



Ministry of Environment
of Denmark
Nature Agency

A magnificent royal hunt

- a guide to the par force hunting landscape of Jægersborg Deer Park and Enclosure



Embark on a journey into the earliest par force hunting landscape in Denmark

In 1669, King Frederik III established a small deer park which would provide the best conditions for a good hunt. When he assumed the throne in 1670, King Christian V expanded the enclosure to five times its former size. The King had been introduced to the French par force hunt during a visit to the court of King Louis XIV. The new deer park incorporated long, straight roads. It was the beginning of what was to become a truly impressive par force hunting landscape in North Zealand, and an even more impressive display of power.

Read about the World Heritage Site at www.parforce.dk



Frederik III and his son Christian V



A magnificent show of force

The par force hunting landscape in North Zealand has earned its place on the UNESCO World Heritage List because it allows us to experience how the Baroque ideas of 17th and 18th century Europe found expression in the design of the landscape.

The par force hunting landscape has also been awarded World Heritage status because it is an example of how the absolute monarchy demonstrated its power.

The landscape is laid out with an extensive system of hunting tracks befitting the extravagant par force hunt, which included an impressive abundance of riders, hounds, blaring horns, and a lavish entourage. Horses and hounds were bred specifically for par force hunting. Hunting lodges were built so that the hunting party had a place where they could eat.

Three distinct forests - one World Heritage Site

King Christian V designed the forest of Jægersborg Deer Park and Enclosure, Gribskov and Store Dyrehave, along with several other forests, for par force hunting - a hunting tradition and show of force which subsequent monarchs were to maintain for more than 100 years. The last royal par force hunt was held in Denmark in 1777.

Naturstyrelsen Hovedstaden, 04. 2022. Photo: Tue Blichfeldt, Peter Lassen, Anders Soby, Ib Welling, Alf Aagaard. Graphic design: Wabos Kjellevrup. Print: Rosenbathis als, Svaneværket 2022.



To this day it is still possible to take in the hunting roads, beautiful hunting lodges and other traces of the area's history, for instance here at Jægersborg Deer Park



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The par force hunting
landscape in North Zealand
inscribed on the World Heritage List in 2015

What is par force hunting?

The French term par force means 'by force'. The par force hunt was a magnificently staged hunt. Hunters on horseback and hunting dogs pursued the chosen prey, which was often a large stag. To ease access and allow the audience to enjoy the dramatic hunt, long straight roads were cleared in the forest, sometimes laid out in a star formation. From here, the audience could follow both the prey and the hunters. Particular members of the hunt used hunting horns to signal the different stages of the hunt. The prey was pursued for hours on end, until it was exhausted. The hounds then surrounded the stag until a distinguished member of the hunting party approached the prey to dispatch it with a short hunting knife known as a Hirshfænger.



In the forests of North Zealand, the absolute monarch led the hunt and would typically deliver the final blow, thus demonstrating his power and his courage.

The deer's meat was inedible following the stressful pursuit. The meat and entrails were instead fed to the hounds. The lead hound was given the deer's head, while the hunters sounded special signals with their hunting horns. The King, or his guest of honour, was given the right foreleg of the deer as a trophy.



Experience the par force hunting landscape

The prey. The wild deer which inhabit the deer park today are descendants of the deer that were used in earlier times for par force hunting. Wild deer from the surrounding areas were driven into King Christian V's par force hunting enclosure and were supplemented by deer brought over from Bornholm.

Jægersborg Deer Park still functions as a deer park and hunting grounds to this day. The deer population of around 2000 animals is controlled by the Danish Nature Agency's gamekeepers. The Danish royal family also occasionally hosts hunts in the park. Around 700 animals are killed each winter, and around 700 calves are born each summer. These are either sold for meat or as breeding animals to other deer parks throughout the world.

The stag (the male deer) has antlers. This applies to all the four species of deer in the deer park. The stag naturally loses its antlers every spring, after which a new set of antlers grows out. White deer and fallow deer are the result of natural colour variation; they are not albinos, as many people think. Jægersborg Enclosure is exclusively home to roe deer.

The red deer migrated to Denmark 10,000 years ago and is Denmark's largest wild mammal. The stag grows large, highly branched antlers. The park is home to 300 red deer. The hinds and their calves mostly keep to the southern part of the deer park, while the stags keep to the northern end. The male and female red deer are almost exclusively seen together during the rutting season in September and October.



The fallow deer are found in three colour variations: white, black and brown. They are seen in large groups on Eremitagesletten. Their rutting season is in October and November. The park is home to 1600 fallow deer.



The sika deer is native to eastern Asia and was introduced to the deer park in 1923. The park is home to 100 sika deer. Its summer coat is reddish brown with white spots. Its winter coat is a uniform dark brown. Its rutting season is in September and October.

The roe deer is the smallest species of deer in Denmark and was not hunted as part of the par force hunt. The park is home to 20-30 roe deer. The roe deer live exclusively in Jægersborg Enclosure. Their rutting season is in July and August.





1 Echoes of par force hunting

Every year on the first Sunday of November, the Sportsrideklubben riding club hosts the annual Hubertus Hunt. To the delight of onlookers the riders attempt to ride through Magasinødammen (Magazine Pond). We are transported back to the era when the wild par force hunt thundered through the park. More than 30,000 visitors flock to the park to experience the Hubertus Hunt.



2 Strategically situated

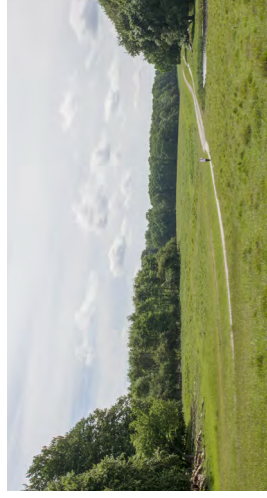
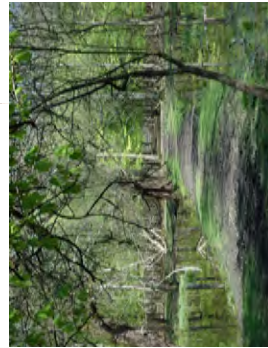
Eremitageslottet (Hermitage Palace) is the third hunting lodge to be constructed in the history of the deer park. It was built in 1736. It was built on the highest point in the landscape where the hunting roads meet. The absolute monarch's relation to the landscape was further emphasised by the east-west alignment of the building, which meant that when the rays of the sun hit the mirrors in the dining room, they would be reflected onto the earthly representative of the sun, the absolute monarch. More information is available at the north side of Eremitageslottet.



4 King Christian V's oak - the fatal rendezvous

This is where King Christian V was fatally kicked by the dying stag during the final stage of a par force hunt in 1698. The accident probably contributed to his death the following year. The antlers of the famous stag still hang at Rosenborg Castle.

5 A hunting track runs through a wetland area, thus demonstrating the absolute monarch's dominion over nature.



3 Get rid of the farmers!

The population of the village of Stokkerup were evicted and the farmers were given new land outside King Christian V's par force hunting grounds. The outline of the 16 farms that used to surround Stokkerup Keer, the pond in the centre of the village, can still be discerned.

To begin with only a few hunting roads were established in Jægersborg Deer Park and enclosure on the most impenetrable stretches, following the English tradition. Three parallel roads were established leading from north to south, while the forested areas were supplemented by several roads in a pattern of squares.

The star-shaped system of roads came about when Eremitage-slottet was built at the intersection of several roads. The Hjørtekeær road is more recent.

The par force hunting roads

Legend

- Existing par force road from 1685. Discernible in the landscape.
- Original par force road from 1685. Not discernible in the landscape.
- - - Par force road of a more recent date. Discernible in the landscape today.
- - - Par force road of a more recent date. No longer discernible in the landscape.
- Large rocks that marked the route of a par force hunting road.

Other legend

- Public road
 - open to motor vehicles
- Forest road
 - motor vehicles not permitted
- - - Forest track
- ⋯ Bridle path
- The northernmost border of the deer park today. King Christian V's par force hunting grounds encompassed both Jægersborg Deer Park and Jægersborg Enclosure.
- Entrance, red gates

