VINDELEN RIVER VALLEY

A UNIQUE FISHING EXPERIENCE

VINDELEN RIVER · TRIBUTARIES · LAKES
A new web site for fishing enthusiasts

The Vindel River, one of Sweden’s four national rivers, offers magnificent natural surroundings and varied first class fishing. Looking for fishing waters, planning a trip or purchasing a fishing licence? This new web site is updated continuously with information and new features.

www.vindelalvsfiske.se.
For those of us who live in and are involved with the Vindel River Valley, it is easy to overlook what we have here. When we put our whole fishing area on paper in this publication – from coast to mountains – we gain fresh insight into what fabulous resources we enjoy. In this magazine we offer you a premier trip through the long valley and hope that it will inspire you and invite you to try a more down-to-earth fishing trip.

Our trip begins in Umeå near the mouth of the Umeälven River, where pike congregate with sea trout and salmon. We don’t need to travel more than about 20 kilometres to arrive at the Vindel River, where the wild and untamed waters begin.

We then move up a river where grayling probably have long been the most interesting quarry for us sport fishermen. However, now we have a new contender that is making big inroads. I’m thinking, of course, of salmon that are now returning to the river in ever increasing numbers each year. In recent years one record after another has been set with respect to spawning salmon migrating upstream.

When you consider that the majority of salmon migrate more than 200 kilometres to reach their spawning area, we are talking about a really long stretch of salmon fishing. In another few years salmon fishing in the Vindel River has the potential to be among the best in Sweden.

A little farther on in the magazine, you can read why I make this statement.

When we move a bit farther up along the Vindel River, the rapids become more powerful and smaller streams flow into the main river. Frequently these tributaries are unfairly overlooked because we have a large river that captures most of the attention. But take a look at names like Åman and Gargån, tributaries as large as rivers in southern Sweden with enormous populations of grayling and resident brown trout.

Finally we have the waters near the mountains, where the river branches into two mountain dells that both have something altogether extra to offer. The big lake running trout of Ammarnäs in the upper reaches of the Vindel River are, of course, becoming national celebrities – and rightly so. But don’t let that make you forget the Laisälven River, where the large “grey grayling” hang out.

Yes, what truly fantastic fishing waters we have up here! Moreover, we gladly share them with all fishing brothers and sisters who want to come here. Read more and feel welcome to visit our fishing paradise both during the summer and later in the year.

Stig Westbergh, Project Coordinator, From Coast to Mountains

“In another few years salmon fishing in the Vindel River has the potential to be among the best in Sweden.”
Vindel River Valley
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The powerful and nearly 500-kilometre-long Vindel River runs through one of Europe’s last wildernesses. The river is also Västerbotten’s largest wild salmon-running waterway. Thanks to the Vindel River’s world-class natural and cultural value, it was singled out as a national river in 1993. The other three national rivers in Sweden are the Torneälven, Kalixälven and Piteälven.

New values point the way

From a historical perspective, we must admit that we have not managed our natural resources and our systems of waterways in the best way. With respect to the Umeälven-Vindel River, salmon fishing was, in fact, so intensive around the mouth of the river as far back as the 17th century that most salmon catches eventually became unprofitable and had to be discontinued.

In the mid-1800s timber rafting began in a big way. During the next 100 years stones and boulders were cleared from the rapids on a 1,600-kilometre floating channel on the Vindel River and its tributaries. When you also consider the 140 floatway dams that were constructed on these tributaries, you will appreciate what effect this has had on the fish population and fishing.

Nor have we been entirely free of power plant construction because such plants began to be built in the lower portion of the Umeälven River as early as the end of the 19th century. The Vindel River itself, however, was saved at the last minute, and we owe all who fought for this a debt of gratitude.

Fortunately, the times and values have changed. The path ahead has been staked out and we are making progress. We currently are actively engaged in restoring spawning and growing areas as well as open watercourses for fish migration. There is a lot left to do – but we will persist. You can count on it.

Nature conservation prevailed

The final word came on April 1, 1970 – the Vindel River would not be developed. The Palme administration had finally announced that the river would be preserved untouched for future generations.

It actually began with the much-discussed “Peace in Sarek” in 1961, which was not any kind of peace and definitely not one of Swedish conservation’s greatest successes, as is sometimes asserted. Nature conservation’s agreement with the Vattenfall power company meant, among other things, a green light for the exploitation of the Vindel River, which had been planned more or less behind closed doors at the end of the 1950s. At a very early stage the Vindel River was considered one of our most “profitable” rivers – for the water exploiters, that is. The long Vindel River game was a game with a deck that was in part stacked.

The entire 1960s was a single long period of inquiries, petitions, lobbying, actions for or against, new inquiries, Parliamentary motions, press commentaries and agreements. It seemed to go on forever. On December 6, 1967, however, it became clear that Parliament, by a vote of 179-141, had decided in favour of a protected river. All at once the Vindel River became more than a river. It became a concept, a symbol for the protection of untouched nature.
Fishing close to the city for both enthusiasts and families

The Vindel River’s winding and, in places, dramatic journey through Västerbotten comes to an end at Bottenhavet outside Umeå, about 40 kilometres downstream from its confluence with the Umeälven River. If we are a little contrary and turn the whole thing around, we can say that the rivers begin down at the coast. Accordingly, that is where we start our trip up the river.

Umeå residents and tourists who come there have some really exciting salmon and sea trout fishing within bicycle distance of the city centre. In the lower sections of the Umeälven River, fishing is permitted upon purchase of a fishing licence in the section below the dam spillway, downstream in Sörfors as well as in the Röbäck waters on the south side of the river abreast of Böleäng and at Bölesholmarna a little farther downstream. Below the bicycle bridge in central Umeå fishing is free.

Fishing in May
At Röbäck and by Bölesholmarna the river is wide and flows calmly. The best way to fish here is from land or by boat with spinning flies or light spoons and wobblers. Thanks to proximity to the sea, you have a good chance to catch fresh run sea trout, which follow the spawning smelt. Fishing in the Umeälven section below the dam spillway can also be very rewarding at times, depending on when, where and how you fish. To begin with “when”, fishing first really gets going in the middle of May, depending somewhat on if and when Vattenfall opens the dam gates at Stornorrfors. Before the water has been released, there are no newly migrating fish in the section below the spillway. Not until ice has cleared in this section can you count on the better fish migrating up through the Baggböleforsen rapids. Most of the fish caught during the first days are thin kelts that should be released.

Salmon trout in September
During the whole month of July there can sometimes be plenty of salmon that have their sights set on the Vindel River. Some days during good several hundreds of fish are registered at the counter by the fish way. In the middle of the month the first seatrout also start to appear and their numbers increase during August and especially in September. After September 15 seatrout are protected, so during the last two weeks of September only catch & release are prohibited. During August and September there can also be smaller runs of completely fresh grilse that usually are rather eager to bite.

Hot fishing places
The upper section of the Umeälven below the spillway on the north side of the river consists of the stretch from the Sörfors bridge 200 metres downstream to Kåddisholmen. Around Kåddisholmen and some hundred metres farther upstream, there are several rapids, pools and good narrows. Below Brännlands Wårdshus there is also the so-called “Svartälorna” (black rocks), with a long and deep pool that later in the season contains many fish. At the end of the pool there is a narrow passage that sometimes is very hot, but a great deal of climbing is required to get there. Upstream from the inn abreast of Brännland school lies a series of pools rather close together. Both upstream towards Sörfors bridge and downstream towards the old pump station, there are many excellent pools and narrows. Don’t fish only in the faster water with large rocks; also try stripping a fly in the calmer pools as well.

At the upper boundary of the fishing stretch is Sörfors bridge, where there’s parking on both sides of the river. Fishing on the south side of the river is licensed by landowners of the Sörfors community and includes the stretch from Sörfors bridge down to the Klabböle boundary.
Pike and orfe extend the season

The Umeälven River fish population consists of more than fish species with adipose fins. The lower portions of the river also offer great opportunities for those seeking catches of pike and orfe, for example.

Text and photo: Mikael Lindström

Pike fishing has become a popular way to extend the fly-fishing season. And the idea is not fly-fishing that is merely passable, especially when it begins to get into the two-to-three-kilo class. Spin fishing works excellently with spring pike, but it is a matter of not fishing too quickly and preferably using lures that run shallow. If you want to release a fish again, you should also avoid using lures with too many treble hooks.

Ripples in the stream

Right after the break-up of the ice, which usually occurs in May, the Baltic pike begin to gather near mouths of the smaller streams and in flooded inlets that are shallow for a long way out. Fishing places at the mouths of streams generally consist of quiet, dense and bright slopes that continue a way out in the shallow sea inlet or a short, swift stream out into flooded shores overgrown with grass. When the water warms up somewhat, you can see ripples from fish that are chugging along up the rather shallow streams searching for suitable spawning areas. Pike and orfe arrive at the same time, and sometimes it can be difficult to see the difference in the ripples. Orfe prefer to travel in small groups, whereas pike more often come singly or in pairs.

Important gear

To be able to fish effectively and wade around in the often flooded meadows and along shallow shorelines, waders or boots are required. Otherwise from an equipment standpoint, no special gear is required aside from really good tippet material that can be tied and a long forceps so you can avoid sticking your arm down the throat of a ten-kilo pike to get out the fly.

Tips for the lower Umeälven River

- Fly patterns that have proven viable for both salmon and sea trout are long-fibred hackle flies such as Black Doctor spey and Thunder spey. A little tip for salmon is to try flies of small sizes.
- For spin fishing, spinning flies, smaller spoons, spinners and wobblers work great. It’s a good idea to fish carefully, varying the speed and depth.
- Felt soles under boots are highly recommended because fluctuations in water levels make rocks very slippery.
- Contact Blixt Sport, tel. +46 (0)90-77 40 70, www.blixtsport.se for additional fishing information. Fishing licences are sold in the shop as well as at some places identified by signs along the river.

Note – According to Swedish Board of Fisheries’ regulations, seatrout with adipose fin remaining are protected downstream from the regulation dam at Norrfors. Accordingly, only seatrout with clipped adipose fin may be caught.

Hot spots for pike and orfe

- Rinneln by Obbola has many fine fishing spots for large pike and perch, both from land and by boat.
- Villanäs by the bird observation tower by the Umeälven River just south of Strömpilen is another classic pike locale with shallow inlets and small “inland lakes” formed by flooding.
- By the mouth of Strömsbäcken really large pike and orfe hang out at times.
- In Kont, just south of Strömbäck, there are many excellent places that can be easily reached by hiking trails and paths.
- Central Umeå has first-class orfe fishing by the dock with the chance of catching fish of two or three kilos. You can have good results fishing for these orfe using a variety of baits.
Salmon fever in the Vindel rapids

Fishing in Vindeln has become better and better in recent years. Both area residents and tourists have come to see the benefits of fishing close at hand, which offers good catches, especially of salmon and grayling. Located right in the middle of this fishing promised land are Renforsen rapids and Vindeln’s Camping.

Text: Calle Bredberg Photos: Fredrik Holmström och Calle Bredberg

The image of the sparkling Vindel River landscape has changed in recent years. Previously fly-fishermen were a rather rare phenomenon, but nowadays wading fishermen with long rods and heavy lines are to be seen here and there. One person who belongs to the circle of passionate fly-fishermen in the Vindel rapids is hometown boy Fredrik Holmström, a fellow who moreover is generous with tips and happy to see more people discover the rapids.

“It’s really cool to see this development,” Fredrik says.

“As salmon and grayling fishing has improved, all the more people have found this place. It’s especially nice to see that local young people have begun fly-fishing and spending a whole lot of time at the river.”

Central camping

Even if there are many good rapids close at hand, Fredrik especially singles out the Renforsen rapids, where he has caught lots of salmon himself.

“The campground is in an incredibly strategic location,” Fredrik declares.

“Just below the campground there is really good grayling fishing – and guest campers really will catch fish. In addition, by the Renforsen rapids narrows and the suspension bridge just upstream from the campground, we have one of the best salmon fishing places in the whole area.”

To the delight of camping guests, grayling fishing has gotten increasingly better in recent years, probably because of less “catch and kill mentality”. One hot tip from Fredrik is to try fly-fishing in the Renforsen rapids during autumn, when the biggest grayling of all are landed.

Front-row seats

In the Vindel rapids there are really fisheries for everyone – even those who don’t even want to hold a rod. You see, it works fine to stand on the suspension bridge and watch all the fish-

Growing numbers of fishermen are seen with fly rods in the Vindel rapids.

Facts about the Vindel rapids

• The Renforsen and Degerforsen rapids are included in the Vindel rapids nature reserve.
• Adjacent to the Renforsen rapids is the Kvaren area and a nature centre. A beautiful walking path leads visitors around the rapids via two bridges over the Vindel River.
• By all means try fishing in the smooth water between the rapids, where very large perch and pike are caught.
• Information about dispensation periods for salmon fishing is made available at www.vindelalvsfiske.se in August. There you will also find information on the Vindel district’s fishery conservation area.

Johan Bertilsson’s spawning-coloured cock salmon weighing 8.5 kg was caught during the dispensation period in September. Otherwise a great number of more or less fresh salmon are caught beginning in mid-July.
Wild streams near Umeå

Downstream from Vindeln there are a number of “stops” along the salmon’s path to the spawning grounds. Many of them have a pronounced wilderness feeling – and they are located only 30 minutes from Umeå.

Despite their proximity to the coast and Umeå, the rapids between Vännäsby and Vindeln are real nonentities in a salmon fishing context. For example, there’s Långforsen rapids, below the village of Selet, and Gammsvedjeforsen rapids, just upstream from the same village. Farther down is Vännforsen rapids, the Vindel River’s first rapids after the confluence with the Umeälven River abreast of Vännäsby. Clearly these rapids are salmon waters that we’re going to be hearing a lot about in the future.

Sold on bombarda fishing

Janne Tolonen is pretty much alone in the way he fishes for salmon in Vindeln – at least, so far. This method has many advantages and the catches are good, so there is every reason to sneak a look at what Janne is up to.

Text and photo: Calle Bredberg

Bombarda fishing originated in Italy. It is fishing that is based on special sliding floats that perform in different ways in the water. Today Janne Tolonen has adopted the method wholeheartedly, but before it was “imported” to Sweden, he had to content himself with float improvisations of his own.

“I began experimenting at home in Torne-dalen with homemade sliding floats using modified regular floats and weights. It actually worked. But when I finally found real bombarda floats in a catalogue, I switched entirely to them,” Janne says.

Different depths

The greatest finesse with bombarda fishing is the ability to fish at many different depths, depending on which leader and which float you use. Moreover, you can cast for great lengths and effectively fish large areas.

“Special rods are also an important part of fishing. I use a 12-13-foot rod and several different fly line tips for different casting weights and depending on what type of fish I am going after,” Janne continues.

Good start

Janne fishes for all species with the bombarda method, but it was only a few years ago that he started bombarda fishing for salmon with flies. During the very first summer he caught six salmon in the Vindel rapids and lost many times that number.

“The disadvantage is that you lose quite a few fish. For my fishing buddies, it can also be a little tedious at times. You see, they will never succeed in getting me to begin with two-handed rod flyfishing,” Janne Tolonen chuckles.

Contact information and a map

is at www.vindelalvsfiske.se.
Click further to the Långfors-Selet fishery conservation area via “Våra fiskeområden” (our fishing areas).
When you talk about lakes in the vicinity of the Vindel River, many fishermen think first of Storsandsjön Lake, scarcely 20 kilometres north of Vindeln. The lake’s reputation as a place for large brown trout has been intact for many years. The trophies regularly caught sometimes exceed the five-kilo mark by a considerable margin.

Successful experiment
“Bergnäs” brown trout have been stocked by 2-3 year old parr in Storsandsjön continuously since 1983. It all began with an experiment to try and eliminate the lake’s invasive population of whitefish. After only a couple of years, an explosive increase of brown trout was noted, and that is continuing. In cooperation with the Vindel River Fishing Association and the county administration, the fishery conservation area (FCA) is currently working with habitat restorations in Storkvarnbäcken, where the Storsandsjön brown trout have their spawning and nursing areas.

Mainly boat fishing
The 680-hectare (1,680-acre) Storsandsjön is an extremely picturesque lake that is at its best when the sun is shining and the surface is glossy. The clear water and the sandy bottoms intensify the lustre and encourage both fishing and other summer activities. Most fishing takes place from boats and involves everything from advanced to more simple trolling techniques. Boats with deep rigging work best during the warmest periods, when brown trout go deep and are not so easily caught. In spring and autumn you will brown trout at shallower levels, which also makes it easier to fish for them. For visiting boat fishermen, there is a boat launching place at the lake as well as a number of boats for rent.

Char in Ristjärn
Within the Storsandsjön FCA, there are also a number of smaller lakes. Probably the most interesting of them is Ristjärn. The lake is beautifully situated between two mountains just south of Storsandsjön, with windbreaks, BBQ sites and space for caravans. You will hear the sounds of good fishing luck echo between the mountains time and time again. Last Easter a 3.3-kilo char was landed at Ristjärn.

Another lake that is very hard to overlook is Abborrtjärn, just east of Vormsele. Simply fol-
low the side road next to the rural community centre for a few kilometres. This is a truly fantastic fly-fishing lake, especially for those who have a floating tube, which requires a special fishing licence, however. Naturally, those who do not own a floating tube can fish from shore. What is unique about Abborrtjärn is that not only are there big fish in the 17-metre-deep lake, but furthermore its char replenish themselves naturally. The prime time for char is usually from mid-June up until midsummer. In addition to char, there are also plenty of brown trout in the lake.

Anonymous gems
Just north of Åmsele is the Åman system of waterways, extensive bodies of water that include Åmträsket, Djupsundssjön, Hjukensjön, Manjaursjön, Ajauresjön, Holmträsket and Gådaträsket. These are primarily really good perch and pike waters, but an occasional brown trout can sometimes strike. The system is a largely unknown gem that is incomparable. You will look long and hard to find a more beautiful landscape. Isälvsleden (the Ice River Trail) cuts straight through the region, and most of it is organised into a single huge FCA. Accordingly, one fishing licence is sufficient. As paddling waters, the Åman system of waterways is insuperable with furnished floating huts here and there in the area. In addition to the waters named above, there are of course lots of other alternatives. Accordingly, those who travel along the Vindel River with fishing tackle in the luggage and an appreciation of lake fishing have a great deal to do.

Information på webben
- Storsandsjön’s own home page is at www.storsandsjon.just.nu
- If you click further to the fishing areas on www.vindelalvsfiske.se, you will find information on the Åman and Vormsele FCAs, among other things.
Fishing in the Vindel River Valley is very well organised, with almost all flowing waters available to the public. The Åman fishery conservation area (FCA) is one of the largest FCAs along the Vindel River Valley. The Åman system of waterways runs through parts of Vindeln, Norsjö and Lycksele municipalities. The area is dominated by a lake system made up of the remnants of an ancient ice river.

The Manjaurån River is situated in the upper portion of the area and consists of a stretch of river about three kilometres long that connects two larger lakes, Ajaursjön/Ajaurkalven and Manjaursjön. The large proportion of lakes in the system contributes to a relatively stable water flow. During sustained periods without precipitation, however, the river can be affected by low water.

In addition to variations in water flow, the lakes contribute to the so-called outlet effect along the upper portion of the Manjurårn, which has a positive impact on fish production, among other things. The fact is that fishing, and above all the size of fish, along the upper portion is somewhat better.

Fishing in the Manjaurån River is very good, and one can often catch pike exceeding the ten-kilo mark. Other than grayling and brown trout, with grayling predominating as matters now stand, however, it is not unusual for brown trout that are a little larger to be caught in the latter part of the season, which in all likelihood is due to migration from the lakes to seek out suitable spawning grounds in the river.

The Manjaurån River offers more than grayling and brown trout fishing in the streams, however. Pike exceeding the ten-kilo mark hang out in the quiet and deep stretches of smooth water connecting parts of the stream.

**Other tributaries**

Other interesting tributaries along the Vindel River are primarily Ruskträskbäcken and Gargån. On page 19 of this publication you can read a little more about Gargån. Both Ruskträskbäcken and Gargån have special fly-fishing stretches with specific rules to preserve and strengthen the fish population as well as to afford high-quality fishing of wild fish in natural waters.

**Early fishing**

Most of the Vindel River tributaries have their source in forest land, and consequently their runoff ends earlier in the spring than the main river, which permits good stream fish-
ing conditions as early as June. As a rule, the pre-summer period is the best time to fish the tributaries.

The fly-fishermen’s choice of methods, regardless of when during the season they are fishing, differ little between tributaries and the main river. As usual for grayling fishermen, deep nymph fishing generally works well throughout the season, especially if you want to come in contact with grayling that are a little larger. That is not to say that at times dry flies cannot be productive.

Deep nymph fishing is best carried out with a floating line and short leader for good control. The cast should be short and directed upstream, whereupon the flies are allowed to drift freely and unaffected by the leader and floating line. In simple terms, this fishing can actually be compared with traditional course angling bite usually is noted when the tip of the fly line stands up. When you have mastered the technique, you know almost in advance when the bite is coming. This method of fishing has its limitations, however, because it works best in somewhat faster sections. The choice of flies with this technique has proven to be of secondary importance provided that the fly is properly fished. As a rule, commonly imitated deep nymphs such as flashback, double legs, Czech nymphs and Polish pupae work splendidly in the Manjaurån River, and along the entire Vindel River Valley for that matter. Viable dry flies are variations of olive klinkhammer, Mc Murry foam ant and yellow Mayfly dun.

If you want to focus on somewhat larger salmon trout, as you might expect, various types of muddlers can be used. The best fishing for pike usually comes about during the month of June, and large white pike streamers have proven to be very useful during this period.

Useful links

At [www.vindelalvsfiske.se](http://www.vindelalvsfiske.se) you can click further to the fishing areas. Among other things, you will find the Åman, Gargnås/Råstrand and Ruskträsk fishery conservation areas.

Information about Gargån is also at [www.laxsele.com](http://www.laxsele.com)
These two charming villages have much in common, especially fishing. They have well-arranged shorelines with lay-bys and BBQ huts along the river. In addition, there are several bridges and roads on both sides of the river that make most fishing spots very accessible.

**Lively rapids**
Vormsele prides itself on a series of exciting rapids: Grundforsen, Vormforsen and Linaforsen as well as several excellent stretches in between. Of these, Vormforsen rapids are the most dramatic. Here the river has a drop of nine metres in a space of 500 metres. There are primitive rock outcroppings at the rapids and a number of erratic boulders are spread out along the shores.

**Running down**
From a fishing standpoint, Vormforsen rapids are all the rage, but difficult. This is exactly the place where most of the salmon fishermen hang out. Almost everyone who allows the rapids a little time in “peak season” makes contact with salmon, but for many it is only a matter of contact. When salmon make a run outside the difficult, steep rapids, all you can do is shrug your shoulders and hope for new salmon. Those who choose to only sit and look out over the rapids for a few hours can see eight or ten salmon break the surface.

On the other hand, upstream from Vormforsen rapids, more specifically in the middle of Vormsele village, is Storastryckan, one of the very best fishing spots in the area.

**Easy wading at Linafors rapids**
If Vormforsen rapids are difficult fly-fishing rapids, Linaforsen rapids are that much easier. After the spring runoff has passed, Linaforsen rapids are easy to wade and attractive for all who have a passion for fly-fishing. Like the other rapids, there are plenty of char in the river and a whole lot of salmon trout. Upstream from Linaforsen rapids, on the border with the Björksele fishery conservation area (FCA), is the renowned Linastryckan, a fishing spot that is absolutely splendid.

**Salmon attract**
The Björksele FCA administers a 19-kilometre segment, which includes Kittelforsen rapids, 500 kilometres downstream from Björksele, as well as Grundforsen rapids, eleven kilometres upstream from the village. In between there are several fine stretches and calm waters. As with the Vormsele segment, the rapids and the stretches in between provide excellent populations of both grayling and browntrout. In this segment of the river, you can also enjoy fishing for really good perch and large orfe on occasion. As frosting on the cake, salmon pass through the area during the late season – and of course you can hook them. Göran Gran knows that well, having landed three splendid salmon in Björksele last autumn. During the past year there has been an enormous upswing in salmon fishing in the area, as well as in the entire Vindel River.

**Brooks and small forest lakes**
Generally the Björksele FCA offers pleasant fishing in Bjurbäcken, a branch with lots of grayling in the flowing sections. The good access to grayling is especially notable on the fly-fishing stretch in the lower part of the brook. In addition, there are a lot of lakes within the FCA, including one put-and-take body of water. Just outside Vormsele is Abborrtjärn, a very exciting lake with brown trout and a natural population of char. You can read more about Abborrtjärn on page eleven of this publication.

**No crowds**
In large part, fishing on this stretch of the Vindel River must be regarded as very underutilised. Without doubt, there are lots of fish, and the area is beautiful, easily accessible and sufficiently well-organised. Add to that no crowds whatsoever, making it unbelievably attractive.
Fishery conservation measures along the Vindel River

Our remaining and unregulated brooks, streams and rivers are not as untouched as you might think, regardless of whether they are protected in some way. In the aftermath of the timber-rafting period, intensive work has been carried out for many years in an attempt to recreate aquatic environments and improve opportunities for successful and inspiring sport fishing.

Text: Daniel Holmqvist Photos: Stig Westbergh and Daniel Jonsson

Restoration of waterways is not a new phenomenon, but the methods for carrying it out have changed over the years. Nowadays waterway restoration focuses to an increasing extent on trying to reinstate more original conditions. Usually this activity is described as environmental restoration. The intent of this type of restoration is also to limit restoration structures that do not harmonise with the environment. The core of the methodology consists of strengthening natural and existing structures that have been partially wiped out when the floating channels were cleared. Existing rapid narrows, rapids, shallow areas, bends and holes are reinforced at the same time as material that was cleared is returned to the waterway.

New expanses of water
One of the greatest gains of restoration is increased expanses of productive environment that is again made accessible for salmon and other organisms. This came about in part through the opening of tributaries that had been closed off, allowing water to again enter previous shallow areas.

Along the Vindel River watershed 27.8 hectares (69 acres) of highly productive environments for young salmon and salmon trout have been restored so far. According to the International Council for the Exploration of the Sea (ICES), the entire Sävarån area of production occupies 20 hectares and Rickleån occupies 15 hectares as a comparison.

Boulders and gravel
Comprehensive initiatives have already been carried out along the Vindel River’s main channel within Sorseen and the western parts of Lyckele municipality. However, in the future the focus will be on the rapids around Vindeln and Vännäsby. With respect to the tributaries, restoration that has begun in a large portion of the watershed is continuing and is part of a larger, so-called LIFE+ Project being carried out by Umeå University. Among the project’s aims are providing spawning gravel, really big boulders and large woody debris along the stretches that have already been restored in a traditional way. These structural components still appear to be inadequate along our watercourses. Among other things, really big boulders have been blasted away and spawning gravel has eroded. Gravel is supplied from natural gravel deposits with the help of dumpers, while large woody debris and big boulders are taken directly from the brooks’ surroundings with excavators. The actions are carefully monitored by the Swedish University of Agricultural Sciences and Umeå University. It is hoped that this will lead to development of methodologies and enhanced biological expertise on restoration.

Management is important
Lastly, it is worth mentioning that fisheries management is important in this context. It doesn’t matter how many rocks or how much gravel or large woody debris is put in place if the fish population does not have time to reproduce before harvest. Sustainable management must be based on the waters’ natural ability to produce fish. The choice of management tools in this context are though a matter of taste. Accordingly, we can all help to preserve and improve our fishing and our natural fish population by following established rules and fishing judiciously. Because I assume that we have ended large, massive fish stocking of natural waters.
The best beats of salmon fishing

The areas where you probably can be most sure of success when searching for salmon are the rapids of Gargnäs and Vindelgransele. This is the main spawning area for salmon, where classic fishing spots like Laxselet and Krokforsen have offered up many tussles with salmon over the years.

Text: Calle Bredberg

Boat fishing in Torparselet, just below the Mårten-Abrahamsforsen rapids. Photo: Greger Jonsson

It is not only that most salmon are caught in the Gargnäs/Vindelgransele area, in addition, these stretches of the river have long series of pools, riffles and runs which are unusually long and have exciting characteristics. This makes it possible to spend a whole lot of fishing hours in the area.

"Just within our area we have c. 250-kilometres of fishing in the river, divided into ten rapids and nine shorter streams," says Daniel Jonsson, chairman of the Gargnäs-Råstrand fishery conservation area (FCA). "In between them there are also several short, excellent pools of smooth water." However, sometimes the characteristics of the river can be a little too exciting to be fished from shore.

"The rapids can be very powerful, and large rocks make shore fishing sometimes demanding. Fishing from a boat often is preferable however some salmon are caught from shore as well. It is particularly during high-water periods that the salmon go closer to land. Boats can be rented through the FCA."

Female salmon are released

Some may think it's odd to allow fishing for salmon in their spawning areas. From a biological viewpoint however, it is not more wrong than catching them farther downstream in the river. Nevertheless, the fishing do not disturb the spawning period. This FCA have indeed strict regulations. The female salmon are protected and are not allowed to be killed however, one male is allowed to be killed per day. Luckily, many choose to be more conscientious than this and release all fish.

"Generally are the salmon fishermen keen in following the rules and often also release the males," Daniel reports.

Laxselet and Krokforsen

The fishing spot that refers to the name Laxselet is one of the very best in the area. It actually stands for one single stretch of smooth water, but in a fishing context there are two slow flowing areas with a short current between them both. The Krokforsen rapids area c. 10 kilometres upstream from Laxselet, is another of the classic salmon spots suitable for boat fishing. Moreover, the area has one of the river’s deepest places of all, estimated to a full 27 metres. Incidentally, the stretch just upstream from rapid Krokforsen is one of the best places to fly-fishing from shore.

Shore fishing

Downstream the Gargnäs FCA borders the Djupsele FCA. The Djupsele area probably is not appreciably inferior to its more famous neighbours, but it has not been investigated as thoroughly — an area well worth exploring. Djupsele, in turn, borders the Vindelgransele Co-operative Association, which certainly rings a bell for many salmon fishermen. Popular fishing spots include Storgrässle, Åtjärnsselet, Kvarnforsen/Kvarnselet and Lappstryckan. As with the Gargnäs area, boat fishing with wobblers and spoons takes place however, the more shallow rapids and glides in Vindelgransele are well suited for fly-fishing from shore.

Dispensation in September

As in the case of a couple of other FCA along the Vindel River, the Gargnäs/Vindelgransele area has been granted dispensation during the last seven years for fishing during the September 1-14 period (generally salmon fishing is banned from September 1st). During this period fishing normally tends to be very good. In Gargnäs area alone, 87 salmon were caught during the two dispensation weeks in year 2009. Whether there will be any dispensation the coming years or not is unclear, but keep your eyes open for information about this at www.vindelalvsfiske.se.
Useful links

- The Gargnäs–Råstrand fishery conservation area’s own home page can be found at www.laxsele.com. There you will also find other fishing information and lodging in the area.

- Go also to www.vindelalvsfiske.se where you can click forward to the fishing areas.

Joel Jonsson with a fish caught in Laxselet. By the time salmon reach the Gargnäs/Vindelgransele area, they have adapted to spawning activities and are darker and more coloured than the fresh sea run fish. Photo: Daniel Jonsson

Photo: Mikael Lindström

Some places are more suitable for shore fishing than others. Photo: Greger Jonsson
The greyling paradise

In the national river’s rapids as well as in smaller rivers and creeks, lakes and forest ponds in the surrounding area of Sorøsele, there are large numbers of residents with huge dorsal sail fins. These residents are the reason why greyling fishing in Sorøsele ranks among the very best of its type.

Text and photo: Calle Bredberg

It can may cocky to refer Sorøsele as one of Sweden’s best greyling areas. Many who have given the area a real chance however, verify that this is really not an idle boast. Trophy sized greyling are present everywhere in the Sorøsele region, and they come in good condition. Every year a number of greyling exceeding the two kilo limit are caught, and for several years in a row the weight rankings have been topped by greyling caught in the area.

The never failing rapids

The main artery of the area, the Vindel River, runs straight through the community. Just a stroll from the town centre you find the Stensundsforssen rapids who may very well be one of the best spots for numerous greyling. Both spinners and flies are frequently used. At times during the early season there can be a lot of water in the rapids, so it is a good idea to fish close to shore and/or try to get deeper with the fly or lure. On these occasions fly-fishermen should be equipped with weighted gold beadheads nymphs, but also gold-ribbed hare’s ear nymphs and the fly “superpuppen” during normal water levels. Spin fishermen often use small Mepps spinners. The greyling are always present – you can be absolutely sure of that.

Fiskecentrum helps

Periodically large brown trout enters Stensundsforssen rapids. In addition you can occasionally encounter very large pikes who hunt for prey in the stream margins. Perch and whitefish are always available for those who prefer some of these species. There is no question that Sorøsele residents have fabulous local fishing around the corner. However, visitors should be aware that there are two different fishing permits that apply in Stensundsforssen rapids, one for each side of the river. All fishermen who visit Sorøsele should spend a moment at Fiskecentrum Sorøsele (Sorøsele Fishing Centre), located next to the railway station. They have all the necessary information, expertise and all fishing permits assembled under one roof.

Bräskaforsen

When talking about the Vindel River and Sorøsele, it is worth mentioning Bräskaforsen rapids, about 10 kilometres farther upstream from Stensundsforssen. The rapids, located just above the confluence with Laisälven River, are
part of the Örnäs-Forsnäs fishery conservation area. These are very lovely grayling waters that also offer a good chance of catching excellent salmon trout.

In addition to the big rivers, the Vindel River and Laisälven River, there are many smaller rivers and creeks in the Sorsele area. These are small, less known streams that have low fishing pressure. Real nonentities, in other words. Olsbäcken is one of these where, unlike most of the other waters, brown trout predominate. Right next to Olsbäcken there is also a wilderness cottage for rental.

**Waters suitable for all**

On the other hand, grayling predominate in another small stream, river Gargån. Both river Gargån and Olsbäcken creek are easy to access and are located c. five kilometres from Sorsele, but still they have relatively few visitors. Probably due to the enormous variety of fishing in the area. Both of these streams do not have largest fish however, they serve as excellent waters for family fishing and good “practise waters” for beginners. Nevertheless, they can also produce real surprises.

**Mountain characteristics**

A little farther out in the periphery there are several other very fine smaller rivers and creeks. Giertsbäcken river, c. 20 kilometres west, as well as Juktån river, c. 40 kilometres from Sorsele, are streams that have high abundance of grayling and brown trout, especially early in the season. Giertsbäcken river is a mountain fed stream that usually is divided into an upper and lower stretch. Brown trout are more common in the upper parts while grayling become increasingly numerous further downstream. The 2009 Lapland Fishing Festival, with a large number of foreign participants, was held in the lower parts of Giertsbäcken river. The catches were of course very good.

In the smaller river category, Juktån river probably is the stream within the Sorsele municipality where you can catch the largest Brown trout. Around midsummer the stream can offer some really enjoyable moments for those who are willing to refrain from dancing around the Maypole. Within the municipality there are a couple of sections that are especially attractive. The upper stretch runs from Överstjuktan down to Rastiselet, while the other begins at the outlet of Storjuktan and continues down to Lomsele. The upper part is rather susceptible to high water levels, but on the other hand it can be fabulous when the time is right.

**Lake trout**

Large lakes, small lakes and forest ponds. The Sorsele area is overwhelmed with waters. Among the larger lakes, Storjuktan and Överstjuktan must be singled out, especially as trolling arenas. Trolling is growing in popularity, and catches include lake trout of impressive sizes. Another lake just outside Sorsele is Norra Svergoträsket, where large brown trout and arctic char are present. In Svergoträsket many choose to fish from some of the boats available for rental. Fly-fishermen try to hit the mayfly hatches in the early part of the season.

**Boats and floating tubes**

If you are going to list some of the best lakes for grayling, it would be hard to exclude Stora Harrträsket, Sörsåttjärn, Snorsen, Sarvesträsset and Njuktjaure. These lakes are a cut above the rest, waters where greyling weighing more than two kilos are caught every year. Several of the lakes have boats, and by Harrträsket and Snorsen there is lodging facilities available. For those who own a floating tube have their right to bring it along for lake fishing. The only competition from other fishers you will have to contend is with black-throated divers.

**A personal view**

As we’ve noted, some maintain that the Sorsele area is one of the country’s best for large grayling. If you still have any doubts about that assertion, we suggest that you come here to form your own opinion. Whatever conclusion you reach, there is a pretty good chance that you will leave here with a personal record in your backpack.

**Contacts and links**

- Fiskecentrum Sorsele/Tourist Office, +46 (0)952-14095, www.sorsele.se
- Sorselefisket norra (Fishing in northern Sorsele), www.pensionatholmen.se
- Sorselefisket södra (Fishing in southern Sorsele), www.karingberg.se
- Information about Gargån is at www.laxsele.com
- As usual there is always useful fishing information at www.vindelalvsfiske.se
- Magnus Bidner, fishing coordinator in Sorsele municipality, +46 (0)952-104 88, e-mail: magnus.bidner@hush.se
When it comes to brown trout fishing, Ammarnäs and Kraddsele occupy a proud place on the world fishing map. They offer unique fishing that is to be found in very few places on our planet. Moreover, this involves a resource that is managed in a very deliberate way.

Text and photo: Magnus Ström/Bildarkivet.se and Calle Bredberg

A stable situation for the Vindel River’s unique large lake resident brown trout population

Pow!! When the brown trout has made up its mind, the strike is hard as nails and ruthless. It is just a matter of hanging in there. The fish runs over to the other side of the river and then races straight out in the smooth water. Suddenly it heads downstream, alarmingly close to the whitewater down by the narrows, but fortunately the fish turns upstream again. The tension is indescribable. The fight is made all the more sharp-edged because of the fact that I have never before landed a so-called Ammarnäs brown trout.

There have been many strikes during the past days, four most recently last night, but all have gotten away in the course of events. Most of them within a few seconds. Am I now finally going to succeed? Magnus, my loyal and well-schooled fishing buddy, stands as usual beside me and peppers me with words in an attempt to calm my agitated soul. I don’t hear a word of what the man is saying. That’s the way it is when you find yourself in “the bubble”, the microcosm in which only the fish and I exist.

**Catch landed**

It takes quite a while to get the fish tired for landing. When it lies complaisantly on the surface straight downstream, it is by no means easy to bring it closer. Slowly, ever so slowly, careful to not break the leader, I drag the fish in the strong current towards me. When I finally get a grip in front of the tail fin, I can’t help shouting for joy. Magnus, who is an empathetic fellow, also utters some loud superlatives. The fish is a very fine representative of the famous Ammarnäs brown trout – and of course the catcher is tremendously proud.

**Popular and protected species**

The Ammarnäs brown trout population is unique, a species that would not have had a chance of surviving a hydro dam construction in the river. Today it is protected from such exploitation thanks to the fact that the Vindel River has official protection as a national river under the environmental legislation act. Fortunately, the Ammarnäs brown trout also has been accorded another, popular protection in the region that tends to grow stronger each year. Everyone involved – the fishery conservation area, entrepreneurs and owners of fishing rights – seems to have realised the value of securing a strong population of the brown trout and the future looks bright for the unique species.

**Mostly fly-fisherman**

The lodge Ammarnäs Wärdshus houses the local Fiskecentrum (Fishing Centre), a facility that is operated by Ulf and Bodil Johansson. They have been extremely active in efforts to increase the value of the Ammarnäs brown trout as a resource and to elevate its status by research. Today they also can enjoy a steady...
stream of fishermen who share their values and appreciate fishing for the unique population.

“Last year we received reports of 77 brown trout with an average weight of 3.6 kilos,” Ulf Johannsson says. “Nowadays it’s almost exclusively a question of fly-fishermen, even though many stretches are also open for spin fishing. The reason seems to be that fly-fishing simply has proven most successful as a fishing method.”

**Big grayling**

About as many large brown trout of similar average weight have been reported in Kraddsele area, where Ulrik Thureson is prominent in the fishing community. In the heart of the brown trout eldorado, Urik wants to highlight the greyling fishing in the area.

“Yes, brown trout fishing was absolutely fantastic last year,” he says. “More and more people however, are beginning to discover the large greyling in the river, which has improved enormously in recent years. No doubt thanks to changes in regulations specifying a maximum length of 45 centimetres (18 inches). Today greyling weighing about 1.5 kilos are not at all unusual and 2-kilo fish are caught regularly,” Ulrik Thureson adds.

There is no doubt that both Ulf and Ulrik are passionate about the salmon trout fishing they have in their “backyards”. With ambassadors like that, the Ammarnäs brown trout appear to have a bright future awaiting them.

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**About fishing in Ammarnäs/Kraddsele**

- The large Ammarnäs brown trout have a high degree of biological preservation value. Today we have largely got the better of the previously excessive and ill-advised fishing in lake Storvideln, the brown trout’s main feeding area, which has led to an upswing in sport fishing for brown trout. At the end of July or beginning of August, the Ammarnäs brown trout begin their migration from lake Storvideln upstream to the spawning areas, primarily Järnforsen and Sjöforsen rapids, a migration of c. 60-80 kilometres.

- Fishing for Ammarnäs brown trout takes place along the whole river stretch between Sorsele and Ammarnäs, but primarily upstream from Kraddsele. Go to http://ammarnasfvo.dinstudio.

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**Surveying Ammarnäs salmon trout**

During the coming two-year period, the Ammarnäs brown trout will be monitored like never before through a scientific project. Among other things, the research will involve electrofishing surveys, drift diving surveys and radio telemetry studies.

At the end of the 1990s a telemetry study was conducted in the area. Ammarnäs brown trout was tagged with unique coded radio transmitters. This initiative taught us a great deal about the species and provided valuable information for efforts to protect it. This time however, the survey has a whole different magnitude.

“Totally 8-10 people will be involved in the project,” according to Magnus Bidner, the person responsible for the operation within the project “Projekt Ammarnäsöringen”.

**Drift diving- and electrofishing surveys**

“Each year c. 20 electrofishing sites are monitored. The aim is to identify spawning- and juvenile habitats and the yearly recruitment. “By sampling a series at the same sites, we will get a clearer picture of the density of fry and a measure of abundant age groups of the brown trout. These results can be a tool to estimate migrating spawners a number of years later,” Bidner points out.

Drift diving surveys are carried out during summer and autumn.

“The aim is to study spawning areas and to estimate the number of individuals in the area during the summer as well as during the spawning period. In addition we will look at competition among species from lake trout, grayling, salmon and pike.”

Radio transmitters on brown trout Radio telemetry using a small radio transmitter attached just below the dorsal fin will continue between June and October this year. After the marking, the bearing of the senders will be taken by receiver and antenna.

“We will catch c. 30 brown trout, primarily in the feeding areas in lake Storvideln and lake Gautsträsk. However, if necessary also use fish caught by anglers along the river,” Bidner reports.

“If the technology works as expected, we can follow the migration of the fish for one and a half years.”

In addition to the field initiatives, information and web solutions also are involved in the project.

“It is our intention to make all research results public on an ongoing basis – for example, through the fishery conservation areas’ home pages,” Magnus Bidner concludes.

**Naturrum, Vindel Mountains Visitors Centre**

The Naturrum Visitors Centre in Ammarnäs, centrally located in town, is an obvious stopping place for all who have their sights set on the Ammarnäs mountain world.

In the Vindel Mountains Visitors Centre you can read, listen and get to know the Vindel Mountains’ nature and culture, attractions and favourite places. The staff will be glad to offer routes on hiking trails, guided tours and interesting destinations. Information on activities and business hours is at www.vindelfallen.se.
Laisälven is the Vindel River’s most impressive tributary. Like the mother river, it also offers superb fishing for grayling and brown trout. For fly-fishermen, a holiday in Laisälven is safe choice.

Text and photos: Calle Bredberg

From the head waters in the pristine mountain region above the tree border downstream to the confluence with the Vindel River, Laisälven winds for a stretch of at least 170 kilometres. In the upper sections of the Laisdalen Valley, upstream from Bäverholmen, the surroundings have mountain characteristics with crystal clear streams and excellent brown trout fishing. Abreast of Adolfström and Gautosjö, the river is divided up into three lakes, waters that primarily attract jig and longline fishermen. At the outlet of the bottom lake, Gautosjö, are Märkforsen rapids found who also act as a migration obstacle for grayling and whitefish upstream. As a result there are only brown trout and arctic char present upstream. Next comes the narrow, but 35-kilometre-long Laisan lake, a lake that has acquired a good reputation primarily on the basis of trolling.

Hot confluence
Downstream lake Laisan the area heats up for those who think that fly-fishing is the best way to spend a holiday. Continuing to follow the river downstream, we soon come to rapid Håstskoforsen that really cry out for fishing. Immediately downstream from rapid Håstskoforsen are “the meeting of the rivers”, a confluence with the Dellikälven river, a fishing spot that many consider the top spot in the entire Laisälven River. The Dellikälven river also has a reputation for being really something special, but it doesn’t always live up to the visitor’s expectations. The problem probably is that the Dellikälven river has been far too popular at times, but on occasion really large brown trout are landed in the neat river.

Different characteristics
In Björkliden fishing permits are available for the stretch down to Deppisforsen rapids, where the Laisälven river fishing conservation area begins. A short distance downstream from Deppisforsen are some of the most interesting rapids in the entire Laisälven River, namely Sadeforsen and Holmselforsen. When conditions are right, there is no problem at all in spending one’s entire fishing holiday here. Both rapids are excellent “pupae waters” where the caddis flies hatch during the darker nights. The characteristics of the rapids are a little different from one another. Sadeforsen rapid is more turbulent, with large rocks and rough backwaters, whereas Holmselforsen rapid divides into several more suitable grayling branches. What the rapids have in common however, are a very fine supply of grayling. With a little luck, you can also pull in a few brown trout. Small forest roads goes down to the rapids and make them easily accessible, and at Sadeforsen rapid there is also a simple cottage for rental.

Sauna and fishing
Downstream from Holmselforsen rapid the distances between the rapids are considerably longer however, except for a hot spot by the bridge over Granselet, it is a rather long stretch less suitable for fishing all the way down to Luspeforsen rapids, about two kilometres upstream from the municipality border. Nevertheless, these rapids are well worth a visit. A really excellent fishing stretch for a couple of kilometres and a cottage with a sauna for rental. Can you expect much more during a holiday?

Rapids after rapids
Downstream from the municipality borders a new fishing permit is required and new rapids begin. Here you will find celebrities such as Hällforsen, Trollforsen, Vitforsen, Kvarnforsen and Gargesonforsen. By Laisälven standards, these are rapids with a relatively large number of brown trout, but also a high abundance of river Laisälven’s proud symbol – the grayling. In many of the rapids the water is beaten with large boulders, which can make fishing from shore a little more demanding.

Salmon trout sensations
At the area of Gargesonforsen rapids the river changes it’s character again and transforms to more gravelly bottoms well occupied and preferred by the grayling in other words. Farther downstream several interesting fishing places such as Långforsen- and Storforsen rapids crop up. Oddly enough, it is on just these flatter gravel bottoms that many of the largest brown trout have been caught. Accordingly, this is a situation for big surprises of the most positive kind. Negative surprises are generally very rare during a fishing holiday in the Laisälven River.
When the time is right, you can be in on the dry fly-fishing of your life at Laisälven River.

**Contacts and links**

- Fiskecentrum Sorsele (Sorsele Fishing Centre) can help you with most things, +46 (0)952-140 95, www.sorsele.se
- The Laisälven fishery conservation area can be found on its own page, www.laisalven.se
- Björklidens Fiskecamp is at www.bjorkliden-laisalven.info
- Sorselefisket norra (Fishing in northern Sorsele), www.pensionatholmen.se administers a stretch in the lower part of the river.
- Under "Våra fiskeområden" (Our fishing areas) at www.vindelalvsfiske.se you will find some useful contact information, but not everything.

In Hällforsen rapids boat fishing is preferred.
In the county of Västerbotten there are six fishing waters units with quotas above the “odlingsgränsen”, a so-called cultivation borderline. You can apply to the county board for fishing permits. Generally, these are popular waters of high value from both a fishing and nature standpoint. Allotments for waters with quotas normally are for a maximum of three days, but for the upper Vindel River each applicant can receive permission to fish for five days in a row. The main reason is that it’s difficult to get to this fishing paradise. It involves an almost 50-kilometre hike one way. Those imagining they can accept the price of comfort and convenience should be prepared for the fact that a helicopter trip is not exactly cheap.

**Mankeforsen rapids**
The stretch of the upper Vindel River with quotas is a total of 17 kilometres long. For adventurous fisherman this can mean a hefty day trip with a light pack and a rod in hand. And exploratory trips really are to be recommended along this fabulous stretch of river! In the south is Mankeforsen rapids, a very highly regarded fishing arena where you can experience so-called “sight fishing” in the clear water. Upstream from Mankeforsen the five-kilometre-long upper Framakselet section awaits you before the wild Skånjaforsen rapids begin.

**The area of Dalavardo**
Upstream from Skånjaforsen rapids the river’s character changes, taking on the guise of a more intimate mountain stream. In places it consists of winding, calm-flowing sections with short stretches of faster water. Abreast of Dalavardostugan (cabin) the speed of the current increases and then becomes more calm again farther up towards the headwaters. This area is seldom visited by people. Paths and fireplaces
are unusual occurrences, and so are fishermen and mountain hikers. The top weight of the brown trout is a bit lower than around upper and lower Framakselen, but the fishing absolutely is world-class. Those who have the good fortune to time it right can experience late mayfly hatches and salmon trout that gorge themselves on the dainty morsels so that the water splashes a metre high. Often the fish move into shallow water and are clearly visible against the light, sandy bottoms. We’re talking about sight fishing of the highest international standard.

A set table
Fishing just like this, one of the absolutely most enjoyable experiences of my fishing life, is stored on the hard disk under my own fishing cap. The fishing took place in a divine fishing spot where the river separates into several smaller channels and sandbanks. It began with a brown trout that struck in one of the shallow side channels and immediately raced out towards the deep holes lower down in the stream. There the fish darted around long and hard before it finally gave up. While I was fighting the fish, I detected distinct splashes in several of the shallow channels. The table was set for the brown trout and mayflies were on the menu.

Fishing with the eyes
My fishing comrade chose to sneak up on a brown trout shadow that he discovered at a distance. When he had crawled forward on his hands and knees and found himself a mere five metres from the fish, he whipped out a fly and the brown trout rose like a rocket. Despite the fact that brown trout up here are said to be cautious and shy, the strike was unhesitating and rock solid. After fishing for a while, the Klondike mood tapered off a bit and we switched to enjoying Vindel River residents in a different way. On a high shore bank we strolled forwards and peeked down into the clear water. Within our field of vision there were always brown trout to follow with our gaze. Fishing by eye is actually just as exciting as rod fishing. Sizes are compared, food-scouting routes are mapped and favourite dishes on the menu are noted.

Two kilos
Most of the brown trout were between one-half and one kilo, but a few fish exceeded over a kilo. When Magnus got a look at the day’s big strapping fellow we realised that we would be forced to raise the bar a notch. The bronze-coloured, gently undulating brown trout must have weighed close to two kilos. It is mental images like this that make one determined to return to the “paradise of mountain fishing”.

Facts about the upper Vindel River
• In the 17-km-long fishing stretch from Mankeforsen rapids to the influx of Särngejukke creek, a maximum of one hundred 24-hour fishing permits a year are allowed. Each applicant can be given a maximum of 5 days.

• Permits are granted during July 1-August 20. Only fly-fishing is permitted, and a maximum of two fish a day measuring min. 40 cm (16 in.) may be caught and killed.

• Apply to the county board before May 1. You will find additional information and application procedures at www.ac.ist.se/fiske/statensfjaIlfiskevatten

• Limited numbers of fishing permits are also available at the Ammarnäs Fiskecentrum, tel. +46 (0)952-602 00. E-mail: ammarnas.fiskecentrum@telia.com. Web: www.ammarnasfishing.com. These are earmarked for arranged tours to Mankeforsen and Skånajforsen rapids.
Instead of continuing a legal battle that has gone on for more than 50 years over what effect the hydro dam in Stornorrfors (Umeälven river) has had on fishing in the Vindel River, a mediation agreement has now been reached among the concerned parties.

The agreement means that the Vattenfall power company and Umeå municipality will set aside SEK 50 million for fish migration at Stornorrfors as well as fisheries development in the Vindel river valley.

Migration problems
With additional financing from affected municipalities, the Regional Council, the County board, the universities, EU funds and others, resources have available for the comprehensive development project known as “From Coast to Mountains”. The project is divided into six different subprojects, and within them intensive efforts are now under way to deal with migration problems at Stornorrfors and other issues. Today the Vindel River’s migrating fish must pass through an approximately seven-kilometre stretch that is heavily impacted by hydro dam constructions. Studies have shown that less than half of the fish ripe for spawning succeed in getting past this area for spawning migration to the Vindel river.

Obstacles being removed
Together with international fish migration experts in one of the From Coast to Mountains subprojects, we have now presented proposals for how to best solve problems with migration upstream. Our intention is to turn these proposals into practical reality within the coming years and to remove obstacles to effective fish migration that exist. The project’s goal is that at least 80 percent of the fish will be able to make their way through the problem area, compared to about c. 35 percent today. With that increase and the “compound interest” that will occur when salmon have a chance to spawn, it is easy to exude optimism.

Problems migrating downstream
A majority of the salmon and sea trout that have spawned in the Vindel river survive and migrate downstream towards the sea during the spring and early summer. The migration occurs at about the same time as the naturally produced offspring, the smolts, conduct their migration towards the sea. Studies have shown that the Stornorrfors hydro dam causes major problems when the migrating fish have to pass the turbines. Today many of the fish die on the way through turbines and power plant tunnels.

New fish ladder
Company Vattenfall and the Umeå municipality are currently building a new fish ladder that is adapted to function for fish migrating both up- and downstream. Within another of the From Coast to Mountains projects, a fish bypass is being built onto the fish ladder that will direct fish migrating downstream into the ladder. The Stornorrfors initiative leading outward-bound fish past a power plant of this size is unique in Europe. The ladder and fish bypass will be put in operation during the 2010 migration season.

Most people are aware that timber floating activities, through channelization, removal of rocks and boulders and dam constructions, affected the biology of watercourses negatively. Thus, now we have seriously come to grips with restoring the Vindel River and its tributar-
Good fishing etiquette is beneficial for everyone concerned at fishing waters, the fish as well as the fishermen. There are some unwritten rules about how one should behave with respect to fellow fishermen as well as how one should act when releasing fish.

**Be careful**

When you release fish, you should be careful. Don’t play the fish too long before you bring it in. If possible, try to remove the hook before you bring in the fish. If the hook is deeply or firmly embedded, but not in a gill, you should not dig into the fish but cut off the leader and let the fish heal from the hook instead. Do not return a fish that is bleeding from the gills, but kill it quickly and make use of it. If you pick up a fish in your hands, dampen them first. Never lay your hands on the gills or eyes of a fish because you can easily injure them. If the fish is large, turn it on its back so that it calms down and the risk of injury decreases. Remember to always minimise the time above the surface of the water. The fish should be carefully placed in the water when you release it. If you see that the fish appears sluggish after its struggles, hold it under the surface of the water with a grip around the tail. Manoeuvre it forwards and back so that water flows through the gills until you see that breathing resumes properly before you release it. Good luck out there!

**Prioritized fisheries areas**

In the autumn of 2008 the Swedish Board of Fisheries decided that the Vindel River and the lower part of the Umeälven River would be one of ten prioritised fishing areas in Sweden. This also means that we will receive more resources for developing fisheries in the area. Some of the goals are to build up an advisory administrative organisation that covers the entire area, develops the visitor and fishing industry and increases knowledge about the unique Ammarnäs brown trout.

**Information is improving**

In a new information project carried out with the help of the Swedish Sports Fishing Federation, we have created a new home page for the project From Coast to Mountains. Many of the fishery conservation areas offer fishing licence sales there via internet (www.vindelalvsfiske.se) in order to facilitate your fishing trip. If you select a site in the fishing area, you will also note that new information boards and reference signs have been set up and old information has been exchanged with new relevant material.
The From Coast to Mountains information project is co-financed by:
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