

The mire

What is a "myr"

A *myr*, bog or mire, is a piece of land with stagnant water. The oxygen in the air cannot penetrate the surface as in a lake, where the water circulates and is supplied with oxygen from the air. In the wet mire there is so little oxygen that decomposers, including bacteria and fungi, cannot breathe and live. Peat is formed from the badly decomposed plants, which can accumulate in layers several meters thick.

The remarkable mire

A sturgeon that was pushed into the mire 50 years ago is still very fresh down in the peat. At the soil surface where the decomposers can live, it is rotten. In the mire, many nutrients are difficult for the plants to access. Some marsh flowers such as sedges have become "carnivores". They catch insects and assimilate their nitrogen and phosphorus.

Mires in Lapland

In Lapland's forestland, rainfall is usually low. Despite this, mires occupy about a third of the surface. This is because the summers are so short and cold that not much water has time to evaporate. The most typical Norrland mires are the extensive swath mires, which are striped with alternating dry swaths (or *benches*) and wet flarks (*dövlar*). The marshes in Muddus and Sjaunja are good examples of this.

Palsar-permanent ice in the peat

In the bogs in northernmost Scandinavia there are *palsar*, peat hills up to seven meters high, with constant frost inside. Even in bogs in the Jokkmokksfjällen there are *palsar*, but they are small.

Mires and money

Today, large bogs are dug up to be burned up and provide energy. Before the peat extraction, the bog is dug out, to be able to carry the machines. Other bogs are dug up to be converted into forest plantations. Now, as in the past, the unspoiled bog also provides people with income. There, the cloudberry are picked, which are eaten or sold at a high price per kilo. By the bog, are often good moose passes.

The marsh of the birds

In May, the wader bird's powerful and tinkling play sounds over the marshes. Wood Sandpiper, Common Greenshank, Spotted Redshank, Eurasian Whimbrel, Common Snipe and Ruff return from their winter roosts in large numbers. For a few weeks, they do away with mating and nesting, and then turn back towards the south.

Why do the Wood Sandpiper move?

The waders spend most of the year in huge flocks along the coast of Europe, in the Mediterranean, and in Africa. Why don't they just as easily nest there and avoid a dangerous journey? Perhaps it is because the waders' young, which leave the nest as soon as the eggs are hatched, would never survive in southern regions rich in predators. On the marshes in the north, life is safer, and food is plentiful during the bright summer days.

The marsh plain

Until the 1940s, there were marshlands all over Lapland's forest land. Those who had cows, sheep and goats got most of their winter feed from bogs. Before all the hay was cut and raked, it was often September. When the snow came, you had many weeks of work hauling the hay home.

Many species of cattails, horsetails, grasses and flowers were included in the marsh hay. The most powerful feed was the water horsetail. It was common to dam streams and lower lakes to improve vegetation. Lean marshes were not beaten every year. Starren must be given time to recover.

The shoe hay

With dried and combed sedge hay in the shoes, they kept warm all year round. In September, shoe hay was taken in the marsh edges. Best was bottle/beaked sedge with its broad, strong leaves. You cut it under willow bushes where it didn't become into grain, to avoid sharp grain thorns in the shoes.