



PASVIK-INARI

NATURE AND HISTORY SHARED



AREA DESCRIPTION



The Pasvik River flows from the largest lake in Finnish Lapland, Lake Inari, and extends to the Barents Sea on the border of Norway and Russia. The valley forms a diverse habitat for a wide variety of plants and animals. The Pasvik River is especially known for its rich bird life.

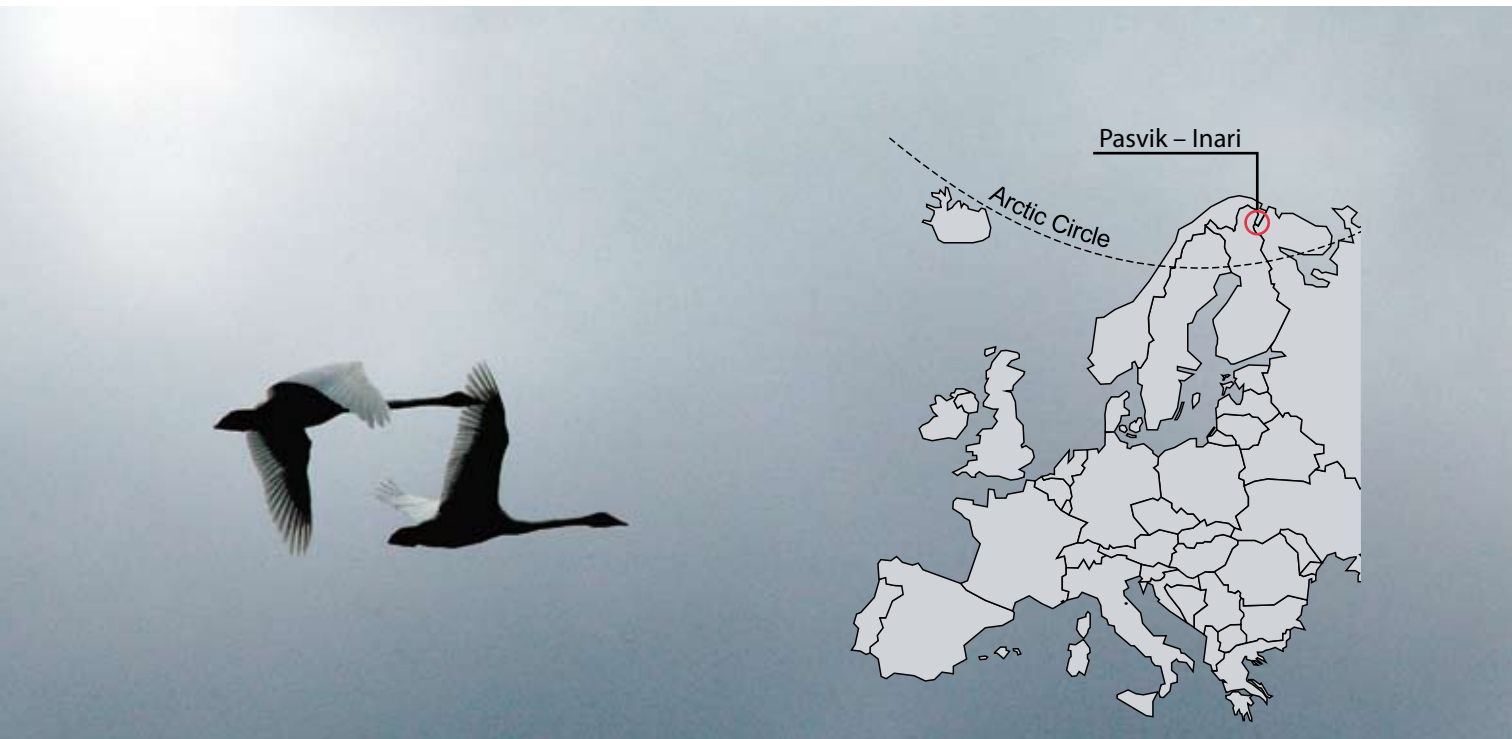
The rugged wilderness that surrounds the river valley astonishes with its serene beauty. A vast pine forest area dotted with small bogs, ponds and streams stretches from Vätsäri in Finland to Pasvik in Norway and Russia.

The captivating wilderness offers an excellent setting for hiking and recreation. From mid-May until the end of July the midnight sun lights up the forest. The numerous streams and lakes provide ample catch for anglers who wish to enjoy the calm backwoods. Although hiking deep into the forest

is recommended only for very experienced hikers, some paths are marked for shorter visits. Lake Inari and its tributaries are ideal for boating or paddling, and in winter the area can be explored on skis or a dog sled. The border mark at Muotkavaara, where the borders of Finland, Norway and Russia meet, can be reached by foot or on skis.

Several protected areas in the three neighbouring countries have been established to preserve these great wilderness areas. A vast trilateral co-operation area stretching across three national borders, consisting of the Vätsäri Wilderness Area in Finland, the Øvre Pasvik National Park, Øvre Pasvik Landscape Protection Area and Pasvik Nature Reserve in Norway, and Pasvik Zapovednik in Russia, is protected.





NATURE



The Pasvik Valley and its surrounding wilderness are located on the northwestern edge of the taiga, from where the mountain birch forest and alpine heath extend towards the north. In the heart of the wilderness, the pine forest has been able to develop without extensive impact from human activities. Thousands of small bogs and ponds dot the forest, and the rocky shores of great lakes open up among the pines.

The seasons vary greatly in the north. Although the cold winters are very long, the short summers are warm and extremely light. Lapland's short-lived summer ends with the changing of the leaves to bright autumn colours.

Harsh northern living conditions place great demands on the flora and fauna in Pasvik, and several species live here at the extreme limit of their distribution. The species composition is a mixture of European, Asian and Arctic species. The Siberian Jay, which can be found in old-growth forests, is an eastern species typical to the area.

The close proximity of the Barents Sea affects the flora, especially in the northeastern part of the area,

where the snow cover is thinner and temperatures lower during the winter. Dwarf Cornel and mosses are found abundantly in the area. Vast mires and wetlands flank the Pasvik River. Many beautiful orchids, such as the heath spotted orchid and creeping lady's tresses, thrive alongside mires and streams.

Although the Pasvik Valley is famous for its brown bear population, sightings of this impressive animal are quite rare. And small predators such as the fox, stoat or marten also prefer to stay hidden in the woods. The wilderness serves also as a pastureland for reindeer. Elks are also common in Pasvik.

In the heart of the Pasvik Nature Reserve is Lake Höyhenjärvi (Fjærvann), the most untouched area of the river. The name refers to a lake covered with feathers, which describes well the shallow and lush lake, rich with bird life. The ice melts early in the spring and the lake freezes late in the autumn. It is an important nesting area and a resting place for a large number of migratory birds.



CULTURE AND HISTORY



The water system has been an important source of subsistence for the inhabitants of the area for centuries. Fishing and waterfowl hunting represent the major sources of livelihood, and the grasslands on the shores have been mowed to provide food for domestic animals in the wintertime. The river was also an important transportation route to the market places close to Barents Sea. During the great loggings of the 1920's, logs were floated to sawmills in Elvenes and Jakobsnes by the outlet of the Pasvik River. Later, the battle for nickel in Pechenga brought changes to the area, as the rapids of the Pasvik River were used to produce energy for smelting.

The historically significant Pasvik–Inari region is a meeting point for different cultures. For centuries, the Sámi have lived in this area, which is part of Sápmi (Sámiland). Today, three different Sámi groups live in the Pasvik–Inari area: the Northern, Inari and Skolt Sámi. The Northern Sámi form the biggest Sámi minority in Norway and Finland. The Inari Sámi have traditionally lived only in the surroundings of Lake Inari in Finland. The Skolt Sámi lost their native

lands in Pechenga in World War II. They were forced to move abroad, but preserved their own culture and Orthodox faith. Nowadays, most Skolt Sámi live in the eastern parts of the municipality of Inari in Finland and in Sør-Varanger in Norway.

Since the Early Middle Ages, Finns, Norwegians and Russians have settled in the Pasvik–Inari area. Although different cultures coexist in the area and have learned a lot from each other, they have each retained their distinctive traditions. The local museums contain a wealth of information on the early and late settlement and traditional livelihoods in the area.

Reindeer husbandry is still one of the main sources of livelihood in the north. The wilderness provides rich pastures for the reindeer herds to feed. As the season's change the reindeer roam to areas that offer the best availability of food. Traditionally, every part of the reindeer is used. The skin can be used for shoes or clothes and the bones can be made into tools or jewellery.




- 1 Siida, Northern Lapland Nature Centre and Sami Museum
- 2 Orthodox Church, Nellim harbour, shop/bar
- 3 Timber Slide, Iron Gate path
- 4 Pasvik Bridge
- 5 Border mark between three countries
- 6 Piilola gate between Finland and Norway
- 7 Old reindeer fence of Vätsäri
- 8 Orthodox Church, Skolt Sámi heritage house, shop/bar
- 9 Vaggatem prison camp
- 10 Height 96 (Høyde 96) observation tower, café/souvenirs (open in summer)
- 11 Øvre Pasvik National Park Visitor Centre, Botanical Garden, Svanvik Chapel, the longest gamme in the world, Sør-Varanger Museum – Bjørklund farm (open in summer)
- 12 Sør-Varanger Museum – Strand Museum and Bear's Den
- 13 Sør-Varanger Museum – Namdalen, Norwegian Settler's farm (open in summer)
- 14 Jäniskoski village
- 15 Rajakoski village, Office of Pasvik Zapovednik
- 16 Bird watching tower, house of Schaanning
- 17 Museum of history
- * Rajapää wilderness hut, open 1. 6. – 30.9.


 Information

 Sight

 Bird watching tower

 Wilderness hut

 Lapp hut

 Harbour

 Trail

 Snowmobile track





FINLAND



Vätsäri is a place to experience the serenity of true wilderness. The area's rugged natural landscape is at its most beautiful in this vast mosaic setting. There are no marked paths in the wilderness and only a few cabins to provide shelter for travellers. Hiking in the northern wilderness is challenging and requires careful planning and competent skills in orientation.

Travellers who wish to stay in the surroundings of Lake Inari are also rewarded with memorable experiences. There are several outdoor and cultural destinations to visit and the great lake itself is a sight worth seeing. Several tour operators organise fishing or boating trips. In wintertime, dog sledding and snowmobiling are also possible.

The beautiful Sámi village of Nellim is a meeting point for different cultures. The first Finnish inhabitants settled in the originally Inari Sámi village in the early 20th century, when log floating was an important source of income. After the wars, the Skolt Sámi inhabitants moved to Nellim from Pechenga. A noteworthy landmark in the village is the Orthodox Church, built with logs. An impressive view opens up from the Pasvik Bridge to the Russian river valley.

Near the village of Nellim you can visit the renovated old timber slide and learn more about the

area's logging history. The path leading to the timber slide presents the war history. The Rautaportti bay, sheltered by steep cliffs was a strategically important area during the wartime (1939-1944). Defensive forts were built on both sides of the bay to hold off enemies from the road to Barents Sea.

There are accommodations and tourism services in Nellim and you may buy supplies or have a meal in a shop/bar. The Nellim harbour is of major importance to the boaters travelling at Lake Inari.

The Sevettijärvi village, north of Vätsäri, is a centre of Skolt Sámi culture in Finland. In summertime, the Skolt Sámi heritage house in Sevettijärvi provides information on the local traditions and culture, and visitors can buy books and handicrafts there. The old Orthodox Church was renovated in 1991. There are no hotels in the village, but the nearby village resorts provide accommodation. There is a shop/bar where it is possible to buy a meal or groceries.

Customer service points provide up-to-date information on hiking destinations, sights, tour operators and accommodation possibilities. You may request licenses needed for fishing, hunting and snowmobiling from Metsähallitus's customer service points.

For more information, please visit www.outdoors.fi

Metsähallitus Customer Service Points:

Northern Lapland Nature Centre Siida. Tel. +358 205 64 7740, siida@metso.fi

Ivalo Customer Service. Tel. +358 205 64 7701, ivalo@metso.fi

Inari Info. Tel. +358 16 661 666, inari.info@saariselka.fi, www.inarilapland.org



NORWAY



Pine forests covering gently sloping hills, sparkling ponds, lakes and vast mires – this is the Pasvik Valley. The area is well known for its flora and fauna, containing many eastern plants and birds that hardly occur elsewhere in the country. It is no wonder there are several protected areas here. Start your trip at the National Park Information Centre at Bioforsk Svanvik, where you can learn about the area's culture and nature, and get tips about things to see and do in Pasvik. Here you can also admire the diversity of northern plant species in a botanical garden.

Øvre Pasvik National Park is easily reached via the gravel road to Sortbrysttjern. There is a marked trail with information boards to "Ellenkaia", an open cabin available for overnight stays. The path continues on to the Piilola gate between Norway and Finland. Another way to reach the national park is by the gravel road to Grensefoss, which goes through a landscape conservation area. The border mark at Treriksørøysa (Muotkavaara) is only five kilometres away.

The tower at "96 Høyden", a former military observation tower, provides a fantastic view of the landscape, and you can even see far into Russia from here. A small café operates in the tower from June to

August. Pasvik is famous for its rich bird fauna, which you can glimpse from bird-watching towers along the Pasvik River. You can also visit a real bear den.

For those more interested in cultural destinations there are two museums in Pasvik: the Strand Museum and Bjørklund Gård, which present the wildlife, history and culture of the area. The longest 'gamme', a Sámi turf hut, in the world was reconstructed in 1922, and today functions as a border history museum maintained by the Border Guard Service. The Svanvik chapel, built in 1932, is a landmark in the village.

The pristine Pasvik Valley is not a bustling tourist area. However, several tour operators are available to guide you through your adventure, whether by foot, boat, dog sled or skis. There are many types of accommodation available in the Pasvik Valley, in the form of both cabins and guesthouses. And for travellers seeking a more daring experience, there are many open cabins. Supplies may be purchased at shops in Svanvik and Skogfoss.

A lot of silence and untouched nature awaits you in Pasvik.

More information:

Kirkenes Tourist Information, Tel: +47 78 99 25 44, www.kirkenesinfo.no

Bioforsk Svanhovd, Tel : +47 46 41 36 00, www.pasvik.no



RUSSIA



The Pasvik Nature Reserve (Zapovednik) is the youngest nature reserve in the Kola Peninsula. It extends as a narrow belt on the verdant southern bank of the blue Pasvik River along the Russian-Norwegian border. Pine forests alternate with mossy bogs and brook ravines. Beautiful views of the landscape open up from the hilltops in the central part of the nature reserve.

The Pasvik Nature Reserve is a territory of untouched nature, and most of the area is only used for scientific research. An important cultural heritage site, Varlam Island (Vaarlamansaari) in the southern part of the area, is open for visitors. There you can visit the reconstructed house of the famous Norwegian ornithologist Hans Schaanning, as well as the observation tower from which you can admire the calm flow of the river and the great Kalkupya Mountain.

Remnants of World War II and signs of Finnish settlement are visible in the surroundings of Varlam Island, and dense birches and diverse grass meadows, a result of agriculture, are typical for the island.

Although the core of the Pasvik Nature Reserve is reserved for research purposes, the surrounding areas are easier to access. Settlement is concentrated in the villages. The office of the nature reserve is situated in Rajakoski, where one of the hydroelectric

plants of the Pasvik River is located. At the office you can buy souvenirs and find more information about the area. Accommodation is available in Rajakoski, where you can find a small hotel, sauna, community centre, shop, medical station and post office.

You can also reach the tiny village of Jäniskoski by motorboat from Rajakoski, a trip that takes only 30 minutes. The river landscape is captivating – small islands covered with pines lie like soft pillows on the river. You may also come across picturesque waterfalls and fishing places at the Rivers of Pechenga and Titovka. Tour operators organize fishing trips to these clear rivers surrounded by mighty fells.

Most visitors arrive to the Russian part of the Pasvik River Valley through the industrial towns of Nikel or Zapolyarny. Be sure to check out the cultural events of the music school and cultural house of Nikel. The museum of history in Nikel presents the area's rich culture and history. In Suonijoki you can visit a beautiful waterfall.

Pechenga is situated in the border zone where the border control is strict. When planning a visit to the area, contact the tour operators for an official letter of invitation and a border permit. Your tour operator can also arrange fishing licenses upon request.



More information:

Pasvik State Nature Reserve (Pasvik Zapovednik)

Tel/fax: +7 815 54 50881/52500 (Nikel office), ppasvik@rambler.ru, www.pasvik.org.ru

Pechenga Municipality

Tel/fax: +7 815 54 50578, adm_pech@mail.ru

Government of Murmansk region, Department of Economic Development

Tel: +7 8152 486286/486287, www.murmantourism.ru

The main partners in Pasvik-Inari cooperation are Metsähallitus Natural Heritage Services Lapland, Finnmark County Governor and Pasvik Nature Reserve (Zapovednik). This print is a co-product of the joint project Promotion of nature protection and sustainable nature tourism in the Inari-Pasvik area (2006-2008) and was funded by EU Interreg III A Nord/Tacis programme.



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