

Trip Report - Jonathan Deane, Canoe and Wild Camp in the Båven Lake System, June 2026

Overall, it was a very good trip and mid-June is potentially a good time to have done it. I say 'potentially' because the weather in the first two days, 14/15 June, was bad to dreadful, but after that it cheered up and by Wednesday 17/6, it was superb. This is a risk you take with a Swedish summer, I suppose, but there was also a big advantage to going when we did: the big Swedish summer holiday started on Friday 19/6, midsummer, our return date, so we had the lake and all the best camping spots entirely to ourselves.

Our local hosts were very welcoming and gave us useful and thorough briefings on the Saturday evening and Sunday morning before we set off. Again, had we not been out of season, there could have been a dozen people waiting to get off and our briefing would have had to be curtailed.

The single most useful thing was the waterproof map which Mikael sold us. He has his own copy, and previous kayakers have marked good camping spots on this with a black cross. We copied these onto our own map and they were the most best possible guide for our whole trip. In fact, we always camped at a black cross, and in all cases, there was sufficient flat ground to put up two tents, a fire circle, easy/relatively easy access to the lake and plentiful burning wood. I strongly advise other people taking this trip to do the same as many of the good spots aren't obvious until you're very close - you could easily paddle on by.

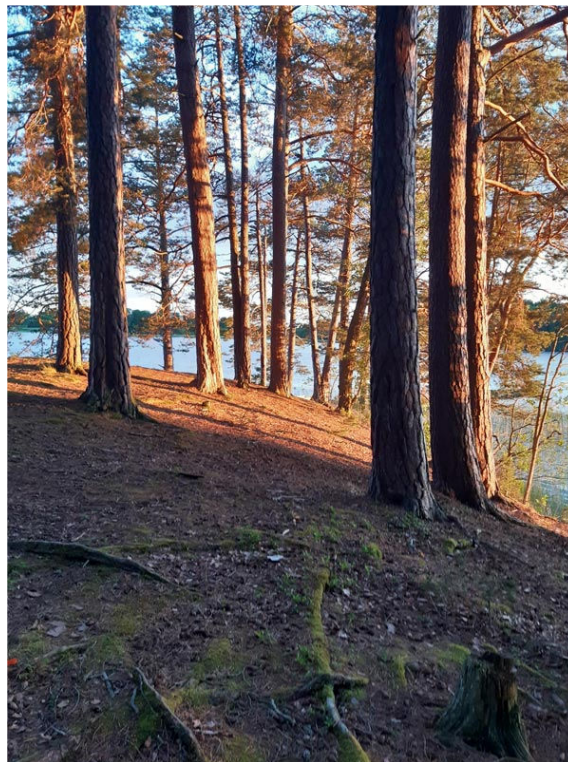
Thus it was that we discovered Majholmen, the most beautiful island, with sunny rocks to sit on and a lovely beach - easy for hauling out the kayaks and for swimming from. This really was the best of islands and we could easily have missed it without that all-important cross on the map.



The beach at Majholmen. Best camp of all.

The equipment provided was adequate (Seabird kayaks with enough hold space for a 6-day trip; Trangia stove, gas version, which never lets you down; nice, if old North Face two-man tent with two generous porches; a sleeping mat that unfortunately had a slow leak).

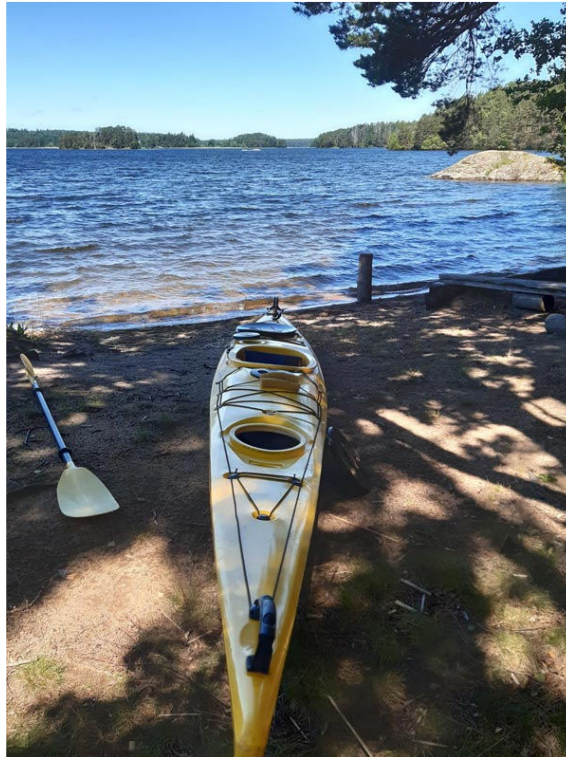
We made good use of our six days, camping at a different spot every night except one, when we stayed two nights in order to do a side-trip to the small village of Stjärnhov. This was well worth doing because (a) Stjärnhov has a restaurant, one that was actually open...a bit of a treat to eat, at a table, something not cooked on the stove, and (b) to get there, you have to negotiate a narrow winding channel, Naten, which is a good contrast to the wide-open spaces of Båven. Carina told me that people often come to the area just to do this channel.



Camping place opposite Hornet, where we spent two nights

The accommodation at Gamla Mejeriet is comfortable, hostel-like with a good kitchen (oven, hob, two microwaves, toaster, electric kettle, fridge, freezer) and a small, shared shower and loo. It's a shame they don't do food, but there's a useful Co-op in Flen, just behind the station. You just have to remember to add an evening meal to your shopping list for all the rest of your trip.

We made good use of the 589 bus between Flen and Skebokvarn and it was reliably on time every time we needed it, even on the bank holiday.



Our last camping spot, Kyrkfjärden, mosquito free but plenty of wood ants

There are plenty of beavers in and around the lake, although we weren't lucky enough to see them. There were many felled trees, and I thought they had been felled by axe, the old-fashioned way. In fact, this was the work of beavers, testament to amazingly strong jaws and teeth since the trees were upwards of a foot in diameter.

All in all, it was a very enjoyable experience and I would recommend it to anyone who likes the idea of kayaking combined with unlimited wild camping, the latter thanks to Allemansrätten, an enlightened Swedish law. We did a similar trip last year in Saimaa, Finland, and the two holidays were very much comparable.