

= Lågskär =

Lågskär (Swedish for " low skerry ") is a small island within the Åland Islands archipelago of Finland . It belongs to the municipality of Lemland . It is situated about 24 kilometres (15 mi) south of Mariehamn in the Baltic 's Sea of Åland . The main island of Lågskär measures 61 hectares (150 acres) in area . Rock stacks , sea cliffs and rocky shores are found along the coastline of the island . As a breeding ground for waterfowl , Lågskär has the status of an Important Bird Area (IBA) and is frequented by ornithologists who use the Lågskär Lighthouse buildings during their stay .

Several ferry routes pass within a few kilometres of Lågskär , including the Långnäs to Värtahamnen ferry , the Stockholm to Tallinn ferry , the Mariehamn to Helsinki ferry , and the Mariehamn to Åbo ferry . In the past , several vessels have sunk off the coast .

= = History = =

The earliest habitation on the island was linked to a cairn and a wooden beacon that existed on the island during the 1600s and 1700s . In the 1840s , when the first lighthouse was constructed to replace the beacon , there were 20 @-@ 30 inhabitants comprising the families of the lighthouse keepers . In addition to rearing livestock , fishing , and hunting wildlife , the families ran a school for their children ; a lighthouse society functioned at the time . The wooden lighthouse was remodeled into a stone structure which was destroyed during World War I. The existing lighthouse , built in 1920 , introduced a rotating gas lighting device , noted as the first of its kind in the world . After the lighthouse was automated in 1961 , the lighthouse keepers vacated the island . It is uninhabited since .

On 11 April 1918 , the German Nassau @-@ class battleship SMS Rheinland ran aground in heavy fog during World War I. In 1934 or 1935 , the German vessel Frida sprang a leak and sank off Lågskär , but the crew survived . On the evening of 21 October 1942 , Finnish submarine Vesihäisi torpedoed and sank the Soviet S @-@ class submarine S @-@ 7 near Lågskär .

= = Geography = =

The island comprises a mix of greenery and rocky areas , with the thickest vegetation towards the centre . Rock stacks , sea cliffs and rocky shores are found along the coastline . There is a small sandy beach at the north west side . Near the island , particularly to the south , there are rocky islets and rocks , including Sundbloms Grund , Söderklappen and Österklappen . To the east are Kalvskär and Norra Kalvskär .

Wetlands International has identified the island as a wetland . The Middle Åland Sill , one of three sills in the two basins of the Åland Sea , measuring 70 metres (230 ft) width , is situated between Söderarm and Lågskär and separates the two basins of the Åland Islands .

= = Nature and wildlife = =

The Björkör @-@ Lågskär area , measuring 6 @, @ 097 hectares (15 @, @ 070 acres) in size , is part of a Ramsar Site , while the Nyhamn @-@ Lågskär islands area , measuring 2 @, @ 879 hectares (7 @, @ 110 acres) in size , is recognized as an Important Bird Area (IBA) since 2000 . A Birds Directive designation for 1 @, @ 079 hectares (2 @, @ 670 acres) overlaps the IBA site .

Lågskär is occasionally visited by ornithologists for birdwatching , and to operate a bird ringing station which was established in 1964 . They use the abandoned buildings during their stay . The island has been identified by Alula , the Finnish birding magazine , as ? one of the most important breeding bird islands of the Finnish Baltic Sea ? . On the island are Steller 's eider (*Polysticta stelleri*) , the key bird species , and razorbill (*Alca torda*) . Other breeding species recorded are : Mute swan (*Cygnus olor*) , greylag goose (*Anser anser*) , tufted duck (*Aythya fuligula*) , gadwall (*Anas strepera*) , black guillemot (*Cephus grylle*) , razorbill (*Alca torda*) , guillemot (*Uria aalge*) , water rail (*Rallus aquaticus*) , colonies of gulls (*Larus* spp .) , terns (*Sterna* spp .) and the white

@-@ tailed eagle (*Haliaeetus albicilla*) .

Despite harsh conditions , the vegetation on the island is fairly diverse . Following the island 's grazing ban , vegetation has become very thick and has resulted in it becoming a breeding ground for waterfowl . There is large reed bed in the small lagoon area .

Fish species reported in the late 19th century in a small rock pool of 9 by 4 metres (30 ft × 13 ft) in size continue to flourish . *Carassius carassius* of lengths varying between 8 @.@ 7 ? 11 @.@ 7 centimetres (3 @.@ 4 ? 4 @.@ 6 in) is found along the coastline , and in a 1993 study , some 18 species of macroalgae were recorded at depths varying between 4 ? 7 metres (13 ? 23 ft) . The species reported include *Pilayella littoralis* , *Ectocarpus siliculosus* , *Fucus vesiculosus* , and *Rhodomela confervoides* , followed by a lesser number of *Sphacelaria arctica* , *Cladophora rupestris* , *Stictyosiphon tortilis* and *Polysiphonia fucoides* than in a previous 1950s study .