

EDEFORS

EDEFORS - LIFE BLOOD THEN AND NOW

Med den här informations-samlingen av besöksmålen i Edeforsområdet vill vi göra kunskapen och historien levande och tillgänglig även digitalt och för dig som är här på besök, vill söka fakta eller berätta för dina gäster om det som har hänt här.



Länsstyrelsen
Norrbotten



Europeiska jordbruksfonden för
landsbygdsutveckling. Europa
investerar i landsbygdsområden

The area of Edefors, or Edeforsen (Ede Rapids) as it was known before the river was dammed and the rapids disappeared, has a history that goes a long way back. The place has been part of a transportation route for centuries, with silver, salmon, logs, tar and passenger boats passing through. There are remains from all kinds of activities from different eras. Stone Age dwellings, cooking pits, fishermen's sheds from the 18th century, a stone labyrinth, foundation remains of a market square and workers' houses, remains of a canal, a stone pier and a blast furnace ruin. There are also aquatic structures, remains of the log driving era. The Edefors area is home to easily accessible, well-preserved examples of remains from various livelihoods that were important in the region at different points in history. This means that the area is of great cultural historical importance and it has been designated an area of national interest. It is one of a number of areas in the county listed as an area of national interest regarding the preservation of cultural sites, which means that it is protected under the Swedish Environmental Code. The ancient remains are protected under the Swedish Cultural Heritage Act. The buildings on Laxholmen are listed for protection, also under the Cultural Heritage Act.

Fishing has always been particularly important here, not just for this area, but for the whole county and indeed the entire country. Construction of Gammelstad Church and Uppsala University was funded with money from salmon fishing in Edefors. All the fish that were caught here were transported to Europe and sold, providing income to the Swedish nobility, clergy and royalty. In 1837, 80 percent of the total income of the City of

Luleå came from salmon fishing in Edefors. Every now and then, two tons of salmon were caught here, in a single day.

Edefors has also been the site of an iron mill, log driving, the construction of an English canal built by over 1400 workers, who came to join Sweden's first workers' riots, which ended up requiring military intervention. There are many mythical tales about this place and still to this day, people speak of a silver treasure left behind.

The area was also visited by celebrities of the time. Carl Linnaeus, the scientist who amongst many other things created the foundation for modern systematic classification of flora and fauna, came here and documented the fishing and local life in his writings. Author and Nobel laureate, Selma Lagerlöf stayed at the Edefors Tourist Hotel. Maybe this was where she first had the idea to write her classic, *The Wonderful Adventures of Nils*?

In the modern age, hydropower development silenced the river, which now provides electricity and heating throughout the country. However, the magic is still here. Today, the Edefors area is frequented by visitors from all over the world. The river and the forests are still at the heart of what people experience. Stories live on and many historical sites are exciting destinations for visitors both young and old, looking to experience Swedish nature and history, in a place where reality exceeds art.

With this collection of information about destinations in the area, we hope to make knowledge and history come to life, in digital form too, for those who visit, want to find facts or for hosts to tell guests about the history of this place.

Welcome to the historical sites of Edefors!

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1. QUICK GUIDE ^{1 (3)}

WHAT IS EDEFORS?

The Edefors region is located in Boden Municipality, inland Norrbotten County, Swedish Lapland.

Edefors is actually a name for several different things:

- Edefors Municipality, where Harads was the main locality. Merged with Boden Municipality in 1971.
- Edefors parish and the Edefors district, encompassing eleven different villages in inland Norrbotten.
- Edeforsen – the mighty river rapids that were the source of extensive salmon fishing and a fishing industry of crucial importance to the county and the rest of Sweden. It was recorded as far back as the 14th century.
- To the locals, Edefors is still the place where the river once was, where the cultural preservation area Laxholmen is today, featuring old buildings and remains from Edefors' golden age. This is also the location of a highly popular summer café and nearby you will find camper trailer parking and a scenic outdoor recreation area

BRIEF HISTORY

Legend has it that fishing in the Edeforsen was discovered by a Sámi prisoner, left on Laxholmen to starve. He won his freedom by showing his captors the treasure, the salmon. It then became an important part of local trade, with various different holders of fishing rights. In the 15th century, the construction of the Gammelstad Church and Uppsala University was financed by revenues from Edefors salmon. In 1837, approximately 80% of the income of the City of Luleå came from Edefors salmon fishing. The City of Luleå sold the rights to the rapids in 1960. Laxede Power Station was finished in 1962. The rapids disappeared and the salmon along with them. There are also remains of industrial history in the area, such as an iron mill and log driving structures.



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1. QUICK GUIDE 2 (2)

HISTORICAL SITES TO VISIT TODAY



Fishing village

Laxholmen is one of Europe's oldest well-preserved fishing villages, dating back to the 14th century. Several of its buildings have been preserved for posterity. One now houses a summer café and handicraft shop and the others are open for visitors during the café's opening hours.

Stone labyrinth

Laxholmen is home to one of the legendary Swedish stone labyrinths. It was discovered in 1969, only metres away from the corner of the fisherman's cottage. The labyrinth is several meters across and consists of five rows of stones in a circular shape. With a location this far away from the coast, the Laxholmen stone labyrinth is unique. It has been speculated that stone labyrinths were laid out to give better fishing luck.

Protected area

Laxholmen has been named a protected area and is home to a number of protected species. Amongst many others you will find the small ferns, moonwort and northern mornwort, white bellflowers and the fragrant northern sweet grass. Butterfly species present here include the geranium argus and scarce copper. There is also a rich flora of fungi. Waxcaps, copral mushrooms and earth tongues are significant species, showing that this is a unique .

The English Canal

Near Laxholmen lies the English Canal, construction began in 1864. Hopes were high that this route would open new doors to the entire region. At its peak, 1486 men were working on it. However, money ran out and the company struggled to pay wages. Around the time of the Edefors Market in 1865, tensions boiled over and the workers began rioting. This was the first workers' strike in Sweden to require military intervention and canal construction ceased afterwards. Signs on route 97 point to the canal, before the bridge in Edefors.



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1. QUICC GUIDE ² (3)

NEW DESTINATIONS IN HISTORIC LOCATIONS

Information platform

An information platform near the Laxholmen car park describes the long era of fishing in Laxholmen and Edeforsen.

Salmon traps

The two salmon traps on either side of Edeforsen could catch 435 salmon in a day, weighing a total of 2000 kilos. Today, you can find a newly built, authentic salmon trap at Laxholmen. Other methods such as cages and nets were also used. Old fishing equipment is found on display at Laxholmen



Forsudden

By the exit towards Laxholmen, on the opposite side of route 97, lies the Forsudden outdoor recreation area, in a scenic location next to the Lule River, between Harads and Vuollerim in inland Norrbotten. The area has several spaces offering a natural campsite for camper vans and trailers. There are several grill sites with a view of the river as well as a cabin with an iron stove, tables and seating for up to 15 people. The cabin provides solar electricity. The cabin and the recreation area were renovated in the summer of 2018.

Booking and information:

Laxede camping

A pier extending into the river outside Laxholmen hosts a natural campsite with 24 spaces providing electricity for camper trailers, as well as an amenities building with a kitchen, shower and sauna. The campsite is owned and operated by the association Bykraft.

Booking and information: Esko +46(0)70-315 77 92

Edeforstjärnarna

Three beautiful little meres with footbridges leading up to them and between them and grilling huts available nearby. The meres are on the Laxholmen side, seen from route 97.

Find your way here: Route 97 from Luleå, Boden and Jokkmokk. Signage along route 97.

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2. EDEFORS' IMPORTANCE TO THE REGION 1 (7)

ANCIENT REMAINS

The **Stone Age-type dwelling remains** found during excavations along the river banks, including quartz chippings and fire-cracked rocks, are difficult to date. The good location, sandy points and banks of a river rich in salmon, attracted people even in prehistoric times. During an investigation of a dwelling site at Forsudden, three hearths and a cooking pit were found. The cooking pit was dated to the 4th century, whilst the hearths were medieval and 17th century. The trapping pit in the area has not yet been dated. A large number of cooking pits are found in the area west of the river, showing the importance of fishing in the area in prehistoric times

TRANSPORTATION ROUTES

Transport has been travelling through the area for a very long time. The Swedish word *ed* in Edefors refers to a stretch of a waterway where one was forced to pull the boat ashore. Fire-cracked rocks and waste from the production of stone artefacts have been found in the Edefors area, which suggests that there were early settlers here.

The Edeforsen rapids served as a transport route between 1660-1702 when silver was regularly transported from Alkavaare and Kedkevaara mines in Sarek, via the Kvikkjokk smelter, to the port of Luleå. There are also indications that the silver mines had a boat permanently stationed by the rapids.

Before the turn of the last century, salmon was salted, smoked and transported away by boat.

Logistical improvements, particularly the advent of steamboat traffic, allowed the salmon to be sent fresh, in crates cooled with ice. From 1926 onwards, transport was carried out by road

STEAMBOAT TRAFFIC

Edefors was serviced by several steamboats, including vessels Primus, Edefors and Turist. The steamboats were primarily used for transportation of materials to and from the fishing industry and other industries in Edeforsen. The steam boats also carried passengers, mainly local workers.

Later on, the boats were also used by tourists



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2. EDEFORS' IMPORTANCE TO THE REGION 2 (7)

FISHING – A 600-YEAR ERA

The Edefors fishing industry was highly influential and brought large revenues to the nobility and the bishop, who had long owned fishing rights for the Lule River. In the 15th century, construction of the Gammelstad Church and Uppsala University was funded by Edefors salmon. All fish caught here was salted, transported to Stockholm and further down to Europe. When King Gustav I ascended the throne in Sweden in the 16th century, he also inherited a practically bankrupt crown. Changing Sweden's state religion from Catholicism to Protestantism allowed him to expropriate the properties of the Catholic Church, thereby once again putting the fishing industry wholly under the Crown's control. He realised the value of fishing and commissioned expansions to increase revenue.

Fishing rights belonged to the Crown until 1621.

A few years later, around 1650, a family from Kläppgården in Harads was granted fishing rights.

In 1675, Charles XI granted the fisheries in Luleå tax exemptions. In 1678, the city of Luleå once again sought to monopolise fishing and the Kläppgården family lost their fishing rights.

The early 1700's saw crop failures and no fish in the rapids. The years were carved into the wall of the salting shed on Laxholmen, along with notes about how high the spring and mountain floods reached.

In 1886, the city of Luleå also purchased the nobility's fishing rights, that had previously belonged to influential families such as Oxenstierna, Sture, Bielke, Sparre, Trolle, Natt och Dag and others. The city of Luleå operated the fishing themselves, with employees who also guarded against unlawful fishing.

There are records from 1837 stating that approximately 80% of the city of Luleå's income came from salmon fishing in Edefors.

From 1889 onwards, the fishing was leased to tenants but in the beginning of the new century, the fish population declined and no fishing occurred between

1902–1906. From 1906 onwards, fishing was leased primarily to locals. For a few years, the fishery board of the Rural Economy and Agricultural Societies carried out fishing of farmed salmon. They harvested roe, which was then hatched at the Kusträsk hatching facility. Later on, Vattenfall took over fishing in Edefors. >>>

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2. EDEFORS' IMPORTANCE TO THE REGION 3 (7)

THE ENGLISH CANAL AND THE EDEFORS RIOTS



In 1864, the Swedish-English company The Gellivare Comp Ltd. began construction of a canal called the English Canal.

The construction method was new but had been tried in East Prussia. In addition to lock chambers and a canal, the facility would require some source of power, probably a steam engine, to power line wheels and winches. The canal was planned to be 3 km in total.

On October 14, 1864, the first ground was broken. Hopes were high that this transport route would create new opportunities throughout the region. The next year, excavation work was underway and At its peak, 1486 men were working on the canal

However, money ran out and the company struggled to pay wages. Around the time of the Edefors Market in 1865, workers' provisions ran out, tensions boiled over and the workers went on to strike and riot. This was the first workers' strike in Sweden to require military intervention and it spelled the end of canal construction.

However, before the project ended, they had managed to move close to 106,000 cubic metres of rock and stone at three construction sites.

The beginning of the canal remains in place to this day and is an excellent spot to bring your picnic basket.

Coordinates:



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2. EDEFORS' IMPORTANCE TO THE REGION 4 (7)

THE EDEFORS MARKET

Throughout human history, local markets have been important meeting places – and so was the one in Edefors. The market square was located on the eastern side of the river. Tar was the main item traded here. The tar was driven downstream to Luleå for further export. Because of the canal project and the new target group formed by the workers, other goods were eventually sold in the Edefors market square too. Trading goods and engagement rings changed hands, business deals were negotiated.

The Edefors market was held in the midst of high summer, when the tar piles were burned out and barrels of tar had been moved down to the river, driven down to the rapids and stacked on the banks, just before the haymaking season, when the warehouses needed renovation.

After the Edefors market had been around for a few centuries, steamboats began servicing the river, both upstream and downstream of the rapids. A tourist hotel was built and the market developed into a local festival. In 1880, the first modern roads brought the first merry-go-round and the first circus here. There was a shooting range, accordions were played and people danced in the riverside dance hall of the tourist hotel. Posh city ladies and military men danced side by side with the villagers. The market went on for days and was one of the annual highlights in the region. It was later cancelled, as decision makers felt that it led to too many children being born out of wedlock.

In the 1990's, the market reemerged for a couple of years, at a time when local authorities hoped for higher nativity rates. In a humorous reference to the olden days, they now paid a premium to couples who conceived during the Edefors market.



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2. EDEFORS' IMPORTANCE TO THE REGION 5 (7)

IRON WORKS AND BLAST FURNACE

When **Baron Samuel Gustav Hermelin** acquired the Gällivare Works in 1799, Edeforsen was once again an important route for iron ore. Construction of a blast furnace began close to Edeforsen and a smithing facility was built in Svartlå, about 20 km downstream from Edefors. However, in 1872, Hermelin declared bankruptcy and in 1817 a visitor testified that the dam building had been spoiled, the excavation site for the blast furnace had collapsed and a large amount of coal wood had rotted. Workers' barracks had also fallen into disrepair.

Construction of an iron works resumed when King Charles XIV John purchased the Svartlå and Edefors homesteads and houses. At several different points in time, records indicated that the blast furnace near the mouth of Forsträskån, just above the beginning of the Edeforsen rapids, was nearly completed. In 1834, a fire occurred at the facility and only its ruins remain today.



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2. EDEFORS' IMPORTANCE TO THE REGION ^{6 (7)}

LOG DRIVING

The increased demand for timber meant steadily expanding forestry, which made it profitable to improve the waterways. This was done by clearing parts of the river and building structures to facilitate driving the logs down to the saw mills on the coast. Log driving on the Lule River continued up until the 1960's. Log driving structures and a stone pier remain in the area, showing the work that was done to improve waterways used for log driving.



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2. EDEFORS' IMPORTANCE TO THE REGION 7 (7)

LAXEDE POWER STATION

In 1960, the city of Luleå sold water rights for Edeforsen to the Swedish power company Vattenfall. Vattenfall built Laxede Power Station at Drakaudden. Today, hydroelectric power accounts for more than half of Sweden's total electricity needs. The Lule River is Vattenfall's and Sweden's most important river for hydro power.

Laxede Power Station is a conventional, above-ground hydropower station. The water above the dam lies 4.19 m above sea level and 20.7 m above sea level below the dam. A total of 607 cubic metres of water flow through the turbines every second.

Initial power output was 116 MW, produced by two units. Because the Lule River was still used for log driving at the time, a 122-metre log driving canal was also built, with a capacity of 10,000-24,000 logs per hour.

Twenty years after it first opened, Laxede Power Station was expanded with a third unit.

Over the past several years, major investments in and renovations of the power plant have been underway. Turbines, generators and transformers have been replaced with new, more efficient equipment. The renovation means that another 40 years is added to the lifespan of the facility, the efficiency is improved, as are both the internal and external environments.

However, the salmon's routes to their breeding grounds have been cut off for good and a long era of fishing on the Lule River has come to an end. The entire river section from Laxede to the Vittjärv Power Plant outside Boden is now just a large hydroelectric dam. The once frothing rapids live on only in people's memories, but instead, the now quiet river reflects the midnight sun. The river is still a place for recreation, a place to enjoy the scenic environment – and Vattenfall has built a fish farm in Heden outside Boden, introducing fish to supplement the natural population, downstream from the last power plant on the river.

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3. OTHER SUBJECTS: 1 (12)

THE STORY OF HOW SALOMON THE PRISONER DISCOVERED THE SALMON

One of the earliest recorded stories from Laxholmen has lived on since medieval times. Through the actions of Archbishop Olof Björnsson, the reeve of Hälsingland and two wealthy landowners, the church had acquired fishing rights to all salmon in the Lule River and its tributaries, bestowed by the king himself in 1327. Together, the men went on a journey to inspect their new-found properties. At the time, there was a labour camp in Luleå for Sámi who had committed crimes against the Crown. A few of these prisoners were sent to accompany the guests, bringing them up the Lule River by boat.

One of the Sámi prisoners saw the journey as a chance for freedom. He tried to escape by setting the boat on fire and jumping overboard. Finally, he was tied down on the boat. When the travellers had made their way past Laxholmen, both the clergymen and the noblemen were so tired of Salomon that they simply left him on the island. Back then, Laxholmen was entirely surrounded by rapids, so there was no way to swim and no other way to leave.

However, Salomon, left to starve on the island, climbed its highest pine to find a possible escape route. Once he got up there, he saw thousands of salmon glistening in the water around the island. The pine he climbed became known as the Lapp Pine and what is said to be the huge stump left behind by that pine can still be seen there today.

The salmon saved Salomon, in more than one way. First, it kept him well fed during his time on the island. A few months later, the boating party passed by on their way back to Luleå. They were shocked to find Salomon alive, waving at them on the shore. They disembarked and he negotiated his freedom with them, in exchange for showing them the treasure he had found. He showed them the salmon and they were profoundly impressed, even though it may not have been the kind of treasure they first imagined. They kept their word and released Salomon on the mainland. Where he went from there, no one knows, but the noblemen returned home and commissioned a fishing village on Laxholmen. This put Edefors on the map and marked the beginning of an era of fishing that would last for



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3. OTHER SUBJECTS: 2 (12)

THE STONE LABYRINTH

In 1969 a unique stone labyrinth was discovered only meters away from the corner of the fisherman's cottage. The Labyrinth is several meters across and consists of five rows of stones arranged in a circular shape.

Ancient remains of this type are often found near old coastal fishing sites, in Germany and the British Isles amongst other places. With its location this far from the coast, the Laxholmen stone labyrinth is truly unique.

It has been suggested that the stone labyrinths were built to give better fishing luck. According to folklore, the opening, which always faces the water, supposedly calmed storms and brought better fishing luck. At Laxholmen, the opening faces the fishing site where nets and traps were laid out. The theory here is that the labyrinth was supposed to draw the fish from Sörlandet towards the fishing site. Also according to folklore, one could perform a ritual after fishing by walking the labyrinth in a certain pattern and jumping out of it at a particular place. In doing so, it was believed you could shake off evil spirits that could otherwise ruin your fishing.

However, there are other possible explanations for the significance of the labyrinth. Amongst other sources, a doctoral thesis from 1731 notes that an island downstream from Edeforsen has stone piles where "Moscowites" (Russians) were buried after dying in battle with local Sámi. However, no graves have been found on Laxholmen, so the folklore theory seems a more plausible one

TWO STORIES OF HOW THE CITY OF LULEÅ ACQUIRED FISHING RIGHTS

There are two stories about how the Lule River fishing rights came to leave the Crown. One is that Queen Christina, on a journey through her realm, was guided upstream by a Luleå nobleman. After this journey, she supposedly granted some salmon fishing rights to the nobility. Popular legend said that she gave them away as a gift of proposal.

A different, less romantic and unfortunately more likely story is that her father, King Gustavus Adolphus, sent a declaration during the war in the Baltics that he was running out of soldiers. The city of Luleå was offered part of the salmon fishing in Edefors, in exchange for sending a certain number of soldiers to the Baltics. If this is true, many people from the coastal region may have paid with their lives for these salmon fishing rights.

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3. OTHER SUBJECTS: 3 (12)

A DRAGON'S DEN AND SILVER TREASURES

Drakaudden (Dragon Point) is the name of the point where crossings to Laxholmen were made, past the thundering rapids. Drakaudden has long been mentioned in legends about treasures, one guarded by a dragon, a stolen haul of silver from the Sarek silver mines and large copper plates. Today, Drakaudden is the site of Laxede Power Station, but before it was built, there were many pits there, showing treasure hunters' attempts to find these treasures.

In the 18th century, silver was found in the Sarek wilderness. The silver was transported via the smelter in Kvikkjokk, past Edeforsen along a carriageway on the northern side of the rapids. In winter, the Sámi had to transport the silver on sleds pulled by reindeer. There was also a boat on Edeforsen, used by the silver mines.

According to one of all the silver legends about Drakaudden, one of the Sámi transporting the silver fled with the cargo and buried it somewhere on this point, to return the silver that Queen Christina had taken from Mother Nature.

There are also stories about the Dutch Momma brothers, who were granted royal privilege by King Gustavus Adolphus to make coin plates out of Svappavaara copper, stamping them with the seal of the Royal Majesty. The brothers owned a copper field by the Luonga River. They also owned a forge by the Kengis River, where copper coins were made from copper plates. Such plates may have been hidden at Drakaudden. It is known that at least one large plate from Kengis has remained in the Edefors area, but no other treasure has ever been found.



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3. OTHER SUBJECTS: 4 (12)

LAXHOLMEN

The fishing village

Laxholmen is one of Europe's oldest well-preserved fishing villages, dating back to the 14th century. Several of its buildings have been preserved for posterity. One now houses a summer café and handicraft shop and the others are open for visitors during the café's opening hours.

Buildings

The fisherman's cottage (dated 1799) – Most likely primarily intended for the so-called free men, i.e. noblemen and the archbishop, who owned fishing rights and shared the income from the salmon fishing.

The smokehouse (1702) – where the salmon was smoked. Sometimes, there were three fires burning at once.

The ice shed – storage for ice sawed into blocks on nearby lakes. The ice was covered in sawdust to insulate it.

The sheep shed – previously had an inner ceiling. There are indentations on the outside, probably from where there used to be a ladder to a hatch where hay was thrown in as winter feed for the sheep.

The outhouse – an idyllic outhouse with room for three people.

The salting shed – When large amounts of salmon were caught here, they also needed to be salted. The salting shed had a bench where the salmon was laid out to be gilled and gutted. It was then moved to a filleting bench with two holes where the salmon was tied down to make it easier to fillet. The salmon was then laid on a slatted table, to run off. The salt was first coarsely crushed in a trough and then more finely on an adjacent table. The salmon was then placed together with the salt, in large barrels. Smaller barrels, holding about 125 kg, were used for the salmon that was sold. The salting shed had the year 1649 carved into the door. The shed was sold to a farmer in Harads who used it as a barn, relocated to Nymyran in Harads, but it has now been demolished.

In summer, Laxholmen is open to the public, handicraft and food are sold here. All buildings are open to visitors.

Lapptallen (the Lapp Pine)

On Laxholmen you will find remains of a pine tree, said to be the one that Salomon the Sámi climbed when he traded his knowledge about the salmon for his freedom.



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3. OTHER SUBJECTS: 5 (12)

FISHING METHODS

Fishing in the Laxholmen and Edeforsen area has been carried out using both fixed equipment such as cages and traps – and portable equipment such as nets and seine nets. Today, only one salmon trap remains. It was built in 1941, replacing earlier ones from the 1870s. In the summer of 2012, a new, authentic salmon trap was built and is now on display in Edefors

Seine fishing The nets are called seines (Swedish: kolk) and the fishing method is known as seine-haul fishing (Swedish: kolkning). The nets could be 40-60 m wide, 2.7 m deep and had large cork buoys. They were held down by witherings with bands of birch bark tied in the middle. The net was carefully laid in the boat which was then rowed up to the upper end of the fishing location. Three men stayed in the boat and at least one man remained on the shore. The boat was then rowed diagonally downstream through the netting area, whilst the land edge of the net was pulled down alongside the bank, by the man who stayed ashore. The outer end of the net was rowed downstream and at the end of the netting area, the boat was punted ashore at the so called helping point, where the man on the shore had now arrived too. The net was taken up with or without salmon. The share of salmon caught using seine-haul fishing in Edefors was on average 50% but varied considerably over the years.

Cage fishing As early as in the 16th century, fishing cages were used in Edefors. The number ranged from one up to seven.

The fixed fishing cages in Edefors were placed on either bank, where the lower rapids were at their strongest and most difficult for the salmon to pass. The fishery on the northern side was called “north fishery” or “Crown fishery” and the fishery on the southern side the “south fishery” or “freemen’s fishery”. The fisheries were built using strong beams and weighed down with large rocks. They were protected against ice and logs with the help of crib piers and log guard walls.

The cages were first made of wood with hemp nets and later of strong iron bars with brass or steel meshes. The cages were secured to robust frames and raised using a winch. The Crown fishery had four and the freemen’s fishery three.



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3. OTHER SUBJECTS: 6 (12)

For emptying, the cages were raised above the surface. The fisherman climbed down into them through a topside hatch and clubbed the salmon. The cages were emptied twice every day. The salmon could not be left in the cage for too long, as they could be hurt or killed by the strong currents pushing them against the net. The most bountiful catches came when water levels were medium-high. The salmon then struggled to swim upstream and instead moved towards the banks. If water levels were very high, or very low, conditions were the opposite. The salmon cage fishing season normally began in late June or early July, reaching a peak in mid-July to mid-August.

Some years, fishing was good all the way into late August, when the legal salmon fishing season ended.

Trap fishing The early 1940's saw the construction of the salmon traps that replaced 19th century constructions. A trap was built on either side of the river. In one day, these could catch 435 salmon, weighing a total of 2000 kilos.

A salmon trap is a sealed chamber with layers of cribs. The stream flowed in through openings in the upper wall of the chamber. The water ran through the trap and out through openings in the lower wall, where the fish entered. The upper opening had iron bars to prevent the fish from leaving the trap. When they were emptied, the openings were barred with grids. When the trap had nearly dried out, the fish were taken up using hand nets. By the north fishery, basins for salmon breeding were also built.

Trap fishing occurred for a short period of time, relative to the 600 years of cage fishing. When Laxede Power Station was built in the 1960's, fishing ceased for good.



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3. OTHER SUBJECTS: 7 (12)

FORBIDDEN TO THE PEOPLE

The fact that salmon was immensely important as trading goods meant harsh punishment for illegal fishing. None other than the nobility and the Church were allowed to fish the Lule River. Years of starvation and crop failures meant that many “greedy locals”, as they were called, were sentenced to harsh punishments for illegal fishing. There are records of locals being sentenced to as much as a year of forced labour for having fished for their starving families.

The older people in Edefors today grew up with frothing rapids and a river full of salmon. However, the locals have never been particularly active in the development of fishing, as the rights to it have almost always belonged to someone else. The commercial fishermen working in Edefors were mainly people dispatched here from the coast. It is said that they were allowed to take the fins and the head of the fish for themselves, to have enough energy for the work at hand.

POACHING LOCALS

The locals grew up with a sense of bitterness over the fact that they were not even allowed to fish for household needs from the river that held so much salmon. Those who decided to do it anyway, knowing that it was considered poaching, faced punishment. Thrilling, but risky. More than once, nets made by the locals in winter were seized by authorities. The nets were so coarse that they had to be placed in the rapids so as not to be seen by the fish. The fishing boats were small and the waves were high.

Surveillance was strict and you needed to be clever to avoid the state police, who also worked with informers. One of the locals tells a story of how he, as a child, was posted as a watch on one of the islets and given a match to light if the state police showed up. Then, his father and the other poachers would come get him so that they could all hide in a sheltered part of the waters.

Occasionally, the state police travelled the river by boat to catch poachers.

In spring, it was easier for the locals to fish. No one came to watch them before the salmon started entering the river around midsummer. As soon as the ice first broke in spring, boats were pulled along the ice and people went fishing in the bright spring evenings.



EDEFORS

3. OTHER SUBJECTS: 8 (12)

THE EDEFORS TOURIST HOTEL

For the construction of the English Canal, workers' barracks were built, as well as an administrative building that was later converted into the Edefors Tourist Hotel. The building was first used to accommodate managers of Gellivare Company Ltd. The tourist hotel was located by the lowermost rapids and was a beautiful building with an equally beautiful view. The first innkeeper was Carl Schough, who was responsible for company representation. In an annex of the hotel building, he also traded wares.

The hotel was widely known all over Sweden for its large veranda where many travellers' depictions of Swedish Lapland were written over the years. "...illuminated by an ancient midnight light, with the thundering river as its backdrop..."

The best-known travelogue that began here in 1904 is one by none other than Swedish author Selma Lagerlöf, who published the classic "The Wonderful Adventures of Nils" in 1906 and received the Nobel prize in 1909. She enjoyed this place so much that she decided to stay longer than initially planned.

King Gustav V has also visited.

The Edefors Tourist Hotel was frequented by city people from Boden and Luleå who travelled up to Edefors by steamboat. When the weather was pleasant, long tables were set and people danced at the dance hall through long, bright summer nights. When guests began arriving by car, the car park filled with fancy cars and well-dressed city people who had Sunday dinner at the hotel and coffee out on the veranda. Local children crawled under the veranda to catch dropped pennies. One pastime enjoyed by guests was watching the emptying of the salmon traps, when the large salmon were lifted ashore using hand nets. The fish was then sold fresh, on location.

At the hotel's peak, 12 waitresses worked there, all wearing strict black-and-white uniforms.

Many events were held at the Edefors Tourist Hotel, until it burned down in 1989, to the shock and sadness of many locals. The hotel was never rebuilt.



EDEFORS

3. OTHER SUBJECTS: 9 (12)

CARL LINNAEUS BOTANISED HERE

On May 12, 1732, the young explorer from Småland, Carl Linnaeus, only 24 at the time, departed for Lapland. He brought 400 copper daler coins and he had the blessing of the Royal Academy of Sciences to explore Lapland, a fairly uncharted region at the time. His 5-month journey to Lapland would become one of the most important scientific expeditions ever carried out in Sweden. Carl Linnaeus observed and documented everything from the natural environment of Lapland to the customs of the Sámi. Amongst other things, the journey resulted in his collection, *Flora Lapponica*.

During his journey, he also visited Laxholmen, which he called Laxeden. He arrived there on June 27 and described how he found a pine that was used to record spring floods. He also found butterwort and Scottish dock, as well as black sand that contained iron.

Three months later he returned to study the life cycle of the salmon. The fishing season had been over for over a month, but he was still invited to catch salmon, especially gib salmon. He dissected several salmon and found that all the gib salmon contained milt, whilst all salmon without gibs contained roe. Workers present at the time told him that the salmon was present from around 14 days before midsummer until around the Feast of Bartholomew in late August and that was the period during which fishing was profitable.

After arriving home, Carl Linnaeus posed in traditional Sámi garb and he also brought a Sámi drum. He described the mosquitoes of Swedish Lapland in the following way:

“Never could a priest describe a hell that is worse than this.”



EDEFORS

3. OTHER SUBJECTS: 10 (12)

THE SOLDIERS OF CHARLES XII

In the **Battle of Poltava in 1709**, the Swedish army lost many men, wounded or captured by the Russians. A new life company was established in the north but fled, retreating across the Swedish border looking for somewhere to go. Around this time, it is likely that a few of King Charles XII's soldiers made their way to Edefors. In the early 19th century, a copper kettle full of gun flints was found buried here. Guns and bayonets of the type employed by Charles XII were also found. It is believed that a small number of units from the army of Charles XII made their way to Laxholmen. By the time they arrived, Laxholmen was empty, as no salmon fishing occurred during the war years, due to the shortage of salt. In times of war, the suppliers of salt did not want to venture into unsafe waters with their goods.



EDEFORS

3. OTHER SUBJECTS: 11 (12)

HISTORICAL DATA

1282 During the reign of Magnus III, an edict is issued, claiming “all the streams of the Northlands and Finland” for the Crown.

1323 The border between Sweden and Russia is drawn after a 30-year war between the countries. The salmon in the north becomes a factor of influence and an important source of income that is passed between various rightsholders.

1327 Through a royal charter, Archbishop Olof Björnsson, along with the reeve of Hälsingland and two rich landowners, are granted “all of the river known as Lulu, its surroundings and also its tributaries”. Sámi prisoners row them upstream. One is left on Laxholmen, where he discovers the salmon.

1471 The Edefors salmon funds the construction of Gammelstad Church.

1477 The Edefors salmon funds the construction of Uppsala University.

1486 The Archbishop’s share of fishing rights is transferred to Uppsala Cathedral.

The mid-1500’s. The Crown and the Church share fishing rights to the Lule River. By converting the country to protestantism, King Gustav I assumes control of all fishing rights.

1621 The Crown’s fishery is donated to the foundation of the city of Luleå.

1732 Carl Linnaeus studies the life cycle of salmon at Edeforsen.

1886 The city of Luleå purchases the freemen’s fishing rights and is now the sole proprietor of the Edefors fishing rights.

1837 The city of Luleå has a total annual revenue of 1795 Swedish riksdaler. 1378 of these are generated by the fisheries in Edefors.



EDEFORS

3. OTHER SUBJECTS: 12 (12)

The mid-1800's Fishing is carried out using two fishing cages and one seine net.

The 1920's One leaseholder manages to catch more than 200 kilos of salmon in one day, with an average weight of 10 kilos per fish.

1920–1940 There is a decline in the catches of both cage and net fishing. The amount of roe supplied to the Kusträsk breeding facility also declines, thereby threatening its continued existence.

The 1940's The fishing cages are converted to traps, to compensate for the negative influence of the Suorva Dam on salmon fishing. The traps can catch 435 salmon, with a total weight of two metric tonnes, in one day.

1960 The city of Luleå sells their Edefors properties to Vattenfall, who builds Laxede Power Station, thereby bringing an end to a 600-year era of fishing in Edefors.

2005 The association Bykraft builds the Laxede campsite.

2012 Laxholmen is listed as a protected area. A salmon trap is built for public display, as well as a visitors' platform with information and pictures detailing the history of the area.

2018 xxxx people visit the Laxholmen summer café, run by the Edefors local history society.

2019 The Edefors Region Economic Association complete renovation of the Forsudden Recreation Area, leasing it to private tourism company for further development.