A scenic view of a lake with a wooden dock, a green boat, and trees in the foreground. The text is overlaid on the upper portion of the image.

# *Doing Dasland*

*by Bertus Rozemeijer*



There are a lot of beautiful places to fish for *Esox* around the world, but Sweden must be right up there with the best?

Reading this piece by *Bertus Rozemeijer* made me want to pack my trailer full of gear and drive straight on over, with the help of a cross-channel ferry of course!

Sweden was a great discovery for me. As a younger angler I was completely focused on Ireland, but thanks to the Fisheries Board and their stupid policy towards pike, we found a new destination in Sweden. Sweden is big and teeming with lakes and rivers, as well as the incredible Baltic. Following the coastline we have some 3,214km of fishing water available. That's a lot of fishing to do. And if brackish water is not your thing, there are thousands of lakes in Sweden, teeming with pike. Calling Sweden a pike angler's paradise is really not that far from the truth.

Over the years I have fished in many of these lakes. Some in the far north, way above the polar circle, and a real good number in the south. Fly fishing for pike in the north for me is unforgettable. With my friend Rutger de Jong, we experienced days with up to 70 fish. At a certain moment Rutger stopped fishing and when I asked why, he showed me his hands and the big blisters he had got from playing the fish. Stripping the line over the back of his hand time and time again was a bit too much for him.

The north is great, but one has to know the way to find good fishing, and know how to deal with the mosquitos. The south of Sweden is far better developed for a pike fishing holiday, especially the areas close to Gothenburg, which are absolutely brilliant. Move a bit further up

and you come across the lakes in Dalsland. Dalsland is simply beautiful. It offers all you can wish for, with overwhelming nature. Moose are all around, and driving the roads there should be done with care. Sure, you need an eye for them to see them, but once you have learned how and where to look for moose, you cannot miss them. A funny thing happened on my last trip with my friend Uli Beyer. Uli told me he had never seen a moose... I could not believe this, and I reckoned I could show him half a dozen in less than 10km of driving. Soon after, on that very same road, we had a moose crossing just a few metres from our car. We barely missed the animal.

You can see cranes foraging near the road, sometimes lots of them! There are ospreys on every lake, and you surely will come across the mighty white tailed eagle, hunting for cormorants... Surely you will see and hear loons, and on the same lake experience pike fishing as never before.

You will be on your own there as 'a lonely pike angler in the wilderness of Sweden'. To fish, you need a lake, and you will find so many lakes there that it might get tough to take your pick. Most of these lakes are situated very close to each other. There are simply way too many lakes to discuss them all. I fished them for the first time in the mid-eighties.



Edsleskogs Wardhus. This beautiful family hotel is situated at Lake Edslan.



My sister and husband lived in the Norwegian Halden bordering Dalsland. I fished lakes like Store Erte (Store means big), Stora Le, Foxen and so many more. Lakes like this often exceed a length of 50km and more, and with all the islands and countless bays create a very long shoreline. Like so many glacial lakes, they are north to south situated, and are often narrow and deep. Most of the shoreline is shallow and fishes very well. Small islands, reefs and rock bars are all over the place, which all offer great fishing too. Next to these lakes, there are numerous smaller lakes as well. Laxsjon is still pretty big, but being only 10km long it's also fishable in windy conditions. If you have and can fish from a belly boat, take one with you.

The number of small lakes between the bigger lakes is countless, many of which are either hardly fished, or not fished at all, and they too offer great pike fishing.

So, all in all, there is a lot to do in Dalsland. My top attraction is the big Lake Vanern. Vanern is a giant, and here is the real challenge. It has 5,650 square kilometres of water, and with that an incredible coastline with numerous bigger and smaller bays. Some of these bays are nothing more than lakes connected to the main lake. Again, there are so many places around Vanern that describing them is impossible in

these pages. And, as you can understand, I only fished a few of them. Even so, they will keep me occupied for many years. In all cases, the bays described are pretty stable, and fish are not that hard to locate. Finding good spots is often obvious, but it's good not to spend too much time on a nice-looking place. If pike are there, they let you know for sure. Pressure on these bays is very low, and that is noticeable in the way the pike react to your offerings. Once you have caught a few pike,



you can be sure that there are many more of them. My starting point here is the place called Åmål, situated at a big bay and offering great fishing right out the boatslip. In this bay, there are some real nice smaller bays offering plenty of hours of pike fishing. Out of Åmål, I move up to the Tjuvviken bay. You have to pass some open Vanern water, but most of the time this

is a doable job. Keep in mind that weather and wind can change rapidly, and getting back safe can be an enterprise. The safe thing about Vanern is that once you are out of the bay and into the waves, these waves are so wide out of each other that traveling at a modest speed looks more dangerous than it is. But... Be aware!

Not the biggest pike here, but beautiful nevertheless.





Going into Tjuvviken, you will see a row of rocks and pass them on the right-hand side. The entrance is rather narrow and shallow, so travel with care. Before entering the main basin, you have to pass close to some reed beds. Your adventure starts here. The whole bay offers great shallow-water fishing; thus, fishing jerkbaits and, under mild conditions, topwater lures is great. Sure enough, a fly fisherman can do his thing here too. In the real shallows you will see a lot of loose reed stumps just emerging the surface. This is fly-fishing water, and if you don't fly fish, use spinnerbaits with a set of single up-riding hooks. There is a lot of water like this, and don't be surprised to get lots of pike here. Many of them are not that big, but a good fish is always around. There is deeper water too, going down to about 3m, where you will catch fewer but often better-quality pike.

So far we have never had a day without at least one 40-inch fish. Fishing this spot is a day's work, if not more. On the map it seems to be just one bay, but there is a (not mapped) canal connecting this bay to the much bigger Gatviken bay. Gatviken goes down to some 7m, but again, there is a lot of weedy shallow water, and pike seem to be at every cor-

ner. Again, do not waste time in any of these pockets if results stay out. The next pocket can be full of them, and trust me, you will have a lot of fun and excitement in this part of Lake Vanern.

Personally, I love to move down to the Tössebäcks Skärgård (Skärgård is skerries). Going out of Åmål, you have some 20km of water, scattered with islands and thus offering nice

and sheltered fishing. You really need shelter for, as told, Vanern itself can be like an ocean, creating huge waves in just a bit of wind. If it is too windy to make the journey to the skerries from Åmål, then another option to reach this archipelago is using the boatslip at the small town of Tösse (Tössebäcks Hamn). You will find a lot of great places to fish here, but good navigation is a must. The main channel is well marked with red and green

buoys, but if you go out of the channel to fish the bays, then careful navigation is a must.

Once in the bays, in front or behind the numerous islands, you are in a pike angler's paradise. You will come across long reed beds around the islands, and making a drift on the edge of these reeds brings you enough pike very easily. It's a place for my field testing, where I try out new baits. Not really fair, for



Fishing the productive shallow areas from the boat.



Stunning scenery and lots of pike.





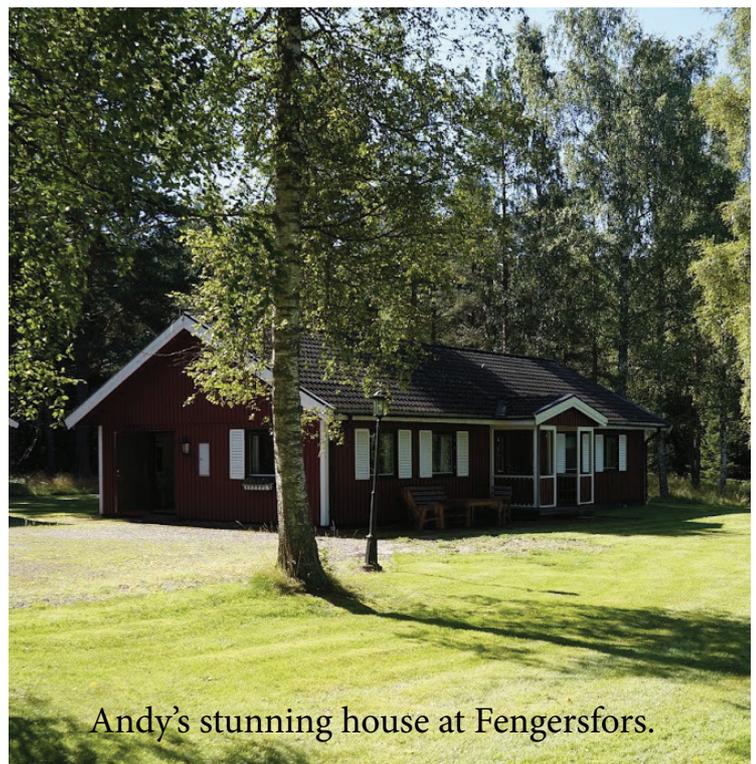
it doesn't say anything if you use these lures in your everyday water. I guess that it is the best to fish fast here. Again, do not stay too long in a bay if success is waiting. The next corner can be a hit. Try to locate the better spots and fish them right, and with some time. Here you also will have long stretches with water where reed stumps are all under the surface, creating a dense forest, but also making it a great place to fish. Just drift over it and be amazed at what you will see. Again, this is spinnerbait or fly-fishing water. The edges though are good for regular but still shallow-running lures. It is also good to come close to the shoreline and check out what's in there. You will meet real narrows where, behind this, another stretch of water is waiting for you, making you realize that the fishing water is endless. If not enough, you can also do some trolling. While doing this in deeper water, you might come across some other trollers. They are not out for pike, but for big trout and the famous land-locked salmon Vanern has. Talking about trolling: do not be amazed when you meet some real big pike in extreme deep water. This behaviour of pike, hanging out in open water, only a few metres below the surface, is typical for Scandinavian pike. As a standard, the best way to catch pike in open water is to locate shoals of whitefish (Sik). Once located, you also find your pike. If it's your thing to fish this way, I am sure some big ones will come up for you.

Some good places to stay? Fishing close by? As told, there are lakes everywhere, big and small. To make it comfortable, and to have some good local knowledge helping you out, a good place to stay can be with Andy van Assema. Andy's lodge and holiday houses are situated at Fengersfors, between the lakes Arrsjön and Ånimmen. Fengersfors is also very close to Tösse, so it's also close to Lake Vanern. Andy is a great guide, and also has some nice boats on trailers, so you can move

from one lake to the other. Next to the boats, Andy also has belly boats available and runs a tackle shop to provide the lures you need. On his site [www.sportfishingdalsland.com](http://www.sportfishingdalsland.com) you will find all the details.

Next, but just as good, is Edsleskogs Wardhus. This family hotel is situated at Lake Edslan. I fished it, together with Uli Beyer, and although not the biggest lake in Sweden (it still has a shoreline of some 30km), the fishing is just great. Pike up to 50ins have been caught here, and 40ins plus fish are common. Uli and I once made a trip to fish a small lake connected to Edslan and had some 20 fish in a very short space of time, indicating that small lakes can offer excellent pike fishing. The Edsleskogs Wardhus is also very close to Laxsjon, a must lake for any pike angler, and also in close range to Åmål. Owner Johan Postma has a number of good boats available, and he is a great cook. Check out more at:

[www.edsleskogswardhus.se](http://www.edsleskogswardhus.se)



Andy's stunning house at Fengersfors.



# EDSLESKOGS WÄRDSHUS

*Guesthouse for wildlife photography, hiking and sportfishing in Dalsland,  
Sweden*

## SPORTFISHING IN DALSLAND

**T**HE SURFACE OF THE PROVINCE OF DALSLAND IS COVERED FOR ELEVEN PROCENT WITH LAKES; THIS IS the highest percentage of lakes in Sweden. Many of those lakes can be reached witin half an our driving. We have the big lake Vänern is the east and to the west we have lakes as Edslan, Knarrbysjön, ärran, ånimmen, Lelången, Västra- and östra Silen and Laxsjön. Besides all kind of white fish these lakes are perfect for predatorfishing as pike, perch, trout and salmon. We even have a perfect river and lake for Zanderfishing. We help you to find your way towards and on these lakes. We have roadmans, watermans, fishingpermits and localguides to help you find the

Click anywhere on this picture to visit the website.

Uli Beyer with just one of the many fish we caught on our short trip.





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