

= Indre Wijdefjorden National Park =

Indre Wijdefjorden National Park (Norwegian : Indre Wijdefjorden nasjonalpark) is located in a steep fjord landscape in northern Spitsbergen in Svalbard , Norway . It covers the inner part of Wijdefjorden ? the longest fjord on Svalbard . The national park was established on 9 September 2005 and covers 1 @, @ 127 km² (435 sq mi) , of which 745 km² (288 sq mi) is on land and 382 km² (147 sq mi) is sea . The marine environment changes vastly from the mouth of the fjord , through a still , cold , water basin , becoming deeper before reaching the glacier Mittag @-@ Lefflerbreen at the inner @-@ most sections of the fjord .

On both sides of Wijdefjorden there is High Arctic steppe vegetation , dominated by grasses and extremely dry , basic earth . There are some areas dominated by exposure of mineral earth . The area around the fjord has a vegetation which is unique and not preserved in other areas of Svalbard . Along with vegetation found on nesting cliffs , it is the most exclusive flora in Svalbard . There are several exclusive species in the national park , including Stepperøykvein , Puccinellia svalbardensis , Gentianella tenella and Kobresia simpliciuscula . Of the larger fjords on Svalbard , Wijdefjorden is the least affected by humans , although a trapping station has been built at Austfjordnes .

= = Geography = =

Indre Wijdefjorden National Park covers 1 @, @ 127 km² (435 sq mi) , of which 745 km² (288 sq mi) is on land and 382 km² (147 sq mi) is sea , making it the smallest national park in Svalbard . It is located in the steep fjord landscape on both sides of the inner (" Indre ") parts of Wijdefjorden (" The Wide Fjord ") on Spitsbergen . At 108 kilometres (67 mi) length , Wijdefjorden is the longest fjord on Svalbard . It is located on the northern coast of Spitsbergen , between Andrée Land to the west , Dickson Land to the south and Ny @-@ Friesland to the east . The inner parts of Wijdefjorden split into two , with the eastern , 32 @-@ kilometre (20 mi) long part known as Austfjorden (" The East Fjord ") , and the shorter as Vestfjorden (" The West Fjord ") . At the end of Austfjorden is the glacier Mittag @-@ Lefflerbreen .

The inner parts of the fjord receive some of the lowest precipitation of the archipelago . Combined with the exposed basic earth , this results in Europe 's only High Arctic steppe . The only other area with this landscape is the north of the Canadian Arctic Archipelago . The rock bed on each side of the fjord is different . On the west side there are Devonian deposits , while there is bedrock on the east side , resulting in different vegetation on each side . The fjord has a unique shape ; it has a wide mouth (thus the name) , but at Elvetangen there is a shallow section which is 50 metres (160 ft) deep . This reduces the circulation in the inner parts of the fjord , which have a cold @-@ water basin 250 metres (820 ft) deep .

Average July temperatures range from 4 to 6 ° C (39 to 43 ° F) , and in January temperatures are normally between ? 12 and ? 16 ° C (10 and 3 ° F) . The Arctic climate results in permafrost , which can be up to 100 metres (330 ft) deep . The North Atlantic Current moderates Svalbard 's temperatures , particularly during winter , giving it up to 20 ° C (36 ° F) higher winter temperature than similar latitudes in continental Russia and Canada , keeping the surrounding waters open and navigable most of the year . The shelter of the mountains gives the inland fjord areas less temperature difference than the coast .

= = History = =

The area around Wijdefjorden was first used by Russian , and later Norwegian , trappers . The cabin at Krosspynten was erected in 1910 , and two years later the cabin at Purpurdalen was built . Trappers considered the area to have few polar bears but much fox ; they could also supplement the catch with common eider . In 1928 , a season of trapping gave about 50 Arctic foxes . In 1932 , the area 's special vegetation was protected , which was assimilated into the national park when it was created . Since the 1980s , trapping has again been taken up , and the Governor of Svalbard has one cabin at Austfjordnes that can be rented for a season of trapping . Of the larger fjords on

Svalbard , Wijdefjorden is the least affected by humans .

During the considerations prior to the establishment of the national park , there was a conflict with the mining industry . Svalbard Minerals had found baryte within the national park borders , and Arktikugol holds two mining claim areas just south of the national park . The national park was established on 9 September 2005 . It completed a several @-@ year @-@ long plan to increase the amount of protected areas of Svalbard from 55 % to 65 % , which had two years earlier resulted in Nordenskiöld Land National Park , Sassen ? Bünsow Land National Park and Nordre Isfjorden National Park .

= = Management = =

The establishment of the national park and the protection is based on the Svalbard Environmental Protection Act , which takes its mandate from the requirements in the Svalbard Treaty to protect the environment of the archipelago . The overall responsibility for protection lies with the Norwegian Ministry of the Environment , which has delegated management to the Norwegian Directorate for Nature Management and the Governor of Svalbard . The latter performs all day @-@ to @-@ day practical management , including registration and inspection . In aspects related to cultural heritage , the Governor reports to the Norwegian Directorate for Cultural Heritage , and in issues relating to pollution , to the Norwegian Pollution Control Authority . While it has no authority , the Norwegian Polar Institute performs monitoring , mapping and research .

Traditionally , the mining industry in Svalbard has had more rights to operations within protected areas than in mainland Norway , where all such activities would be completely banned . Indre Wijdefjorden has the most strict regulations , with a total ban on construction of buildings and facilities , laying of cables and roads , earthwork , drainage , drilling , blasting , and excavation of petroleum , gas and minerals . It is the authorities ' goal that Svalbard is to be one of the best @-@ managed wilderness areas in the world . Svalbard , and thus the national park , is on Norway 's tentative list for nomination as a UNESCO World Heritage Site .

= = Nature = =

The vegetation on both sides of the fjord is High Arctic steppe , which is characterized by grasses . It is caused by extremely low precipitation , basic earth with salt deposits in the surface , and large areas of exposed mineral earth . The area around the fjord has a unique vegetation , which has not preserved in other areas of Svalbard . Along with vegetation found on nesting cliffs , it is the most exclusive flora in Svalbard . There are several unique species in the national park , including Stepperøykvein , which is featured in the national park 's logo and for which Svalbard is the only known location in Europe , Puccinellia svalbardensis , Gentianella tenella and Kobresia simpliciuscula . There is breeding ground for pink @-@ footed goose within the park , although Svalbard ptarmigan can also be found . Animals that can be found in the park include polar bear , Svalbard reindeer and Arctic fox .

Both fauna and flora are affected by the cold temperatures and the extreme light conditions . Activity is at a stand @-@ still during the polar night , which lasts for many months . During the summer , months of midnight sun help accelerate the natural processes . The nature in the area is especially susceptible to global warming . Models show that the winter temperatures will increase more than the summer temperatures , resulting in more precipitation . Because the vegetation requires little rain and much wind , this may result in major changes .

= = Recreation = =

Entrance to national park is available by boat in Wijdefjorden from the north , or over land from Billefjorden and Dicksonfjorden from the south . During winter , the area is accessible from Longyearbyen , either by snowmobile or by ski . There are several older trapper cabins in the park , and some of these are lent to residents of Longyearbyen . Except for Einsteinvatnet , a lake with

Arctic char , there are few destinations within the park , although the park can be used as a basis for other destinations . This includes trips to Perriertoppen , Svalbard 's second @-@ highest peak , and the glacier Åsgårdsfonna . Because of the shape of the park , there is little good hiking within the park , except for walking along the beaches on either side of the fjord . It is possible to see the entire national park from Mittag @-@ Lefflerbreen , which can be hiked to from Pyramiden .

The freedom to roam is strong in Norwegian culture and law , and also applies to Svalbard . However , there more restrictions on the archipelago . The freedom includes the right to tent , but this must be done at least 100 metres (330 ft) from any cultural monuments . As far as possible , tenting must occur on vegetation @-@ free land . Tenting for more than one week at a site requires a permit from the Governor . Beaches have large amounts of driftwood from Siberia , which can be used for campfires with the same location restrictions as tenting .

As in all Norwegian national parks , motorized land transport is banned . However , on Svalbard this does not include snowmobiles . On the other hand , cycling is banned . The Governor can , however , enforce temporary bans on snowmobiles or even all travel within the national park . Use of helicopters and aircraft for sight @-@ seeing are also prohibited . Polar bears are protected , but anyone outside of settlements is required to carry a rifle to kill polar bears in self @-@ defense , as a last resort , should they attack . Most flora and fauna are protected ; the right to gather established with the freedom to roam does not apply in national parks , although there are some exceptions . Hunting is permitted after explicit permit from the Governor , and locals have more access to hunting rights than tourists . Fishing is not permitted , although dispensations can be given .

All tourists traveling to Svalbard must pay a tourist tax of 150 Norwegian krone , which is entirely used for conservation . The tax is included in all ship and air tickets to the archipelago , which residents can get refunded . Everyone roaming outside of the settlements must report to the Governor . This includes the requirement to sign a special insurance policy to cover any search and rescue costs the Governor would incur , should it be necessary .