

Vattenriket®



Kristianstads Vattenrike Biosphere Reserve
Best practice 2015-2025



Kristianstads
kommun

Benefitting Nature and People

In 2005, UNESCO designated Kristianstads Vattenrike as a biosphere reserve. Since then, the area has continued to develop and lead the way in demonstrating how conservation and sustainable development can go hand in hand. The biosphere reserve's role as a neutral arena for collaboration is particularly important to the work to reach the Sustainable Development Goals.

Between 2015 and 2025, the biosphere work has strengthened and managed the landscape's values with a holistic approach to nature conservation and community development. The work has been based on the area's unique environments – from the wetlands along the Helge å River to the valuable sandy arable land and the distinctive nature around Hanöbukten Bay.

Strong local engagement has been a key to success. Through discussion and collaboration, we have worked together with landowners, associations, organisations, and authorities at local, regional, and international levels to create sustainable development for nature as well as people.

An important part of our work has been to spread knowledge about the landscape's ecological values and the challenges we face. Active involvement in research and education has provided new insights into the area's ecosystems and ecosystem services, helping to conserve them for the future. A concrete example of how we combine nature conservation with societal benefits is the crane feeding at the Pulken visitor site, which reduces damage to agricultural crops while creating a fantastic nature experience for the public.

Over the past ten years, we have further developed our visitor sites, inaugurated the Skåne Trail SL6 Vattenriket hiking trail, launched biosphere classrooms, and introduced innovative programmes at naturum. These initiatives have made Vattenriket even more accessible to both residents and visitors. Our thematic approach, currently focusing on "Nature's Smart Solutions," runs through all our activities and has become a key success factor.

In summary, between 2015 and 2025, the biosphere work has continued to be a role model for how nature and people can coexist sustainably – through collaboration, knowledge sharing, and a long-term vision for a resilient future for both nature and humanity!

Carina Wettemar

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THE GLOBAL GOALS



Foto: Patrik Olofsson/N

Naturum Vattenriket

The biosphere reserve's visitor centre is in the middle of town and in the middle of the wetlands. Its exhibition and wide range of activities attract 90,000 Kristianstad residents and visiting tourists every year.



Tradition and innovation

In close dialogue with landowners and land users, we make use of local knowledge and develop new methods to conserve important natural values. Innovation and collaboration are the key to a thriving cultural landscape.



Learning in the landscape

Our visitor sites are places for learning and inspiration. Here, nature enthusiasts can gain new insights, teachers and students can explore nature and nature-based solutions for conservation can be shared.



Photo: Patrik Olofsson/N

Nature-based solutions

Fredriksdalsviken is home to Sweden's first constructed wetland to use natural processes to reduce levels of iron and aluminium in drainage water. The project is a collaboration led by the Biosphere Office.



Photo: Johan Hammar

360-degree projects

We work on projects that span nature conservation measures, research, education, public activities and communication. One example is Restoring the health of the Baltic Sea.



Involvement for all ages

We train biosphere ambassadors, organise biosphere camps and invite scouts to become biosphere heroes. Strong partnerships with associations and the consultation group are other ways to engage, and anchor our work.



Easy access to Vattenriket

Visitor sites, trails, bird towers, picnic areas and outdoor museums increase access to the area. Making it easy to experience Vattenriket's biodiversity increases understanding for conserving and caring for it.



Photo: Patrik Olofsson/N

Broad palette for biodiversity

The Biosphere Office works broadly and innovatively to conserve species and recreate habitats. We use a wide range of measures to keep the landscape open and thriving.



Illustration: Big Brain Agency

Hope inspires new attitudes

Our long-term goal is to change attitudes for more sustainable development. We aim to inspire inner transition by communicating hope and positive experiences of nature. The What if method is one example.



Photo: Patrik Olofsson/N

A resource in urban planning

By integrating biosphere expertise into planning processes, we contribute to more sustainable development in which biodiversity, outdoor recreation and ecosystem services are taken into account.



Circular resource use

In the Bring Back Bream project, we acted as a test bed for circular resource use by exploring how bream, fished to improve water quality, could be used as a local resource in the food industry.



Photo: Johan Hammar

From preschool to university

Naturum Vattenriket offers outdoor education for all ages, from playful contact with nature to research. Biosphere classrooms and new educational tools provide support for teachers.



An arena for research

An important task is to co-operate with and provide logistical support to researchers. The Biosphere Office helps to develop and share new research in, with and about the biosphere reserve.



Communicating broadly

With a well-considered communications strategy that aims to inform, inspire and engage, we reach a large number of broad target groups using a range of channels.



Adaptive co-management

Wetlands are constructed in discussion and collaboration with landowners. Together we find suitable sites and methods, apply for funding and implement measures that we evaluate, adapt and develop.



Networking internationally

We are an active partner in the Biosphere for Baltic network, with twelve biosphere reserves in eight countries on the Baltic Sea. In 2025, a Youth Forum will be held in Vattenriket with young adults dedicated to the sea.



Ideas in a changing climate

Drained peatlands leak greenhouse gases. Raising the water level in the soil can reduce carbon dioxide emissions. The Biosphere Office has blocked ditches at Fjällmossen, restoring 2.5 hectares of wetland.



Reaching the SDGs together

The Biosphere Office is an important actor in the work towards achieving goal 17 by bringing together research, business and society, running projects locally and collaborating globally.

What is a biosphere reserve?

Biosphere reserves are designated by UNESCO as model areas for sustainable development. The focus is on conserving, developing and supporting the high natural and cultural values in these areas. Globally, there are 759 biosphere reserves, with eight in Sweden: Kristianstads Vattenrike, Lake Vänern Archipelago and Mount Kinnekulle, Blekinge Archipelago, Nedre Dalälven River Landscape, East Vättern Scarp Landscape, Voxnadalen, Vindelälven-Juhtatähkka and Storkriket (candidate).



Kristianstads Vattenrike

Kristianstads Vattenrike is Sweden's oldest biosphere reserve. Established in 2005, it covers 60% of Kristianstad Municipality. The area stretches from the forests of the ridges down across the plain, through the city of Kristianstad and the Helge å River wetland area out into Hanöbukten Bay. The work is run by the Biosphere and Naturum Unit. The responsible authority is Kristianstad Municipality. We work to conserve and develop the landscape so that it benefits nature and people!



Periodic Review

A Periodic Review is a comprehensive evaluation that biosphere reserves undertake every ten years. The biosphere reserve's activities are reviewed and UNESCO decides whether the area may continue to be a biosphere reserve. In 2025, Kristianstads Vattenrike Biosphere Reserve will be evaluated for the second time.

Read more on our homepage, complete with contact details: vattenriket.kristianstad.se

