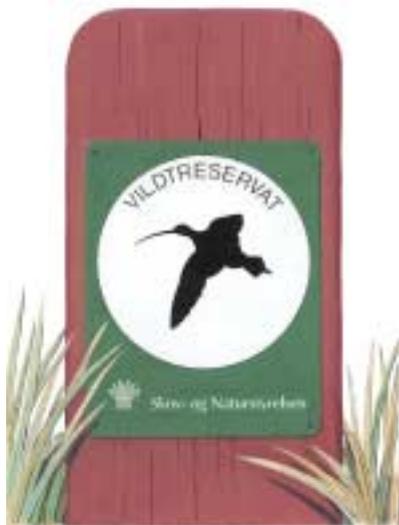


The Hanstholm Wildlife Reserve

Between Klitmøller and Hanstholm is a wildlife reserve of almost 40 km² of dune heath, created by the combined forces of the sea, wind, and sand.

This area is home to more than 30 breeding bird species, including the golden plover, the wood sandpiper, the marsh harrier, the short-eared owl, and the crane. During autumn, vast flocks of migrating geese stop here to rest, and in winter, the lakes are full of flocks of tufted duck, goldeneye, and merganser. The otter has found a refuge in the lakes here, and the area also boasts large populations of foxes, roe deer, and red deer. The wildlife reserve is closed to the public during the breeding season. The central part, featuring the many lakes, is closed all year.



Hanstholm

The Hanstholm Lighthouse was built in 1843. At that time, it had the strongest light of any lighthouse in Europe. Today, the lighthouse buildings house part of the Museumscenter Hanstholm. Here, visitors can enjoy a wide range of exhibitions about the ocean, the harbour, coastal fishing, the lifeboat service, and the natural scenery around Hanstholm.

The Hanstholm Battery is the largest military defence battery from World War II in all of Northern Europe. This battery was part of the Atlantic Wall, which the German occupying power constructed to prevent the allied forces from landing their troops. Among other weaponry, the battery comprises four cannons with a calibre of 38 cm and a range of 55 km. With its sister battery at Kristianssand in Norway, these cannons were almost capable of covering the approach to the Skagerrak. Each of the cannons was housed in a bunker that provided shelter for technical facilities and ammunition as well as accommodation for the 100 soldiers required to man the cannons. The Museumscenter Hanstholm presents an exhibition in one of the bunker emplacements.

A decision was made to build a harbour at Hanstholm as far back as 1917. The project almost foundered several times for political reasons, and more than 50 years elapsed before the harbour was finally completed. Today, Hanstholm Harbour is Denmark's largest fishing harbour for edible fish. In addition to this, ferries run services to Norway, the Faeroe Islands, and elsewhere.



Bulbjerg

Bulbjerg is the northernmost point of a calcareous rock that used to be an island in the Littorina Sea. This limestone cliff, which stands 47m tall, is Denmark's only bird cliff. It is home to a large breeding population of kittiwakes, a north-Atlantic seagull species. In the sea, a hundred metres from the coastline, it is still possible to see the remains of the "Skarreklit". This was once an 18m rock formed from limestone and flint, but it finally broke in a storm in 1978.

Bulbjerg was part of the German defence works known as the Western Wall during World War II. The outermost bunker on the cliff now features a small visitor's centre. Here, text and images tell the story of the German fortifications. Also included is information about local culture and nature.



Lild Strand

A few km west of Bulbjerg we find the fishing hamlet of Lild Strand. This village, Nr. Vorupør, Thorup Strand, and – to a lesser extent – Slettestrand are the only places left on the coastline where commercial fishing is still being carried out with fishing vessels launched from the open beach.

Welcome to the West Coast Trail Agger - Bulbjerg

The West Coast Trail Agger – Bulbjerg is a walking tour/cycle route with a total length of approximately 80km. The cycle route continues south to the Danish/German border and north to Skagen. The walking tour follows large stretches of the old rescue trail, whereas the cycle route follows small public roads or forest roads. The routes can be followed in their entirety or as segments. The walking tour is signposted by means of wooden stakes bearing the lifeboat logo. The cycle route is signposted by means of blue and white metal signs that bear the number 1.



This folder describes a number of selected sites along the trail from Agger to Bulbjerg.

Overnight accommodation can be found at camping sites, the old lifeboat house in Lyngby, or at primitive campsites. These campsites often have no water, and some have no toilets. Shelters are indicated by a special symbol. For information on other overnight accommodation, please contact the tourist information agencies in Hurup, Thisted, Hanstholm, or Vorupør.

The walking trail passes by areas where special restrictions on access apply. These areas are the Agger Bar and the Hanstholm game reserves, as well as the bird-protection areas on the Lyngby, Stenbjerg, and Alvand moors. To avoid disturbance to the birds during their breeding season, these areas are closed to the public during the period 1 April to 15 July. In the wildlife reserves, certain areas are off-limits all year. All of these areas and restrictions are signposted. These restrictions do not affect the right to follow the West Coast Trail all year round.

For the disabled

All the sights described have nearby parking, and many can be visited by wheelchair users. Please refer to local leaflets for information about parking and suitability for disabled people.



This leaflet is prepared in collaboration between the County of Viborg and the Danish Forest and Nature Agency.

To contact the County of Viborg, please call +45 87271700. Alternatively, visit www.vibamt.dk. Local representatives of the Danish Forest and Nature Agency can be contacted at the State Forest District of Thy, tel. +45 97977088, or the State Forest District of Hanherred, tel. +45 98235422. You are also welcome to visit www.skovognatur.dk, where information in English is also available.

● Vestkyststien Agger-Bulbjerg



"Nature Trails in the State Forests" is a series of leaflets with information about selected natural areas. They are available from libraries and tourist agencies as well as at the entrances of many of the areas described. They are also available at www.skovognatur.dk

Ministry of Environment
The National Forest and Nature Agency

- cares for state-owned forests and other natural areas throughout Denmark. The Agency's management addresses outdoor recreation, wood production, and protection of our natural and cultural heritage.

Denne tryksag bærer det nordiske miljømærke Svanen. Licensnr. 541 006

West Coast Trail Agger-Bulbjerg



The National Forest and Nature Agency

Nature trails in the state forests No. 31E





Landscapes and sand drifts

In the Atlantic Time of the Stone Age 6,000 years ago, when the Littorina Sea was at its largest, the coastline from present-day Agger to Klitmøller lay 5 to 10 km east of where it is today, and northern Thy was divided into several islands. The land mass has risen since then, so when we walk on the so-called rescue trail today, we walk on what was once the bottom of the Littorina Sea. The old coastal slopes and cliffs can be seen in many places; they are particularly noticeable at Hanstholm and Bulbjerg.

The land uplift quite literally meant that a lot of sand saw the light of day. The swell of the sea had the same effect, and the combination of these two forces led to the formation of dunes along the coastline. This, in turn, gave rise to destructive sand drifts heading inland.

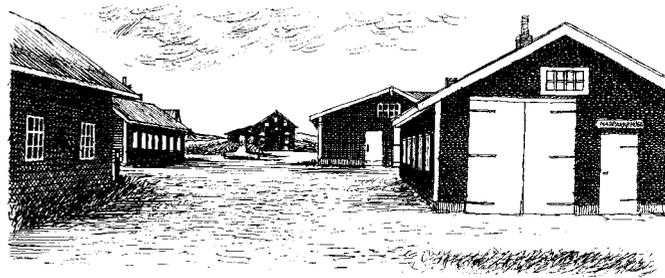
These sand drifts were greatly aggravated by the agricultural practices of the day: sheep and cattle were left to graze freely on the dunes, and dune vegetation was harvested for forage. As a result, sand drifts laid waste to the fields, and many farms – even entire villages – had to be abandoned. The sand drifts were not successfully curbed until the early 19th century. Success was finally achieved by means of strict restrictions on grazing and removal of dune vegetation. These restrictions were supplemented by the planting of marram grass and efforts to reduce breaches by means of bunches of heather.

The dune plantations

The first experiments with the planting of trees were made around 1820, but met with little success. Better results were achieved in the mid-19th century. By this time, species capable of surviving and even thriving under the harsh conditions had been identified. Up until around 1930, the Danish Dune Service [“Statens Klitvæsen”] bought thousands of hectares of dune land, planting them with mountain pine, Austrian pine, and white spruce. Today, dune plantations are dominated by sitka spruce, silver fir, and Scotch pine. Deciduous trees such as oak and beech are also beginning to cover ever-greater areas.

The Agger Bar

Up until the flood of 1825, the sand bar (or “tange” in Danish) between Bovbjerg (20 km south of the Thyborøn Channel) to the south and Lodbjerg in the north constituted a single, unified barrier against the North Sea. The sea breached this barrier, however, and so formed the Agger Channel. A subsequent flood, in 1862, destroyed this channel to form the Thyborøn Channel. Since then, this channel has been the western gate of the Liim Fjord. Since the end of 19th century, the bars have been protected from the North Sea by an almost unbroken line of groynes placed along the coastline from Bovbjerg to Agger. The black houses in Agger bear witness to this work. Here, workers cast concrete elements to be used for coast protection. These elements were transported to the groynes by means of railways.

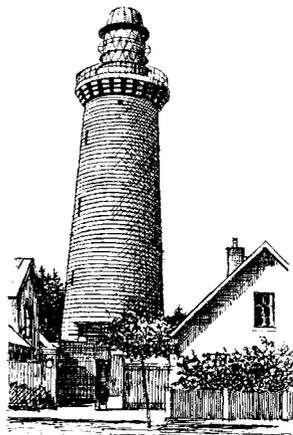


Shallow waters, the large lagoon lakes and the tidal flats on the east side of the bar combine to provide excellent foraging and breeding places for many types of waterfowl. The mute swan, sheldrake, mallard, pintail, coot, oystercatcher, lapwing, redshank, ruff, and the black-tailed godwit are all amongst the most common breeding birds in the area. The bar is also an important stop for many migrating birds in the spring and autumn. The area has been designated as an international bird protection area.

The Lodbjerg Lighthouse

During the era of sailing vessels, countless sailing ships were stranded along the western coast of Jutland. To prevent this, lighthouses, navigation marks, and buoys were erected during the mid-19th century in order to help ships navigate.

The Lodbjerg Lighthouse was built in 1883, using blocks of granite from Bohus in Sweden. The lighthouse is open to the public against payment of a small admittance fee. It commands a wide view of the inhospitable landscape, dominated by the dune plantation, the dune heath, and the jagged ocean dunes. The lush garden surrounding the lighthouse keeper’s lodge is in sharp contrast to its surroundings, acting as proof positive of the importance of shelter.

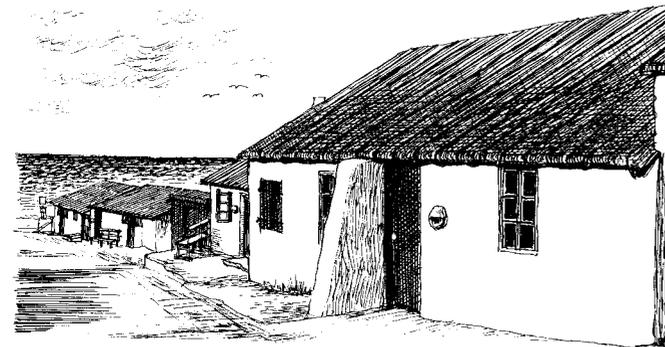


finds speak of the people who lived here during the Stone Age and Bronze Age.

The Stenbjerg Landing Place

In Stenbjerg, old-fashioned commercial fishery with vessels launched directly from the beach ceased long ago, but recreational fishing continues to this day. The unique environment around the landing place has been preserved, including the lifeboat station, the windlass house, and the small, white tool sheds with their brightly coloured doors and windows.

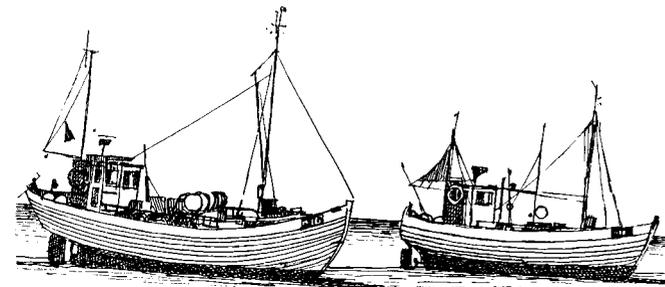
The lifeboat service was established in 1852, and lifeboat stations were dotted liberally along the entire western coast right up until the 1930s. The lifeboat station in Stenbjerg dates back to 1934. It contains a small museum that tells the story of the station’s work up until 1972, when it was closed down. A small special exhibition in one of the fisherman’s cottages relates the history of the fishing hamlet. The Stenbjerg Days festival is held every year on the second weekend of July. During the festival days, the small community is abuzz with music and entertainments, and lavish seafood feasts are prepared.



Nr. Vorupør

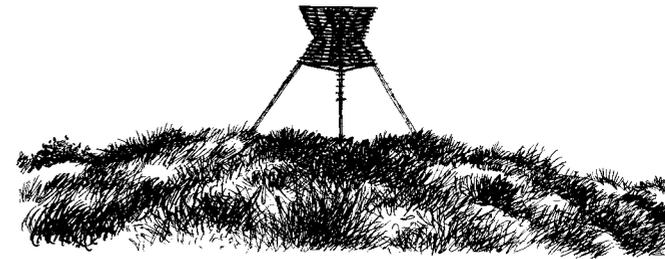
Nr. Vorupør is one of the few places where fishing vessels are still launched and moored directly from and on the beach by means of windlasses. Once, the local fleet comprised 27 vessels; now, only a handful is left. The breakwater, which was built in 1909, protects the landing place. It also exercises a powerful attraction on anglers and others who simply wish to experience the power and beauty of the ocean at close quarters.

Nr. Vorupør houses the largest summer cottage area found in the local area, and of course this has had a marked effect on the town. In addition to many shops and restaurants, the town now boasts the North Sea Aquarium, the Nr. Vorupør Nature Centre, and a new exhibition on the history of fishing.



The Bøgsted Gully

At the Bøgsted Gully (or “Rende”), between Vorupør and Vangså, the plantation reaches almost all the way down to the foot of the coastal dunes. The small stream has carved its way into the soil and joins forces with the imposing dune formations to produce a dramatic landscape. Alongside the gully, visitors will walk beneath oaks, silver firs, and sitka spruces that are hundred years old, yet only a few metres in height. A system of navigation beacons was established along the coastline in 1884–1885. All beacons had a unique appearance, allowing seafarers to determine their exact position. One of the beacons, which are all now under preservation orders, can be found at the Bøgsted Gully.



Klitmøller

Many non-local Danes mispronounce the name of this place: the –møller is stressed, a relic of the mills that gave this place its name. (“Klit” = “Dune”, “møller” = “mills”). Previously, 4-5 mills were located along the stream running from the Vandet lake into the North Sea. Today, this location is better known as one of Europe’s best windsurfing sites.

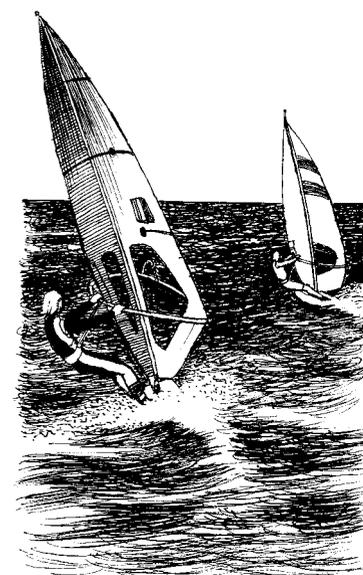
For centuries, Klitmøller was a wealthy community, and its importance as a place of trade far exceeded that of Thisted, which is now the larger town. Klitmøller’s wealth came from trade with Norway. Grain and foodstuffs were sent from Denmark to Norway, and the ships then returned with timber, horses, and other goods. The balmy days of Klitmøller lasted until the sea breached the Agger – Harboøre bar in 1825. With this breach, access to the market towns of the Liim Fjord was much improved, and Thisted grew at the expense of Klitmøller.

During the next 150 years, fishing was the main trade of the town. The many tool sheds still testify to this fact. This era lasted until the opening of the Hanstholm harbour in 1967, which caused the entire fishing fleet to move there. Today, tourism is Klitmøller’s main source of income. As a result, the town offers good shopping opportunities and – during the tourist season – several restaurants.

The Vandet and Nors Lakes

These large lakes are among the cleanest lakes in Denmark. Both are karstic lakes, i.e. nutrient-poor lakes with lime floors. Water flows into these lakes through fissures in the lime. They are about 20 metres deep and are actually former ocean bays that were cut off from the sea by the land uplift during the Palaeolithic age.

Vandet Lake and Nors Lake both offer excellent opportunities for bathing. The eastern end of the Vandet Lake is often used by surfers. This is a good place for children and beginners, and many experienced surfers also come here when the open sea becomes too rough. One-day fishing permits for angling from the shores of parts of the Vandet and Nors lakes are available from the State Forest District of Thy.

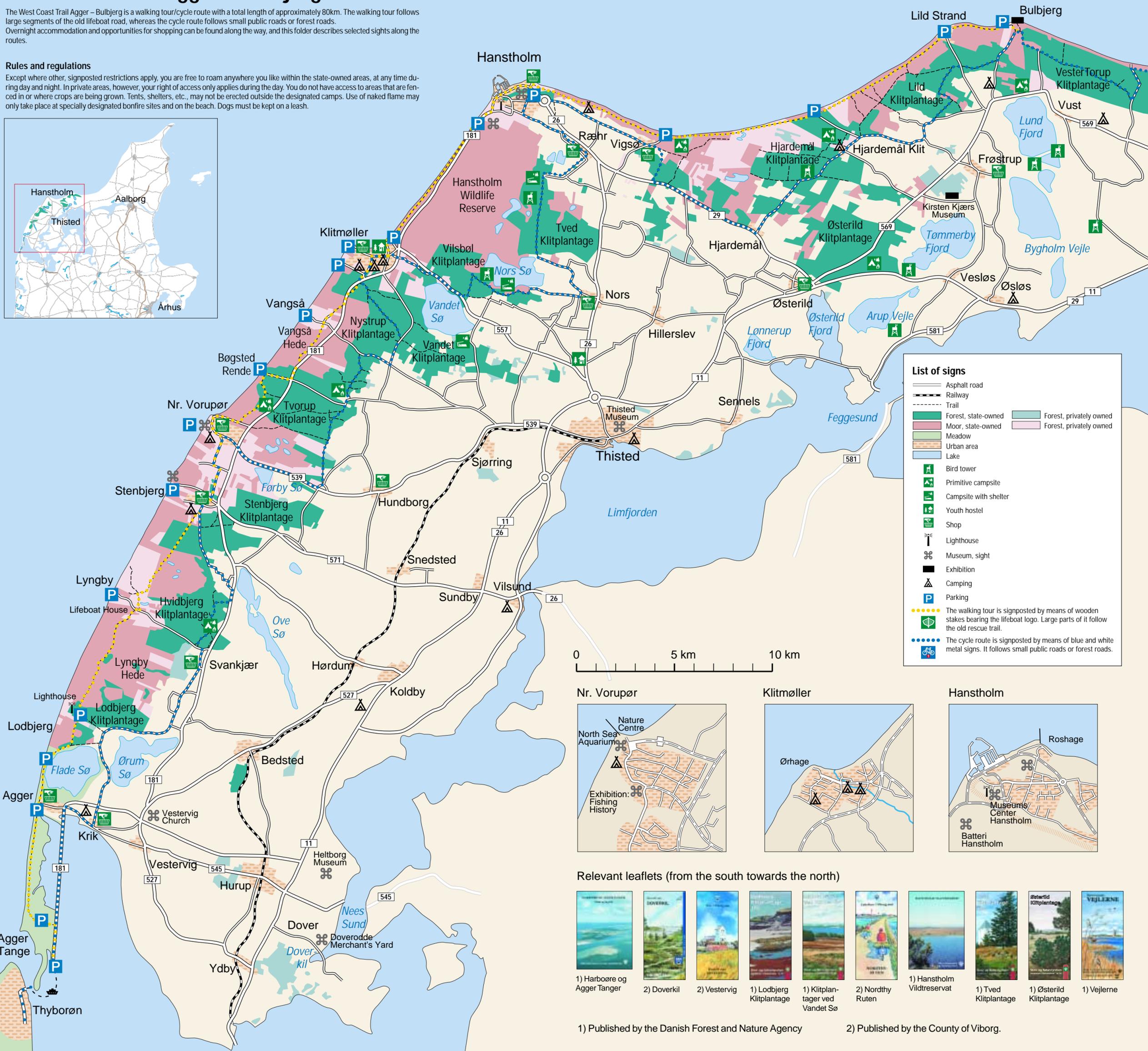


West Coast Trail Agger – Bulbjerg

The West Coast Trail Agger – Bulbjerg is a walking tour/cycle route with a total length of approximately 80km. The walking tour follows large segments of the old lifeboat road, whereas the cycle route follows small public roads or forest roads. Overnight accommodation and opportunities for shopping can be found along the way, and this folder describes selected sights along the routes.

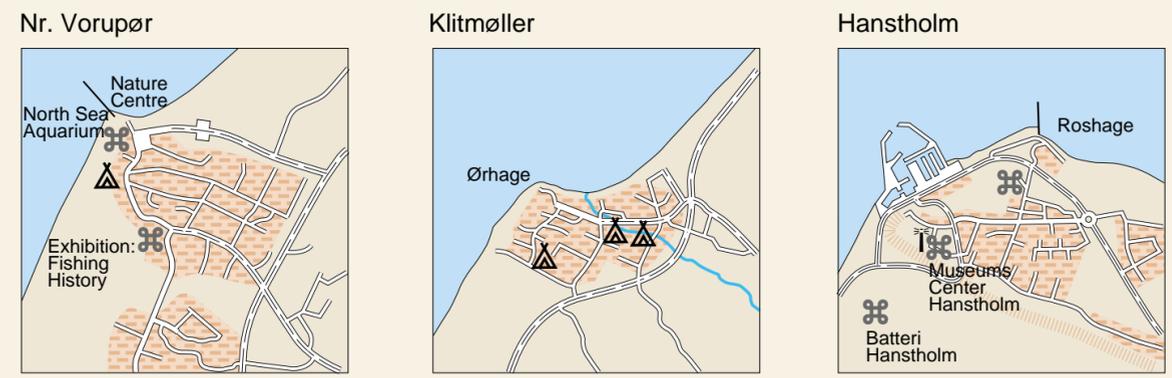
Rules and regulations

Except where other, signposted restrictions apply, you are free to roam anywhere you like within the state-owned areas, at any time during day and night. In private areas, however, your right of access only applies during the day. You do not have access to areas that are fenced in or where crops are being grown. Tents, shelters, etc., may not be erected outside the designated camps. Use of naked flame may only take place at specially designated bonfire sites and on the beach. Dogs must be kept on a leash.



List of signs

	Asphalt road		Forest, state-owned
	Railway		Forest, privately owned
	Trail		Meadow
	Urban area		Lake
	Bird tower		Primitive campsite
	Campsite with shelter		Youth hostel
	Shop		Lighthouse
	Museum, sight		Exhibition
	Camping		Parking
	The walking tour is signposted by means of wooden stakes bearing the lifeboat logo. Large parts of it follow the old rescue trail.		The cycle route is signposted by means of blue and white metal signs. It follows small public roads or forest roads.



Relevant leaflets (from the south towards the north)



1) Published by the Danish Forest and Nature Agency 2) Published by the County of Viborg.