

#fanoebike



Themed route:



The Wadden Sea World Heritage Route (42 km)

This route will allow you to witness some of the most remarkable natural areas.

The Wadden Sea is not only one of the world's largest tidal water areas, it also has irreplaceable and unique landscapes, which is why the Wadden Sea was appointed World Heritage by UNESCO.

Published with subsidy from the Danish Business Authority's Rural fund.

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There are 10.000 species from uni-cellular organisms, to plants and mushrooms, to insects, to birds, fish and mammals making the shallow water, the beaches, the dunes and the marsh their home.

The Wadden Sea stretches from Denmark down to Germany and the Netherlands and can house more than 6 million birds simultaneously. Yearly, more than 10 million birds rest here.

This is one of the few, large and connected ecosystems in which natural forces still rule. Tidal water, rip tides and the wind means that huge amounts of sand is constantly moved, creating an ever changing landscape.

The ferry trip to Fanø itself is an excellent introduction to the Wadden Sea; as soon as you exit the harbour in Esbjerg, you are in the World Heritage area. Looking north, you can see towards Ho Bugt and the uninhabited island, Langli. From the ferry you can even see seals and some of the migratory birds that travel far to rest in the Wadden Sea. During the summer it is possible to see the Arctic Tern from the ferry; these birds fly an enormously long stretch of upwards to 70.000 km yearly.

1. Næs Søjord



You need not go far into wilderness to experience a piece of the World Heritage. In fact, you can observe it from the seafront path in Nordby. In a span of a few hours, the bay is affected by ebb and flow. The name of the area speaks for itself. "Søjorden", "the Seafloor", is what the locals call this piece of the Wadden Sea - and it can be described as both sea and land.

The highest part of Næs Søjord, which is the little sandy bank close to the seafront, often remains dry during high tide. On this bank, seals, Arctic terns and other Wadden Sea birds, some migrating from Africa to the Arctic or vice versa, gather. It is precisely the changing landscape, the large sea mammals and the thousands of migratory birds that caused the Wadden Sea to be appointed World Heritage. Here you have front row seats to the show.

2. Nørby Enge



Cycling route:

From the ferry, go south on the cycling path. After 1.3 km, cross Strandvejen and continue south on Gl. Postvej, turning into a cycling path. Another 700 m further you will pass Fanø Fiskesø; cross the main road and take the path leading to the top of the dyke to enjoy a nice view over Nørby Enge.

Background info:

Starting by the small marina in Nordby, a shallow-watered bay with calm waters stretches south. On the eastern side of Fanø there is shelter from the western winds, and even though the tides cause a constant stream in the waters, fine grained sediments, silt, can settle on the sea bed. This causes the sea bed to be very soft and muddy. Such a tidal flat contains a large amount of benthos, attracting a lot of birds during ebb.

However, some species of birds are almost only seen on the western side of the island. Here the tidal flats contain more sand, are harder and contains fewer/other benthos. Despite the monotonous look of the Wadden Sea, the variation in the overall ecosystem is high.

3. Halen and Skideneng



Cycling route:

Back on the cycling path, continue south 1 km until you reach the next cross road. Go east on Klingebjergvej, which after 1.7 km splits into two. Follow Halevejen for 2.5 km until it ends.

Background info:

The oldest landscape of Fanø is located on the eastern coast of the island on what we call Halen ("the tail"). From here the island has expanded west as the sea has deposited sand flats, which over time connected to form the island. There is no wide, sandy beach on the

eastern coast because the tide only deposits the finely grained silt. In events of repeated floods, the silt causes the sea floor to rise, forming a stretch of marsh along the coast. Due to the organic material in silt, the marsh has some of the most fertile soil.

4. Sønderho Gl. Fuglekøje (duck decoy)



Cycling route:

Cycle back down Halevejen until you reach Klingebjergvej. Go left and after 1.2 km there is a natural path going southwards. The path goes through the dune plantation and after 3.7 km ends in Albuevej. Go west towards Postvejen, reaching the cycling path. Take the path south for 2.1 km until you reach the parking lot where the path to Sønderho Gl. Fuglekøje starts. Walk on this path for 800 m and you are at the duck decoy.

Background info:

A duck decoy is a trap consisting of a small lake with trapping channels, used to capture wild ducks. Originally, there were 3 duck decoys on Fanø but in 1931 this method was prohibited, and later they were used to mark birds. Sønderho Gl. Fuglekøje has been renovated to show how it used to operate, and there is a small house with information on bird species found in the area. In the eastern end there is also an observation tower which you can climb. Sønderho Gl. Fuglekøje is open all year around and entrance is free - please close the gate behind you.

5. The southern tip of Fanø



Cycling route:

Back at the parking lot, cycle for 4.4 km south towards Sønderho. At the church, continue on Kåvervej for 600 m then go right on Hønevejen. At the end of Hønevejen, park your bike and walk to the southern tip.

Background info:

The southern tip of Fanø is where many of the elements of the Wadden Sea nature collide. Here you have dunes, beach, marsh, silt

flats and sand flats bordering each other. Keldsand, the large marsh outside Sønderho, receives the largest amount of sediments in the entire Danish Wadden Sea. The area south of Sønderho used to be an open bay but is now a fertile beach meadow. The southern tip itself is named Hønen. The tidal river running through the area is named Galgedyb, and over the years it has changed course several times. During fall you can observe more than 100.000 birds on Keldsand.

6. Galgerev



Cycling route:

Cycle back the same way until you reach the church. Take a left turn and continue down Sønderho Strandvej until it ends at the beach after 3 km.

Background info:

During ebb it is possible to walk across the mud flats from Sønderho beach. You don't need to walk far before you get an impression of the great, changing landscape and also a sense of how Fanø is dynamically formed from a sand bank; originally and continuously shaped by the sea.

The mud flats by Sønderho beach consist of relatively large grains of sand, meaning you can walk on it without sinking in. Looking in a southern direction, you see a narrow stretch of sand in the horizon. This is where you can often find a group of grey and spotted seals. It is when the seals are shedding their fur in late summer that the group is largest. Walking in the area is at your own risk; be aware of the tides and the weather forecast. During the summer months there are often guided seal tours.

7. The dune valleys by Pælebjerg



Cycling route:

Cycle in a northern direction along the beach for 5.1 km until you meet a sign pointing towards Pælebjerg. Continue on the path for 500 m.

Background info:

The tall dune named Pælebjerg is part of a chain of dunes stretching from north to south along the west coast of the island. Previously, this row of dunes faced the sea directly but today they are second or third row; a result of the sea transporting more sand onto the island from the west. From the peak of Pælebjerg it is possible to see how a typical wadden sea island develops. In between the row of dunes, wet valleys appear, forming the foundation of special plant and animal life. At the foot of Pælebjerg, the valley is covered in reeds, providing protection for bitterns, marsh harrier and small birds. The bittern is more audible than visible, sounding as if blowing into a large bottle. On the other hand, marsh harriers can often be seen circling above the area.

8. Søren Jessens Sand



Cycling route:

Go back to the beach, then cycle north along it for 5.5 km until you reach Fanø Bad.

Background info:

North of Fanø Bad is a very young dune landscape, formed the first years after 2000. The large area called Søren Jessens Sand is an almost everlasting depot of sand, transported by the wind to the dunes, in which certain tough plants grow. Earlier on, tough grasses were planted in the dunes by humans - meaning to keep the sand or to promote the natural forming of the dunes. However, it negatively impacts biodiversity if all dunes become stable and grassy, because the unique animal and plant life in the dunes need the natural dynamics to survive. Therefore, the new dunes being formed, shaped and sometimes destroyed by the forces of nature are interesting natural phenomena and home to a richness of species.

The tidal water streams in and out between the Wadden Sea islands in wide streams (deeps) where the current is always strong. This is what keeps the islands from growing together. As flow comes, more than 40.000 cubic m of water per second is moved through the four deeps in the Danish Wadden Sea. The deep named Grådyb, located between Fanø and Skallingen, has a natural depth of about 10 metres.

9. Back to the ferry

Cycling route:

From Fanø Bad, use the cycling path to go to Nordby and all the way back to the ferry. Distance is 4 km.