

The nature in Vesthimmerland is both gentle and harsh. When the sun shines and the birds sing everybody falls in love with the beautiful nature and cultural landscape that ooze peace and tranquility. But quite a few are taken by surprise by that same landscape when the wind hits the Limfiord, because then it is a rough and challenging experience.

The 12 pearls of nature are chosen based on recommendations from local lovers of nature who kindly and enthusiastically have guided us around in their favourite area of nature and told us stories of the nature and culture.

The pearls are unique in their own ways, but what they have in common is that the text and photos in this folder do not do them justice. The pearls of nature should be seen, experienced and then saved as a precious memory in your heart.

This folder is meant to be an appetizer and we recommend that you also see the individual folders of each area. You can find these in many of the areas, but you can also pick them up at the tourist offices in Vesthimmerland or download them from the internet.

Aggersborg



1 The Viking Castle Aggersborg is the largest of the five castles discovered from the Viking Age. It is located beautifully with a spectacular view of Løgstør and Aggersund.

A Germanic Iron Age village is located under the castle, but the castle itself is from around 980 AD when Harald Blåtand and Svend Tveskæg ruled Denmark. At the time the location of Aggersborg was ideal since the Limfiord could be exited at both ends. Moreover, Aggersborg was located by one of the "Ox route's" three crossings of the Limfiord. Therefore, the location was extremely valuable strategically in a centre of traffic.

Today, the ramparts have been reconstructed and with a diameter of 240 meters they illustrate how impressive the castle has been. In a small exhibition you find wall sheets and three-dimensional illustrations that describe the castle as it was in its glory days.

Navnsø



2 The lake Navnsø, which is also a nice place for a swim, is one of the cleanest lakes in Denmark and surrounded by meadow and heath. The lake and its surrounding area (a total of 100 ha) is preserved and part of the moors of Himmerland, which covered a large part of northwestern Himmerland far into the 20th Century. The lake has a sandy floor, low depth and clear, poor water and is a so-called lobelia lake, named after the plants that grow on the floor of the lake. Around the lake a path has been established which is frequently used by anglers, swimmers and hikers.

Næsbydale



3 Næsbydale between Rønbjerg and Løgstør is a spectacular V-shaped erosion valley where running water has cut through the elevated moraine landscape on its way to the ocean since the Ice Age. The valley ends abruptly with a 35 meter high cliff, where the ocean, as one of the few places in Northern Jutland, is constantly eating away at the landscape and where the gully is constantly changing shape. Today, the gully is so deep that it reaches the ground water, which is evident several places along the beach where trickling springs run down the gully. During a walk on the beach you can find many different kinds of stones that were brought in with the Ice Age and if you keep your eyes open there is a good chance that you will find various fossils.

Weather predictions have always interested people – especially in historic times. In Næsby there is a magnificent view of Livø. In certain weather circumstances you can see Livø very clearly – so clearly that you can even count the number of windows on the island's stable, which is not ordinary. At the same time it appears as if Livø has moved significantly closer. The phenomenon occurs in dark, overcast weather if there is a sudden hole in the clouds that lets the sun shine strongly on Livø. The phenomenon has inspired a saying that is still known in Næsby today: "When Livø comes close, the weather will change."



The moors of Himmerland – one of the finest inland moors



4 The moors of Himmerland is the remaining part of a moor that covered the area between the Limfiord and Rold Forest until the 19th Century. Cultivation and planting has reduced the moor to an area that today is about 1284 ha large. However, in Vesthimmerland you can still get a sense of how desolate and far-reaching the moor was before it was cultivated and turned into forest.

In the moors you find a rich plant- and wildlife and particularly the rare and endangered butterfly, March Fritillary, catches the attention of many visitors. The March Fritillary breeds on the plant Devil's-bit, which can be found in the moors as one of the few places in Denmark. Therefore, much of the care of the nature is aimed at improving the living conditions for the Devil's-bit and thus the living conditions for the March Fritillary. However, it is also an aim that the flora is as diverse as possible.

Frederik den 7th Canal in Løgstør



5 Frederik the 7th Canal is 4.4 kilometers long, between 22 and 28 meters wide and three meters deep. Around 400 workers spent five years digging Frederik the 7th Canal with shovels, pickaxes and spades and from 1861 to 1913 the Canal was used to safely lead ships past the treacherous areas of the Limfiord near Løgstør.

Even though the Canal has been used for nearly 90 years it still appears authentic with its mooring posts, various canal officer's buildings and a draw bridge. The area is perfect for a journey back in time regardless of whether you take a walk on the paths near the canal or go sailing in one of the boats that you can rent from the Limfiord Museum (Limfjordsmuseet)

Vilsted Lake



6 The history of Vilsted Lake can be traced back to the original creation after the Stone Age when a part of the fiord drew back to the Limfiord and left behind low lying areas where Vilsted Lake and Sønder Sø (lake) appeared. During a period of nearly 100 years from 1869 Vilsted Lake disappeared more and more due to drainage. The last part of the lake disappeared in the period between 1952 and 1956 when the discharge from Bjørnsholm Å was regulated. A mere 30 years after the last water disappeared from the lake people started dreaming about having the lake back. This dream has now come true, and today, Vilsted Lake is the largest lake in Northern Jutland, 450 ha, and an area with a unique plant- and wildlife.

The streams and river valleys in Vesthimmerland are among the finest in Northern Jutland



7 Like no other part of Denmark, Vesthimmerland is marked by large streams that has eroded though the flat and slightly hilly terrain since the Ice Age. Binderup, Lerkenfeldt, Sønderup, Trend and Simsted streams are among the finest streams in Northern Jutland. The many river valleys are very varied and cover everything from streams that are wide, quiet and calm to small, wild streams between steep cliffs. On several of the streams it is possible to go sailing in either a canoe or kayak. The experience of going from walking on the trails and looking at the stream to actually sitting in a canoe in the winding, and sometimes exacting, stream in the uniquely beautiful setting in truly recommendable.



Ertebølle



8 In the nature area by the cliffs towards the Limfiord that last hunters and gathers of the Stone Age lived. Today, Ertebølle is a small village, but the name Ertebølle is known, because the village supplied the name to an exciting period in Danish history – the Ertebølle culture.

On the flat land, which is an ancient sea bed, about 1 kilometer south of the cliff you find Ertebølle kitchen midden. During the 1890's the National Museum dug up a huge pile of oyster and mussel shells here and discovered that the pile was man-made and that people had literally lived on top of the pile.

At the Stone Age Centre in Ertebølle you can learn more about what the nature looked like here 7000 years ago – and about the people that lived here. A settlement has been reconstructed and it illustrates what the huts might have looked like and how flint became axes and other tools.

Ertebølle Hoved is a 28 meter high cliff that is located a bit south from Ertebølle towards Løgstør Broad. The cliff is about 500 meters long and includes folded layers of moler with volcanic ash from the Tertiary Period. Throughout the world, moler is only found in the western part of the Limfiord. The characteristic cliffs that can be dated back 55 million years are for instance found by Ertebølle. Combined with moler cliffs in Hanklit, Silstrup and the island of Fur the cliffs have been appointed special Cultural and Nature Heritage and are candidates to the UNESCO World Heritage list. During a walk along the coast there are ample opportunities to find fossils.

Uhrehøje



9 The area where Uhrehøj is located is marked by both the lateral moraine from the Ice Age and sand drifts from the sandy melt water deposits. Today, the area is planted with large trees which makes it difficult to see just how hilly the forest is. However, in some spots on the hiking trails you can get a sense of how forceful that nature was and see the hilly terrain. When the ice retreated, large blocks of the ice broke off here as well and over time it was covered by melt water deposits. Here, they were frozen until the temperature rose and melted it. An example hereof is Tandrup Lake which is a kettle hole.

In Uhrehøj Plantation you can also find 20 preserved burial mounds. One of them, Uhrehøj, is 50 meters above sea level and has a fantastic view of Himmerland and the Limfiord.

Lovns



10 At Lovns nature from everywhere in Vesthimmerland is gathered in one place. Tall hills, deep valleys, forest, lake, moor, beach and much more. The hilly landscape was created by the deposit of the Ice Age where the ice left behind a landscape with large, even hills and where the melt water and rain water that followed has eroded the landscape and created gorges towards the coast. In several places you can find small forests that appear old and gnarled like a real magic forest. The outermost part of Lovns is preserved and via marked trails you can reach the flat beach where it is easy to find shelter from the wind blowing in from the Limfiord. You can go for a swim in the clean water, watch the magnificent view, enjoy the silence all the while the sand martins are busy flying in and out of the holes in the hillside.

The Hills of Hverrestrup Bakker



11 The trip to the preserved hills of Hverrestrup passes through a field boundary before the hills can be climbed and a magnificent view of the area can be enjoyed. The hills of Hverrestrup are located high above the surrounding area and is home to about 40 burial mounds and a beacon which is the highest point, 75 meters above sea level.

Both the single-stone monuments, which are memorials with no inscriptions and the burial mounds are from the Bronze Age.

Towards the south you can see a bowl-shaped hollow which is a kettle hole from the Ice Age. The hollow is also known as "Robbers' den", since highwaymen kept to here several hundred years ago.

The area which is a combination of moor, common, hardwood forest and marsh, provide plenty of opportunities to see many different kinds of plants and animals. In June and July you can find the poisonous yellow plant Mountain Tobacco which the monks used to use as a medicinal plant as well as the Spotted Orchid which is a plant with leaves with brown spots and violet petals. In the same area you can also find the round-leaved Sundew that eats insects. Cotton grass which normally belongs to wet, poor and acid lakes can also be found in the area and if you did not know better it almost appears to be a snowy part on a green grass meadow.



Livø



12 The pearl of the Limfiord Livø – a moraine island in the Limfiord, was pushed from the bottom of Løgstør Broad during the last Ice Age. Cars are not allowed on the island, but on foot all generations can take a cultural and nature journey and bring home fantastic experiences. Livø is famous for its varied nature – here you will find almost all types of Danish nature.

A trip around Livø is about 10 kilometers, but it might feel a lot longer since it is easy to fill up your pockets with fossils, shells and much more. In particular, you will find a lot of sea urchins. Occasionally you might be watched from the water by a pair of curious eyes. It is the seals that breed at Livø Tap who curiously follow what is happening on land. Enjoy it, because there are not many places in Denmark where you can have your "own" seal.

The island is about 320 hectares and can be divided into three parts. Forest, organic farming and finally, the third part which is moor, common areas and tidal meadows. The forest is dominated by oak and hazel. The trees are old and gnarled that in daylight think they are trolls. At night, people are also convinced...



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12 UNIQUE PEARLS

- of nature that are worth visiting