

Areas without major infrastructure development

Innholdsfortegnelse

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Many people still think of Norway as a country with wide expanses of more or less undisturbed countryside. However, more intensive use of natural resources is putting growing pressure on these areas, and the area classified as “without major infrastructure development” is much smaller than only thirty or forty years ago.



Wind power plants and their infrastructure often come into conflict with undisturbed nature. From Vågsøy, Sogn og Fjordane county. Photo: Kim Abel, Naturarkivet.no.



At the beginning of the 1900s, about half of mainland Norway was wilderness-like. Today the figure is around twelve percent. Photo: Kim Abel, Naturarkivet.no

STATE

Shrinking proportion of Norway with no major infrastructure

Remaining areas without major infrastructure development in all parts of the country are shrinking and being split up, but losses have been greatest in South and Central Norway. Much of the remainder consists of areas above the treeline, glaciers and other unproductive areas.

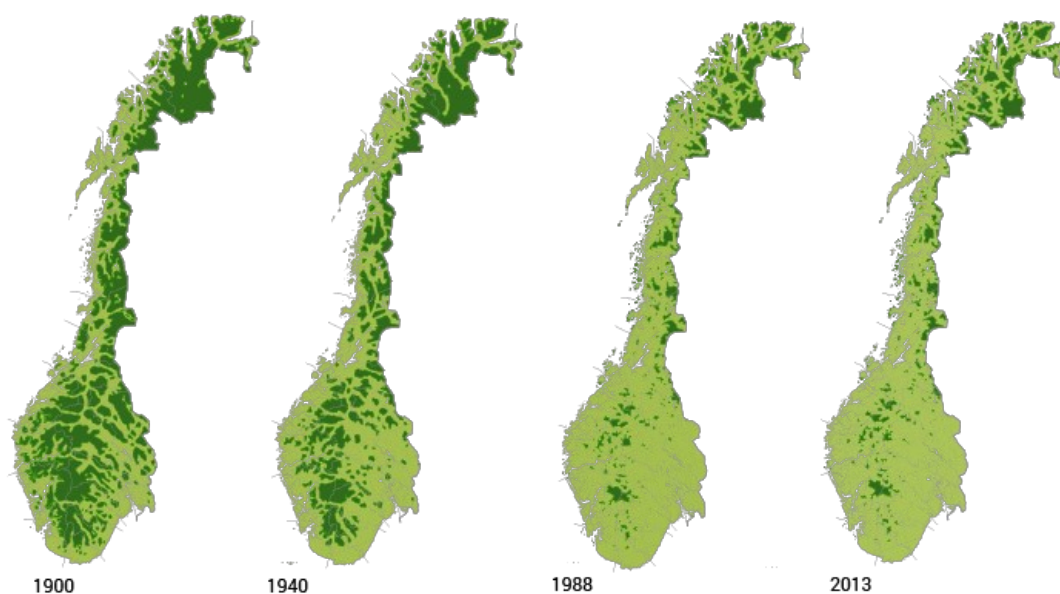
By January 2013, about 44 per cent of mainland Norway's area (about 142 500 km²) was one kilometer or more away from major infrastructure development.

The map shows areas without major infrastructure development and hydropower-related infrastructure (reservoirs, power plants, etc) around the Hardangervidda mountain plateau. You can zoom in or out to explore further.

Barely 12 per cent of Norway is wilderness-like

There has been a reduction in the extent of wilderness-like areas (those lying furthest from infrastructure developments) since the beginning of the 20th century, when about half of Norway could be classified as wilderness-like. By January 2013, this figure had dropped to about 12 per cent, and to only 5 per cent in the southern half of the country.

AREAS CLASSIFIED AS WILDERNESS-LIKE



● Wilderness-like areas: areas 5 km or more in a straight line from the nearest infrastructure development

Source: Map 1900/1940: Bruun, Magne, NOU-1986:13. Map 1988/2013: Norwegian Environment Agency / environment.no

Areas classified as wilderness-like						
Region	Wilderness-like January 2013		Lost 2008-2012		Lost 1988-2012	
	km ²	%	km ²	%	km	%
South and Central Norway	10377	4.9	77	0.7	579	5.3
North Norway	27154	24.1	106	0.4	1099	3.9
Total	37531	11.6	183	0.5	1678	4.3

Wilderness-like areas are defined as lying at least 5 km in a straight line from the nearest infrastructure development.

IMPACT

An important part of Norway's natural heritage is lost

The remaining large undeveloped areas in Norway play a vital role for many species, and are important for nature's ability to adapt to climate change. Information about the development in areas without major infrastructure development therefore also provides important information about the condition of Norway's nature.

In addition large undeveloped areas are important for outdoor recreation and provide opportunities to enjoy undisturbed nature. Such areas are an important part of the Norwegian natural heritage, and are in short supply both in Norway and internationally. They thus contain important qualities also with regard to future generations.

PRESSURE

Transport and energy sectors have the greatest impact

There is hardly anywhere in Norway that is truly untouched by human activity, but you can find everything from urban or intensively-farmed areas to wilderness-like forests and mountains. The most important causes of the loss of areas without major infrastructure in the period 2008–2012 were:

- road construction, particularly forest roads
- energy production and transport, including the construction of power lines

Wilderness-like areas



These areas are defined as lying at least 5 km in a straight line from the nearest infrastructure development.