

### The Ramunderberget Nature Reserve

The Ramunderberget mountain rises majestically some 70 metres above the town. At the foot of the rock face, Göta Canal flows towards Slätbaken bay.

Ramunderberget is part of a fault created some 2-300 million years ago. An earthquake cracked the bedrock plate. Pressure and movements in the plate made the south part sink into a bay and the north part rise to a characteristic fault scarp.

Ramunderberget has characterized and protected the town for centuries, spawning legends and fantasies. Since 2000 it is a popular open-air recreation area and nature reserve, covering 171 hectares and owned by the municipality of Söderköping.

Its principal values is the 200-year-old pine forest, one of the largest in Östergötland, and a great variety of species, including several red-listed (endangered) ones. The forest is allowed to develop freely; and to support the species diversity among insects and birds, all dead wood and wind-fallen trees are left untouched in the forest.



Stairs by the lock



Petersburg

### The name of the mountain

According to legend, the giant Ramunder abducted a young nun called Ragnhild and held her captive on the mountain. She was set free, but upon returning to town she was accused of having given up her virginity and sentenced to burning at the stake. At the stake a water spring burst forth and put out the fire. Saint Ragnhild's spring. The mountain has also been known as Ramshäll ("Ram's rock").

### The springs

Saint Ragnhild's spring was the foundation for Söderköpings Brunn ("Spa"), founded in 1774. The mountain spring above the lock was previously called Trummelkällan and provided water for the townsfolk through underground pipes as early as in medieval times. In the eastern part of the reserve there is another spring, Litzell's spring, which can now only be spotted as a covered cement pipe.

### The viewpoint and outdoor life

There are several jogging tracks on the mountain, both illuminated and regular ones. The tracks start out from the Petersburg exercise facility in the western part of the reserve. The



Viewpoint



The hill fort wall

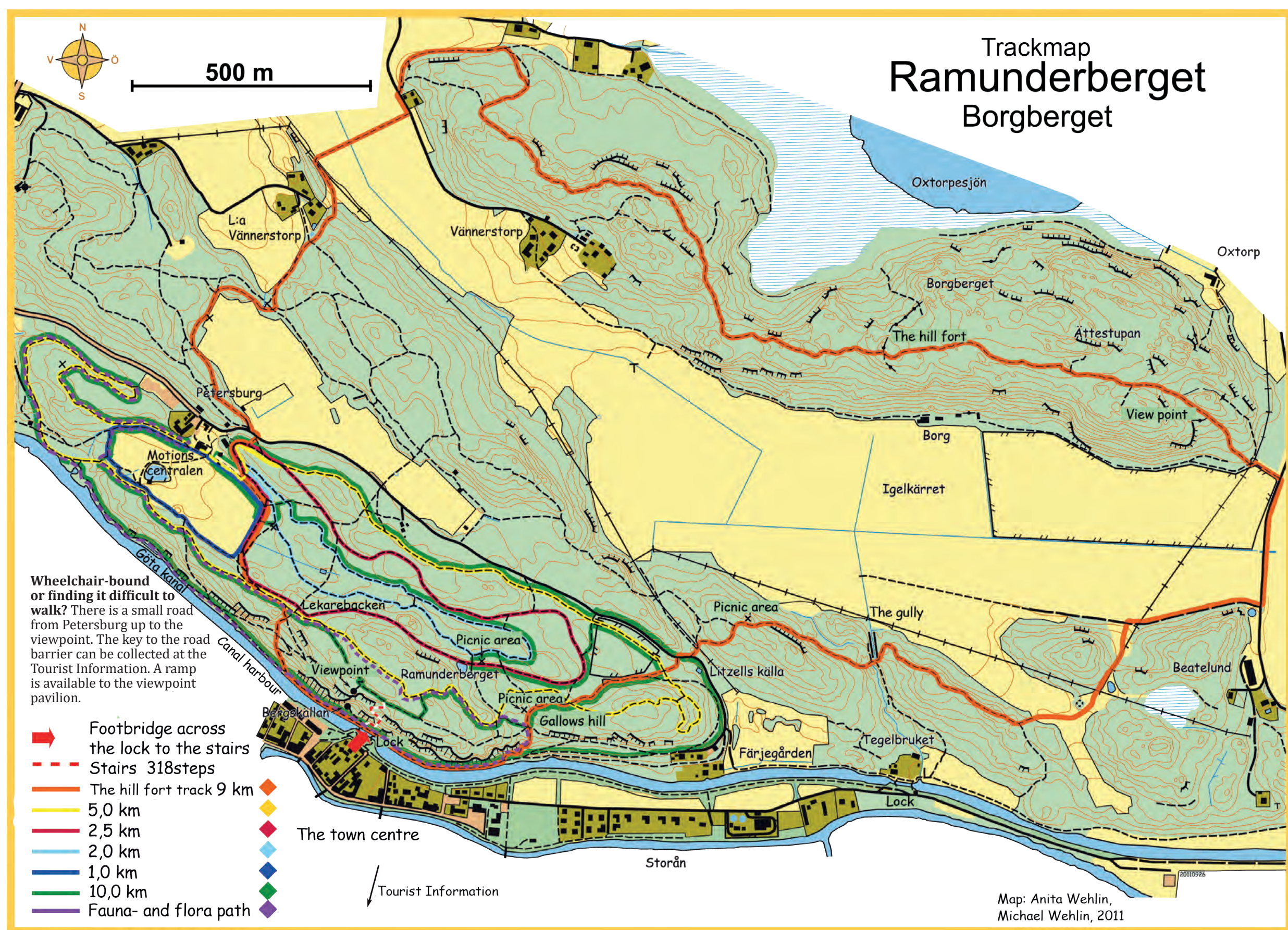
area can be reached by car. At Petersburg you will also find ski tracks, a tobogganing slope, a mountain bike trail, a sauna facility, showers and locker rooms, cafeteria and sprawling grassy areas for picnics, fun and games.

The viewpoint on the top of the mountain can be reached either from Petersburg or from the lock, by walking paths or by climbing 318 steep steps. The viewpoint offers an extended view of Söderköping and its surroundings with view binoculars, free of charge. Between Petersburg and the viewpoint lies Lekarebacken with a barbecue slab and an open-air church.

### Cultural Remains

The area has been cultivated since prehistoric times. This is proven by remains such as graves, boundary stones and a beacon found in the north-western part of the reserve. Stone age axes have also been found in the marsh north of the mountain.

On Borgberget, north of Ramunderberget, stands Sweden's largest mainland hill fort. It has altogether approx. 660 metres of stone walls within an area of 1500 by 300 metres, dating from the 5th century. Inside the fort is a shingle field, 100 metres wide, called "Ramunder's house". The walking path on Borgberget leads partly through rough terrain.





Blue anemone



Flat-rock area



Smooth snake



The Beech forest

In the south-eastern part of Ramunderberget lay the gallows hill, where evildoers were hanged at least during the 16th and 17th centuries.

A chapel called "Saint John's Chapel in Ramshäll" is mentioned in documents from the 15th century. Its exact location is unclear, but it may have been found at an excavation in the 1930s when granite walls, brick floors and human bones were discovered not far from the gallows hill.

During the late 19th century and the early 20th century, guests at Söderköping's Brunn could go for a brisk walk up to Brunnsbacken ("Spa Hill") after being rowed across the canal. On the top of the mountain they could enjoy a cafeteria, a bandstand and pretty walking paths.

More entertainment was available in the people's park, established in 1926 on the western side of the mountain. In the park was a dance pavilion, a tombola and a shooting range. The park was closed in 1962.

### Vegetation

The Ramunderberget reserve presents a rich diversity of biotopes: fields, meadows, spruce and pine forest, deciduous forest, gullies, marshes and flat-rock areas. Most striking is

the little transplanted beech forest on the mountain's south slope. In spring the blue anemone are spread out like a carpet, and there are also patches of wood violet, yellow anemone and corydalis.

Along the canal there is fertile ground where most wild deciduous trees and shrubs can be found. Among the more unusual ones are spindle, buckthorn and guelder rose. But here is also the European larch, a transplanted conifer that sheds its needles in autumn.

By the driveway up to Petersburg grows a rather large amount of hazel and also common plants such as marsh skullcap, lady's bedstraw, toadflax, woody nightshade, black medic, caraway, bitter vetch and bush vetch.

East of Petersburg, in the part facing Borgberget, spruce forest is mixed with older deciduous trees, with a lot of dead wood and many 100-year-old spruces. In the herb stratum grow mountain melick, lily of the valley, maidenhair spleenwort, lesser butterfly-orchid and wintergreen.

The flat-rock area at the top of Ramunderberget is covered with pine trees, heather and wavy hair-grass. Here grow calcicole (lime loving) plants such as bloody cranesbill, wild

marjoram, Saint-John's-wort, wild thyme and spring savory. The flat rock then turns into pine forest with trees as old as 200 years. Red ring rot can be found on some trunks; this is an important indicator of rare wood-living insects. One rare plant which is typical for old pine forests is the umbellate wintergreen, a small bush with red flowers. On the mountainsides grow field wormwood, Solomon's seal, sheep's bit, northern spleenwort and oblong woodsia. Parts of the pine forest next to the gallows hill bear traces of fire.

The gully above Tegelbruket offers a dramatic landscape with steep mountainsides down to the water. Here grow alder and hazel, among other plants. In certain parts of the reserve grow various transplanted trees, such as the Colorado spruce, the Weymouth pine and the larch.

On the rocks grow various kinds of hairy navel lichen. These are very rare; the only presence in Östergötland of the velvet moss and the Magnusson's rosette lichen is at Ramunderberget. Apart from two red-listed polypores - red ring rot and soft bracket - three other endangered mushrooms have been found in the area: the webcap Cortinarius percomis, the omphalinoid Omphalina xanthophylla and the scarlet waxy cap.

### Wildlife

Mammals in the reserve are the common ones for the region: wood mice, squirrels, badgers, ferrets, minks, foxes, martens, hares, roe deers and elks. There are also bats in the area; most strikingly the rare Natterer's bat.

Among the birds, the lesser spotted woodpecker and the wryneck deserve special mention. The rare wryneck is an expert ant-eater, whose loud call can be heard in May and June. There are also several other kinds of woodpeckers in the area, such as the green woodpecker, the black woodpecker and the great spotted woodpecker. Other notable birds include the tawny owl, the raven, the blackcap, the wood warbler, the tree pipit, the skylark, the hedge sparrow, the hawfinch and the redwing. The eagle owl's call can be heard in the area, but it breeds outside the reserve.

In the flat-rock area the smooth snake may be spotted; this rare snake hugs its prey to death, like a tiny boa constrictor. There are also adders, common lizards and slow-worms.

All the dead wood left in the area serves the many beetles living off dead wood, for example the red-listed longhorned beetle. Since dead wood contains many insects, it is also vital for birds such as woodpeckers.

### Right to roam

Sweden has something called Allemansrätten (the right to roam, or literally, "every man's right"). This right grants the public legal access to water and land, including woods and fields. It is permitted to pick berries, wild flowers and edible mushrooms, to land your boat on islands and to camp out for a day or two in nature. But with that freedom comes responsibility. It is not permitted to disturb wildlife or destroy nature.

Special rules apply in nature reserves; damaging any trees, dead or living, is not permitted, and some flowers are placed under protection and cannot be picked.

It is not permitted to pitch a tent or light a fire outside spots assigned by the municipality. Dogs and other pets must be kept on a leash.



Longhorned beetle (Nothorhina muricata)



Guelder rose



The gully



Scarlet waxy cap



Lesser spotted woodpecker

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