

DAY 2: Ljørdaln

We woke up at 8am to a slight drizzle and ate cereal to prepare us for the day. At 9am the methods used to collect data on moose pellet count and bilberry coverage was explained to us by a lady called Karen. We will be using these techniques for the next 3 weeks so it was important that we spent the whole day practicing. I was paired up with Jake and we sampled three plots. While walking along the quadrat we found a bright blue egg with black speckles, however the species it belongs to is unknown. Roe deer and moose faeces were also found in our sample areas while another group found evidence of bears.



Trekking through pine forest was strange due to the large change in scenery compared to England's oak woodland. Reindeer moss and other similar species covered the forest floor in a mosaic, making the whole area look very colourful.



DAY 3: Ljørdaln

Today I was partnered up with Alice and each pair was given one quadrat to complete. The sample area we had was particularly hilly and there was a large amount of evidence for logging which is one of Norway's largest industries. Most logging in the area was small scale but intensive. Nearly all of the sample plots were in forest which was going through regeneration (logged about 15 years ago) however we still found moose poop! We also found a woodpecker's forge which is the remains of an old tree being used to wedge pine cones into the wood so that the bird can peck the seeds out.

DAY 4: Ljørdaln

Anna and I were teamed up today to sample a quadrat located on and around ski runs. The whole area was littered with rocks which made trekking difficult due to the steepness along with more of nature's obstacles such as hidden holes in the ground, which we fell down multiple times! At one point we thought we saw a bear but it was likely that we were just having a stare down with a boulder for 5 minutes... The view on top of the mountain was pretty impressive as you could see the snowy tops of other mountains in the distance. To get back to the car, we ended up walking down a black ski run, pity we didn't have skis!

DAY 5: Ljørdaln

My partner today was Oskari. He was very helpful when it came to identifying Norway's native plant and bird species which made the day interesting! The quadrat was located in quite dense spruce with multiple rivers that we had to navigate across. We also found a lookout post which the Norwegians use to hunt moose from.



DAY 6: Ljørdaln

I was paired up with Callum on a relatively flat quadrat so we worked quickly and effectively. A female grouse flew up from the undergrowth right next to us which gave us quite a fright! We also got a bit peckish and found

some berries which Nil identified over the phone as a crowberry. They're edible but taste absolutely foul and very bitter- I learnt from experience!

DAY 7: Gravberget

Our new cabin is cute, located next to a river and a huge lake which looks gorgeous when the sun sets above it. We have to boil water over a fire place and the toilet is a hole in the shed. However the scenery makes up for the lack of utilities and we all plan to swim in the lake and go rowing!



DAY 8: Gravberget

We woke up at 7am to prepare for a film crew from a Norwegian TV documentary on moose. They arrived at 8.30am and filmed us getting ready for our field work. They then went off and filmed Nil and Karen who demonstrated the method we used to collect data. Jenna and I did quadrat GA2 which was dense spruce and pine forest and incredibly swampy due to the rain the night before. We also experienced a few thunder storms. After collecting data and resting in the cabin the girls went rowing on the lake which was very tranquil. We came back to celebrate callum's birthday with a BBQ by the lake!



Photo credit to Oskari

DAY 11: Gravberget

Today I was partnered up with Natalie to collect data from 2 quadrats. There was a lot of marshland that we had to trek through however this meant there was very little bilberry! Bog bilberry and dwarf birch appeared to be more common in this habitat. We also found a skull as well as fur which could have belonged to a wolverine. After the days hard work had been completed we all went swimming in the lake!

DAY 12: Gravberget

Natalie and I were paired again to complete another 2 quadrats. The pine forest had a vast amount of boulders which could have been an old glacial path. We saw a hare and a large bird of prey while walking between plots. On our last sample plot we saw a mother moose with its baby 50 meters in front of us, resulting in a 10 second stare down! It was a rare sighting and the baby was only a few weeks old, with its fur tainted orange.



DAY 13: Gravberget

Today was a well-deserved break from collecting data. We ended up trekking up a hillside using GPS co-ordinates to find the den of a male brown bear. It was located inside an old ant hill! Afterwards Natalie and I rowed for an hour and 30 minutes to Sweden! We then had a quiz night in the evening around a fire which got very competitive.



DAY 15: Plassen

The new cabin we're staying at was built in the 1750s and has all the characteristics of a stereotypical cabin, but it's great! Today I was paired up with Jake and we saw a hare and a kestrel as well as a beaver den! We did see ripples in the water which we're assuming was the beaver holding its breath under water for ages! It also appeared that the beaver(s) liked to fell down birch trees.



DAY 16: Plassen

Today I was with Jenna working on a quadrat that was very marshy so there was little bilberry to record data from. We did see a fox den near one of the plots however the day went by quite fast seeing little wildlife apart from mosquitos which were everywhere! On the way back to the car we ended up walking through an abandoned village where families who worked in the forestry industry must have lived. It was eerily quiet and the atmosphere was quite sullen.

DAY 17: Plassen

Today was the last day of collecting data! Alice and I were partners for the day and saw a male capercaillie fly away from us from just a few meters. We ended up doing over 2 quadrats which

totalled to 43 plots- the most data collected in a day! It was hard work but it felt good knowing we didn't have to collect any more data.

DAY 23: Bjørneparken

Today we went to the Bear Park where we got to watch the bears, lynx and crocodiles get fed, as well as feed the moose and foxes ourselves! It was great to see the majority of Norway's native animals in their natural habitat and gave us the opportunity to really see the animals up close. We then travelled towards Besseggen. We stopped off at a church built in 1100. As we got nearer to Besseggen the landscape got a lot more mountainous with even more breath taking views! We arrived at the hostel and got served a delicious meal. We're doing a 14km hike tomorrow through the mountain range that the Norse Gods originated from and I CAN'T WAIT!!



DAY 24: Besseggen

We had a large breakfast at hostel before we boarded onto a boat which would take us to Memurubu. The hike took us 7 hours including breaks to complete and the highest point was 1700m! Besseggen is famous for its two different coloured lakes which have a 400m height difference between them. It made the perfect photo opportunity! Some areas also involved scrambling at times but when we got to the top we came across a herd of reindeer which made the moment even more memorable. After checking Natalie's fitbit, we found out we took over 30,000 steps! The whole trip has been an amazing experience and today has topped it off 😊



Photo credits to Natalie

