



## INFORMATION FOR THE BUSINESS COMMUNITY ON REINDEER HUSBANDRY

ARVIDSJÄUR MUNICIPALITY IS PART OF SÁPMI, THE LAND OF THE SAMI. THE MUNICIPALITY IS SITUATED IN AN AREA INHABITED BY FOREST SAMI, MEANING THAT REINDEER HUSBANDRY TAKES PLACE HERE ALL YEAR ROUND.



**ARVIDSJÄUR**  
IN SWEDISH LAPLAND  
árviessjávrrie

## SÁPMI

Arvidsjaur Municipality is part of Sápmi, the land of the Sami, the municipality is situated in an area inhabited by forest Sami, meaning that reindeer husbandry takes place here all year round.

The forest Sami largely conduct reindeer husbandry below the cultivation line. Unlike the samebys of the fell Sami, they never move reindeer up into the high fell. Instead, they move their reindeer between different pastures on adjacent land.



## WHAT IS A SAMEBY?

*Although literally translated the Swedish term sameby means “Sami village”, it does not refer to a physical location. Rather, a sameby is an economic and administrative association of Sami with its own elected board. The sameby is a legal entity that represents the best interests of its members, who can engage in reindeer husbandry within a specific geographical area.*

Source: sametinget.se

The lands of four forest sameby are located within the municipality:

Västra Kikkejaure

Östra Kikkejaure

Mausjaur

Ståkke

There is also one sameby of fell Sami: Luokta-Mávas.

The migratory routes of a further three samebys pass through the municipality: Svaipa, Semisjaur-Njarg and Maskaure. These samebys have the right to move reindeer through the municipality and graze them en route.

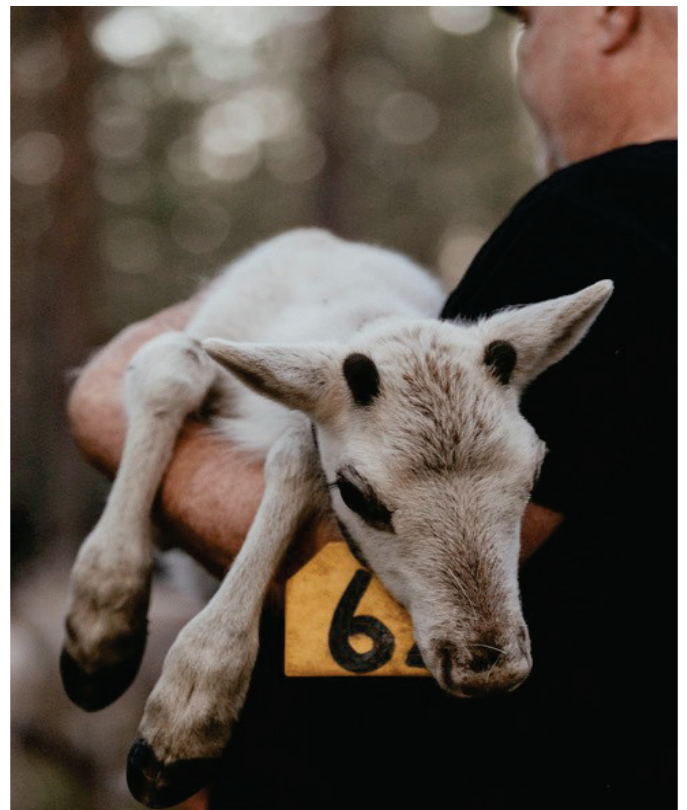


Photo: Sandra Hallnor

## THE RIGHT OF THE SAMI TO PRACTICE REINDEER HUSBANDRY

The Sami have a constitutional right to practice reindeer husbandry. According to the Constitution, Swedish public authorities have a duty to promote opportunities for the Sami people to preserve, develop and practice their cultural and communal life.

Section 17 of Chapter 2 of the Instrument of Government (SFS 1974:152) on freedom of trade protects the right of the Sami people to practice reindeer husbandry. Reindeer husbandry is a recognised part of the Sami people's culture and way of life in Sweden. The right to practice reindeer husbandry constitutes a separate right to use land.

Precedential rulings by the Supreme Court in cases such as the Skattefjäll case and the Nordmaling case have established that the right to practice reindeer husbandry is based on custom and prescription from time immemorial. It has also been established that, by nature, this is a civil right and freedom.

Pursuant to Section 23 of the Swedish Reindeer Husbandry Act (SFS 1971:437), samebys retain the right to move their reindeer between separate parts of the association's grazing lands. This is part of the right to practice reindeer husbandry. The Reindeer Husbandry Act also states that dogs are to be kept on a leash or confined in areas where there are reindeer. The law places strict liability on dog owners, meaning that they are liable for all injury caused by their dog, regardless of whether or not the dog owner has been negligent. Loose dogs can cause reindeers stress, drive reindeer, disperse a herd or cause it to go in the wrong direction, causing a great deal of extra work.

## WHAT IS THE CONSTITUTION?

*The Constitution – also known as Sweden's fundamental laws – are special laws which regulate how Sweden is to be governed. The fundamental laws are designed to protect our democracy and are therefore more difficult to amend than other laws.*



## REINDEER HUSBANDRY IS A NATIONAL INTEREST

Reindeer husbandry is also considered a matter of national interest. Areas that are of national interest are to be protected against measures that damage the natural or cultural environment. The degree of protection is regulated in the Swedish Environmental Code (Ds 2000:61).

This implies that land and water areas of importance to reindeer husbandry shall, as far as possible, be protected against measures that may significantly interfere with such operations in the present or for future generations. A large part of Arvidsjaur Municipality is therefore an area of national interest for reindeer husbandry.



## IMPORTANT AREAS FOR REINDEER HUSBANDRY

*Areas that may be considered of national interest include migration routes, overnight pasture, natural gathering places, passages through difficult terrain, special grazing areas, and areas around reindeer paddocks and other facilities. As reindeer husbandry is not an object to be protected, but rather an operation conducted across interdependent subdivisions, the functional connections between these areas, such as winter and summer grazing land, have the status of national interest.*



Photo: Kent Norberg

## THE CULTURE OF THE FOREST SAMI

The forest Sami are a minority in Sami society. Their culture is unique and an asset to the municipality. The church town of Lappstaden is one example of forest Sami culture in the area. The municipality is within the Sami language administration area, meaning that, among other things, Sami speakers have the right to use the language in spoken and written communication with the municipality. The municipality is also obliged to offer preschool and care for the elderly in Sami.



## REINDEER HUSBANDRY FACES MOUNTING CHALLENGES

Samebys face mounting challenges due to pasture loss and generally deteriorating conditions for reindeer husbandry. According to the associations themselves, problems within the municipality have worsened due to increased predator pressure, development and forestry. Climate change is also having an impact on reindeer husbandry. The increasing frequency of zero-crossings during winter leads to the formation of ice and slush that makes it more difficult for reindeer to graze. The warmer climate may also affect ice conditions on the lakes and waterways along migration routes.





Photo: Malin Jönsson

## WHAT IS A ZERO-CROSSING?

A zero-crossing occurs when the day's highest temperature is above 0°C and the lowest temperature on the same day is below 0°C. This can have serious consequences for reindeer husbandry. When the temperature fluctuates between plus and minus, the ground thaws and then freezes again, making it difficult for reindeer to access grazing.

As all land within the municipality, with the exception of plots that are developed or designated for development, belongs to one of the samebys, all further development involves some form of impact on reindeer husbandry. Examples of activities that pose risks to reindeer husbandry include increased snowmobile traffic, dog sledding, tourism and testing and research. Reindeer are especially sensitive during the winter and spring, when females are pregnant. If stressed, they may abort the calf they are carrying. For businesses operating in Arvidsjaur, functioning dialogue is therefore vital in order to avoid or minimise negative impact.





Photo: Sandra Hallnor, Malin Johansson

## CONTACT THE SAMEBY AT AN EARLY STAGE

If you are considering starting a new business that may have some bearing on Sami land interests, you should initiate dialogue with the samebys at an early stage. This can benefit all parties. The same applies to any expansion of an existing business, or if you are unsure how your current business activities relate to reindeer husbandry.



## CONTACT INFORMATION

The contact person for a sameby is its chairperson, who will decide how the matter should be handled within the sameby. Maps, information and contact details for each sameby can be found on the website of the Sami Parliament at [sametinget.se](http://sametinget.se).

For more general information about business development, you are most welcome to contact Arvidsjaur Municipality's Business Unit at [naringsliv@arvidsjaur.se](mailto:naringsliv@arvidsjaur.se).