

Gressholmen: Pollution from former civilian shooting ranges

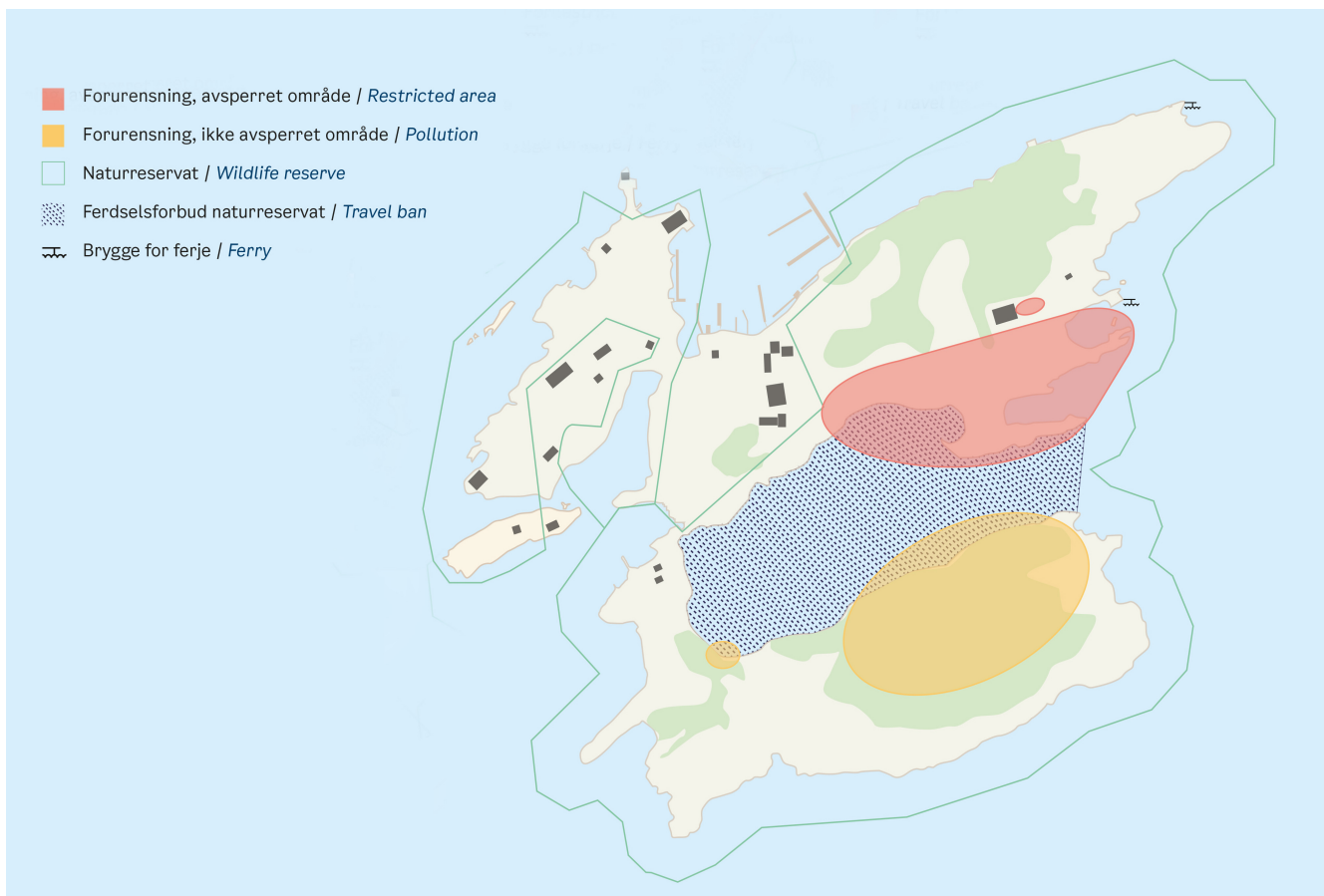
Parts of the nature reserve on Gressholmen and Rambergøya were used as a civilian shooting range from 1864 until 1990. Due to this historical activity, pollution has been found in certain areas, and some parts of these islands have restricted access. The areas has restricted access because it's normally heavily used by visitors.

The islands can be safely used as long as you follow some recommendations.

Recommendations to the public

Gressholmen and Rambergøya can be safely used as recreational areas, as long as you follow these recommendations:

- Stay outside the closed-off area and avoid staying in other areas where pollution has been detected. The map below shows which areas pollution has been found.
- Make sure that children (and others) avoid getting soil and sand in their mouth. Also, prevent dogs from eating soil and/or drinking from seawater or water collected in ponds/puddles.
- Avoid eating berries, mushrooms, and other edible items that can be picked on the islands. Additionally, avoid eating fish and shellfish caught from Gressholmen and Rambergøya altogether.



Is it safe to use the islands?

In specific areas of Gressholmen and Rambergøya, elevated concentrations of lead, as well as antimony, zinc, copper, and PAH (polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbons), have been detected. These substances are commonly found in former civilian shooting ranges. Notably, the presence of lead is particularly relevant from a health standpoint.

Gressholmen and Rambergøya are natural areas frequently used by Oslo's population for swimming, hiking, and recreational activities. From a public health perspective, these green areas, situated on the island in the Oslo fjord, constitute an important contribution. However, it is essential to safeguard all visitors against environmental factors that may adversely affect health and minimize exposure to risks. Therefore, Agency for Health (Helseetaten) and Gamle Oslo District (Bydel Gamle Oslo) have, in consultation with the Norwegian Institute of Public Health (NIPH), assessed the health risk for visitors to Gressholmen and Rambergøya and support the provided recommendations. **If the recommendations are followed, it is considered safe to stay on Gressholmen and Rambergøya.**

Investigations has been conducted

Gressholmen and Rambergøya are municipally owned and managed by Agency for Urban Environment (Bymiljøetaten). As the municipality's landowner, the Agency for Real Estate and Urban Renewal (Eiendoms- og byfornyelsesetaten) has conducted preliminary investigations to assess the condition of the former civilian shooting range. The background for these investigations arises from a national survey conducted by the Norwegian Environment Agency (Miljødirektoratet), which highlighted Gressholmen as a former shooting range with an unknown condition, emphasizing the need for comprehensive mapping. Based on the findings in the preliminary investigations, Rambøll has prepared a health-based risk assessment, on behalf of Agency for Real Estate and Urban Renewal (Eiendoms- og byfornyelsesetaten). An additional supplementary investigation has been conducted by COWI, confirming previous findings, and the risk assessments recommends the temporary measures outlined above.

A nature reserve

Any future cleanup measures must be considering that Gressholmen and Rambergøya are nature reserves. In the further work, the municipality will have close contact with, among others, the County Governor (Statsforvalteren) as the authority for the nature conservation area Gressholmen-Rambergøya.

About the islands

Large parts of Gressholmen and Rambergøya are nature reserves. This means that wildlife and vegetation are protected, and it is not allowed to break branches, pick flowers, etc., or engage in motorized travel on land and in the bay between Gressholmen and Rambergøya. Only smaller parts of the islands are not included in the nature reserve, mainly where the marina is located today on Gressholmen and Heggholmen. Oslo municipality owns Gressholmen and Rambergøya, while Heggholmen is owned by the state.

Who is responsible for Gressholmen

The Agency for Real Estate and Urban Renewal (Eiendoms- og byfornyelsesetaten), in its capacity as the municipality's landowner, is tasked with addressing the identified pollution and exploring potential remedial actions through dialogue with public authorities. Meanwhile, the Agency for Urban Environment (Bymiljøetaten) oversees the management of Gressholmen and Rambergøya, handling the islands' daily operations.

Agency for Health (Helseetaten) is the municipality's professional agency on health issues.