

Hey,

We are both permanent residents on Svalbard, we have a cabin in the Todalen cabin area (22/529) and a private dog team that live in a dogyard in Adventdalen, at the mouth of the Todalen river (22/597). We support nature conservation and protection of the environment. We have observed the increased traffic over the years, mainly from various forms of tourism and gives good cause to introduce some restrictions. However, we are not sure if the proposed Verneplan is has the most comprehensive knowledge base or justification for being established.

We feel that the Nedre Adventdalen Verneplan has the potential to impact us greatly. We drive 1000's km with our dogs during the winter/spring, most of which are in lower Adventdalen. In summer/autumn we drive them along Vei 400 and due to limited options turning mostly in Endalen/Vinkelstation/Todalen cabin area/MAB station. We are also driving our dogs in the river once it has frozen up in autumn or winter when the road becomes too icy or dangerous in the dark with the traffic on Vei 400 – the timing of which all depends on the year as to what conditions we get and when they occur as the climate is so variable. We have our cabin in Todalen where we spend a lot of time in all seasons throughout the year. We have read and fully understand that the area is important for bird life. I feel that the human impacts around the cabin area are good for the bird life. You just have to look at the ponds that have formed due to the road being built that are rich with birdlife. The various wood piles around the cabins are nested in by the snowbuntings – this year (2022) we had one such family nest in a bird box we put up on the cabin, where we come in/out of the door often. The chicks then spend their time growing up happily around the cabin. We also have the rype on the roof of the cabin, especially in mating season and they stay in the area regardless of if we are there or not. The geese are mainly nesting in the lower tundra area towards Endalen where the human traffic is low apart from the various researchers/students from UNIS have their projects. The largest impacts on the birdlife I would say is from the increasing amount of bird watchers that are increasing in numbers, coming in convoys of several rental people carriers and rganised tourist trips to the Todalen road ponds and to Lomdammen during the important breeding/nesting periods in the summer.

We hope that our, and other local knowledge of the area will be taken into consideration. We are mostly concerned that the protection plan will impact traffic to/from and within the Todalen cabin area and the ability to drive our dogs in the lower Adventdalen area throughout the year. We are submitting this input individually in addition to the group Todalen cabin area, but fully-support what our cabin group have input too. We hope that any restrictions from the Verneplan will be based on robust and credible justification. We hope that the process will be transparent and open to input at every stage from people who are using the area a lot.

Kind regards,

Christine Lockwood-Ireland and Grahame Ireland