

Name of the project area:

## Askö

Surface area (ha): 1,526.000

EU protection status:

SPA **NATURA 2000 Code** :

pSCI **X NATURA 2000 Code** : SE0220439

Nature conservation (Woodland 17%, husbandry 9%, water 66% and other landuse 8%).

The area is owned by the state.

### **Main land uses and ownership status of the project area:**

Askö is one of the largest islands in the archipelago of Södermanland. It has a coastal topography typical with rift valleys dominated by rock outcrops. Askö has an interesting geology, including a large area with moraine and rubble in the south. Storsand is an example of a sand area. Various calcareous rocks occur in parts of the island and this is strongly affecting the local vegetation.

The land use on the island has long continuity. The agriculture here consists of field crops, mown meadows and pastures. There is evidence of buildings from the year 1568, why it is reasonable to believe that land on the island has been farmed since.

Askö, through its many and often culture characterized vegetation types, is an island of unusually high species richness. Rare, in the present and declining species *Melampyrum arvense* and *Herminium monorchis*, is still present in the natural pastures. At Sandvik the very rare plant *Botrychium simplex* bed has been observed lately.

In the northern part of the island the landscape is characterized by a gently undulating terrain with a lush conifer forest alternating with swamps and rock outcrops. There are also oakforests with a mixture of coarse oak, ash, white beam, rowan and hazel. The deciduous forest and in particular the oaks now are threatened by the encroachment of spruce.

In the central parts of the island are coniferous mixed forests and rocky pine forests. In parts of the woodland west of Askö Marine Research there are 200 year old pine stands. On Askö are traces of spontaneous forest fires common and fire-favored rare insects such as *Sericoda quadri-punctata* occur. The coastal underwater environments around Askö is very varied and diverse. Here are "eelgrass beds"

(*Zostera*) and a large number of plants, such as the endangered marine alga *Chara horrida*.

Askö inhabits a peculiar insect fauna with rare and endangered species of grasshoppers, wasps and butterflies.

Askö with the surrounding archipelago is through the variety of habitats important both as a resting, wintering and breeding site for numerous species of birds such as ducks, merganser, honey buzzard, Wryneck, Lesser Spotted Woodpecker, gulls, terns, tree lark and nightjar. In recent years, tree and shrub layer is thickening at some parts of the island, which causes problems for many species.

### **Scientific description of project area:**

Updated data about the site in Natura 2000 have been reported to the Swedish Government, and a governmental decision about updates was taken in August 2012. The data in this application are in line with this update.

Askö is a large reserve with extra high qualities for biodiversity dependent on traditional small scale agriculture. Here are many threatened species of insects, birds and plants still remaining. Here is one out of ten known localities for the very rare *Botrychium simplex* in Sweden (and the only one known in the project regions). The site is pointed out as of National Interest for Nature conservation.

The project will address threats from overgrowing of grassland habitats and grazed forests by measures included in action C1, targeting 97.9 ha.

Habitats that will be improved by action C1:

1630: 0.9 ha

6270: 4.3 ha

8230: 4 ha

9070: 70.9 ha

Other grassland habitat: 3.1 ha

Wooded habitat: 14.7 ha

Threats against ancient pollard trees will be addressed by action C2. In total 150 trees will be managed.

Habitats that will be improved by action C2:

6270: 16.4 ha

8230: 3.5 ha

9010: 10.7 ha

9070: 57.2 ha

Other grassland habitat: 16.0 ha

Other wooded habitat: 19.3 ha

The long term management of the site will be improved by the action C4.

Uniform forest stands will be improved by measures in action C6 in total 8.3 ha.

Habitats that will be improved by action C6:

9010: 7.6 ha

Other wooded habitats: 0.2 ha

Other land: 0.5 ha

The accessibility for visitors will also increase by action E4.