

Sweden's New Water World

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Travel



Photo credit: Courtesy Kjell Holmner/West Sweden Tourism Board

With an expansive marine park, the country stakes a fresh claim as Europe's eco mecca.

By Matt Hendrickson

Sweden might be best known for Ikea, meatballs, and producing the world's most famous golf widow, but it's also establishing itself as one of Europe's leaders in eco-tourism. The newly designated Kosterhavet National Park (kosterhavet.se), encompassing the Koster Island archipelago — a popular summer destination on Sweden's west coast — is composed of 150 square miles of protected marine environment. Sea kayaking works great for

easy-access exploring, though we'd recommend scuba diving to check out the cold-water coral reefs and the 6,000 different marine species, 200 unique to Sweden. Dive alone or hire a guide from the Klemming Brothers diving school. Then warm back up in the luxe beds of the Sydkoster Hotell Ekenas, where many of the rooms afford gorgeous views over the Kosterfjord. A meal at Kosters Tradgardar is a must: Stefan von Bothmer serves sustainably harvested seafood along with dishes like sweet-pea hummus. It's a far cry from pickled herring — thankfully.

BEING THERE

Sydkoster Hotell Ekenas (*doubles starting at \$170; sydkoster.se*)

Klemming Brothers diving school (klemmingsdykhjalp.se)

Kosters Tradgardar Cafe (kosterstradgardar.se)

Nature Travels arranges kayak trips (naturetravels.co.uk)

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