as Ålesund & Sunnmøre Trekking Association (DNT), Skjåk almenning, Lesja Fjellstyre and Finndalen Fjellstyre. Check beforehand the standard, the owner and whether you need a key.

Tips: Places in Reinheimen you should see include the Tafjord mountains, Trollstigen and Trollveggen. Enjoy the cultural landscape in Romsdalen and the valleys of Finndalen and Lordalen with their transhumance dairy farms. Cross Føysasteinen in Skjåk, a natural footbridge over the River Føysa.

Maps: 1319 I-IV, 1320 II & III, 1419 II & III, 1518 I & IV, 1618 I & IV (1:50 000) Tafjordfjella - a ramblers map covering the north-western part (1:50 000).

Designated: 2006

Area: 1969 km²

Adjacent protected areas: Finndalen Protected Landscape Area, Ottadalen Protected Landscape Area, Lordalen Protected Landscape Area, Romsdalen Protected Landscape Area, Trollstigen Protected Landscape Area, Tafjord-Reindalen Protected Landscape Area, Brettingsmoen Nature Reserve

National Park Centre: Norwegian Mountain Museum – Jotunheimen and Reinheimen National Park Centre, phone +47 61 21 16 00 www.fjell.museum.no

Management: Contact Committee for Reinheimen, phone +47 61 24 41 00, www.reinheimen.no. County Governor of Oppland, phone +47 61 26 60 00, www.fylkesmannen.no/oppland. County Governor of Møre & Romsdal, phone +47 71 25 80 00, www.fylkesmannen.no

Supervision: Norwegian Nature Inspectorate, Skjåk office, phone +47 970 57 213. Norwegian Nature Inspectorate, Åndalsnes office, phone +47 915 47 617 and local inspection schemes.

More information: www.norgesnasjonalparker.no
www.reinheimen.no

ISBN (printed) 978-82-7072-911-1 ISBN (pdf) 978-82-7072-912-8

Layout: Guri Jermstad AS. **Photo:** Per Jordhøy (PJ), Øyvind Leren (ØL), Kristin S. Karlsen (KSK) and Jan Ove Gjershaug (JOG). **Front cover:** Pitfall in Lardalen (PJ) and black/white: Alnesdalen (KSK) **Back cover:** Friisbua beside Torsvatnet (PJ)



Print: GRØSET™



Norwegian national parks – our common natural heritage

National parks are designated to protect large areas of unspoilt countryside – from the sea to the mountaintops – for the sake of Nature herself, we ourselves and future generations.

The parks contain a wealth of splendid scenery and varied animal and plant life, waterfalls, glaciers, towering peaks, never-ending plateaus, deep forests, and beautiful fjords and coasts. Cultural heritage sites also show how the areas were used in bygone days.

The parks offer a vast range of thrilling and exciting natural history. Make use of the fantastic Norwegian countryside – on Nature's own terms.

Welcome to Norwegian national parks!



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