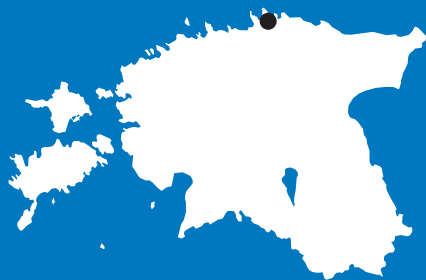




REPUBLIC OF ESTONIA  
ENVIRONMENTAL BOARD



# Lahemaa National Park



# **Lahemaa National Park**

**Harju and Lääne-Viru County**



## Administrative authority of protected area

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Mohni island, Imbi Mets

## WELCOME TO LAHEMAA NATIONAL PARK!

Lahemaa National Park was established on 1 June 1971 to preserve, protect, restore, study and raise awareness about the nature, landscapes, cultural heritage and balanced use of the environment of coastal areas in Northern Estonia. Lahemaa belongs to the Natura 2000 European network of protected habitat and bird sites.



Mesotrophic forest, Toomas Tuul

The surface area of the national park is 74,784 ha, of which 47,910 ha is land and 26,874 ha sea.

Lahemaa National Park is situated on the Gulf of Finland, spanning one municipality (Kuusalu) in Harju County and two (Vihula and Kadriina) in Lääne-Viru County. There are 68 settlements of various kinds in the national park and some 10,000 built structures.

There are approximately 3,600 permanent residents in the area, but in the summer the population of coastal villages increases many times over. The national park was established to preserve landscapes typical of Northern Estonia where **wooded areas are predominantly unaffected by human activity, semi-natural communities are well-maintained and great effort is made to preserve and restore cultural values.**

## LANDSCAPES AND COMMUNITIES

A number of landscape types characteristic of Northern Estonia are represented here, such as the coastal plain and islands of the Gulf of Finland, the plateaus of Harju and Viru and the region of Kõrvemaa with its hills, mires and lakes. The coastline is dotted with peninsulas, bays and small islands. It is the abundance of bays in the area that inspired J. G. Granö, the founder of modern geography in Estonia, to name the region Lahemaa (the Land of Bays) in the early 20th century.

In the national park, **erratic boulders**, including gigantic boulders and boulder fields, are found in great abundance. The most impressive among them is a 400-hectare boulder field in the Käsmu forest, while another similar site, a group of erratic boulders called the Kloostrikivid (Convent Stones) in the Palmse woods, is definitely worth a visit.

The **Baltic Klint** runs through Lahemaa. The highest elevation point of the klint (68 m above sea level) is between Vihula and Sagadi, but it is buried under sediment and can easily go unnoticed. The small klint capes of Muuksi and Tsite, for example, and riverbanks provide a better overview of the klint and its limestone and sandstone outcrops.

Communities typical of Lahemaa are sea, forests, mires, semi-natural communities, rivers, lakes and outcrops.

Sea makes up one-third of the national park's surface area. A variety of coastal habitats cover a total of some 8,850 ha. The majority (covering around 6,380 ha) are shallow waters and underwater sand banks. In addition, there are sandy and muddy foreshores which become exposed in windy weather, shallow coastal lagoons which are still occasionally connected to the sea, shallow bays, rocky reefs, coastal berms piled up on the waterfront, shingle and sandy beaches and dunes.

**Forests** are the predominant ecosystem in Lahemaa and are considered to have high conservation value. It is estimated that forests relatively unaffected by human activity cover 34,300 ha (73% of the national park's land area), of which ca 60% are



Käsmu boulder field, Toomas Tuul



pine forests. Also, other forest habitat types highly valued in Europe are found here, such as old broad-leaved forests, forests in the process of paludification, broadleaf mire forests, klint forests, alluvial forests and mire forests.

**Mires** (3,425 ha) have evolved in depressions left behind by former coastal formations or as a result of relict lakes becoming overgrown. Raised bogs are predominant in this category. Among the largest are Laukasoo bog (surface area: ca 800 ha), Hara mire and Viru bog. Spring mires as well as transition mires and quaking bogs can be found at the foot of escarpments. Attempts are being made to restore mires in areas previously used for the production of shredded peat.

**Semi-natural communities** (surface area: 3,042 ha) are species-rich meadows which evolved through the interaction of man and nature and have been used as hayfields or pastures for centuries. In Lahemaa, the most significant examples of this category are alvar grasslands as well as coastal, flood, mesotrophic and heath meadows.

Seven **waterways** – the Kolga, Puditsoo, Võsu, Loobu and Valgejõgi rivers and the Mustoja and Altja brooks – flow through the national park. The Loobu and Valgejõgi are the biggest rivers in Lahemaa. Also, there is a large number of smaller brooks. **Lakes** Kahala, Käsmu and Lohja are among the biggest in the area. Bogs are characterised by bog pools and small bog lakes.

Rivers descending from the klint escarpment turn into **waterfalls and cascades**. The most impressive is Nõmmeveski waterfall on the Valgejõgi River: after a 1.2-metre drop from the main escarpment, the river rushes down a 400-metre canyon with rapids. Also, the 5.1-metre-long cascade of Joaveski on the Loobu River, where water flows down a series of terraces, is definitely worth a visit. The 3.2-metre-high cascade on Vasaristi Brook is water-abundant only during the period of high spring waters. Turjekeldri waterfall, which has dug a cave out of a sandstone wall under limestone layers, has a drop of 4 metres.

There are a total of 150 **springs** in the limestone klint. Ulliallikas Spring near Kolga boasts the highest flow rate (10 l/sec). Karst springs characteristic of the limestone-rich soil of Northern Estonia can be found in abundance in Vasaristi and Palmse.

## BIODIVERSITY

Lahemaa, with its vast territory and variety of habitats, is well-known for its biodiversity, forming an invaluable habitat for a number of species with varying habitat requirements. Communities typical of Northern Estonia are represented here, with their characteristic and common species as well as rarer ones. Unfragmented areas of forests and bogs untouched by economic activity hold significant value for many of them.

### Forests

Pine forests, full of light and with their floors covered in a light-coloured blanket of cup lichens, attract berry and mushroom pickers with lingonberries, blueberries, rufous milkcaps, chanterelles and boletuses. Also, such rare species as the cauliflower fungus can be found here. Old pine forests are a suitable habitat for a number of protected bird species, such as the Eurasian eagle-owl, boreal owl, black woodpecker, Western capercaillie and European nightjar. Shadowy spruce forests are home to the three-toed woodpecker and hazel grouse. In late autumn, delicious funnel chanterelles grow here, while in early spring you can spot a protected species: the charred pancake cup. Many forest plants have light-coloured blossoms, such as the common wood sorrel, Arctic starflower, false lily of the valley and twinflower. The creeping lady's-tresses is another species with white (and furry) flowers. While this orchid is relatively rare elsewhere, it is quite common in Lahemaa. In wetter, more marshy areas, other rare, small, difficult-to-spot orchids can be found, such as the lesser twayblade and elder coralroot.

Broadleaf forests are not very common in Lahemaa. On the seashore, alder forests bravely stand in the face of ice and storms. Old lindens, elms and maples grow on klint slopes as well as in manor parks and along lanes, their trunks covered in a variety of mosses and lichens. Lichens are found in abundance in Palmse Manor's park. In klint forests, the perennial honesty – a protected species – will not go unnoticed, drawing your attention with its aromatic violet flowers and its fruits, which resemble silver sequins.

Like elsewhere in Estonia, songbirds form the most abundant bird population in these forests. The most numerous among them is the common chaffinch, the population of which is estimated to be around 34,000 breeding pairs. Large, unfragmented areas of forests untouched by human activity are invaluable habitats for extremely rare bird species such as the white-tailed eagle and Northern goshawk, as well as for large mammals such as the brown bear, lynx, elk and wild boar.



Black woodpecker, Arne Ader



Great Sundew, Arne Ader





## Mires and bogs

Smaller marshy patches can be found here and there, while in some places the heath spotted orchid and common spotted orchid grow.

The size of bogs and the proximity of lakes and the sea with abundant fish stocks render the area an ideal habitat for the osprey and golden eagle. Sadly, trees are starting to take over in bogs, mainly due to draining. Thus, wader species characteristic of treeless bogs (the wood sandpiper and European golden plover) are becoming increasingly rare, and the tree pipit and common chaffinch, typical of wooded bogs, are moving in. In early spring, bogs reverberate with the cooing calls of the black grouse and the mating calls of Western capercaillie in nearby pine forests. In autumn you can hear the calls of cranes as well as those of berry pickers – both have a weak spot for cranberries. Cloudberry can be found as early as July. In addition to the cloudberry, the Arctic bramble has been found in one spot in Lahemaa and it is thought that the species, which is typical of more northern habitats, is a relic from times when the climate in what is now Estonia was colder. Bogs, with their excessively moist, nutrient-poor conditions and ever-thickening peat deposits and peat moss layers, give rise to a highly unique growing environment where such species as the marsh Labrador tea (which gives off a strong aroma), the common heather (which produces flower nectar in great quantities) and the sundew (which traps insects) can be found. Against the backdrop of early morning dew, you will certainly see that spiders abound in bogs. By midday, butterflies, insects and dragonflies (including the dark whiteface) are buzzing around bogs.

## Meadows

For the most part, the village landscapes in Lahemaa feature small, dry mesotrophic meadows and grasslands, relatively poor in species. In some places, small paludified meadows can also be found. Flood meadows (which locals refer to as *aasu*) along rivers are usually not maintained and covered with sedge hummocks. Meadows, or semi-natural communities, require some level of human management, i.e. mowing or grazing, to survive. When meadows go unmaintained, fast-growing plants take over – for example, the wood small-reed in drier areas, or the meadowsweet or common reed in wetter areas – and the spot gradually turns into scrubland.

The most numerous bird species inhabiting fields are the red-backed shrike and Northern lapwing. On summer nights the meadows reverberate with the rasping calls of the corn crane, while in the daytime you may spot the common buzzard hunting.



Kingfisher with a pike, Sven Začek



The freshwater pearl mussel, Kaido Haagen

During the migratory stopover period, large open areas serve as gathering and feeding sites for thousands of geese, black geese, cranes and waders.

The Muuksi area is characterised by alvar grasslands which grow on dry soil covering the limestone bedrock and host a variety of calciphilous plant species, including the snowdrop anemone, wild strawberry and willowleaf yellowhead. Also, a number of butterfly species can be found here. In the global context, alvar grasslands represent a very rare community. If they are not maintained and managed, junipers tend to take over.

Plants in coastal meadows must be able to put up with floods and salty sea water. Various sedges and grasses as well as the sea milkwort and common centaury grow here. These meadows are a breeding site for waders and a stopover site for geese. The most important coastal meadows in Lahemaa are located around Vihasoo and Lobi. Sadly, many coastal meadows have gone unmaintained for years and as such have become overgrown with reeds. Restoration of meadows requires extensive efforts. However, reed beds too are an important habitat for birds, albeit for different species – various warblers of the *Acrocephalus* genus, for example, and ducks. Before their autumn migration, even barn swallows and harbingers of spring the starlings spend their nights in reed beds.

## Rivers

The rivers in Lahemaa are small but fast-flowing. Salmon and trout come to spawn here, and their offspring spend the first years of their life in the rivers. Such small fish species as the spined loach, bullhead and bleak also inhabit these waters. If it were not for a number of dams interrupting their journey from the sea to their spawning grounds, there would be more fish in the rivers. The white-throated dipper, migrating here from the far north, winters close to rapids, where surface ice cannot form. With a bit of luck, you might get to admire the swift flight of the kingfisher at any time of year. The common sandpiper is one of the most common species breeding here.

The life cycle of numerous invertebrates is associated with these waters, such as mussels, diving beetles, the larvae of a variety of insects and dragonflies. Dragonflies, such as the blue beautiful demoiselle and the big-eyed green snaketail, hunt for their prey on riverbanks. Larger animals (among them the otter, American mink and beaver) often go unseen, but visitors will easily spot beaver dams and lodges and gnawed trees.

The rarest of all species in Lahemaa is the freshwater pearl mussel, as its only surviving population in Estonia is found in the national park. Although it has been documented



Sea peas growing on the sea shore, Toomas Tuul

here that the larvae of this species, known as glochids, attach themselves to the gills of trout, the population itself consists solely of old mussels; for some reason, young specimens have not been found on the riverbed. The freshwater pearl mussel is probably the longest-living species in Estonia, with a life span of up to 130 years.

## Lakes

Lahemaa is home to three large lakes and a handful of coastal lakes (or former bays turning into inland bodies of water as a result of the vertical movement of the Earth's crust) and reservoirs created by the impounding of river waters in the national park. The shores of Lakes Kahala and Lohja are overgrown with reeds and inhabited by various warblers of the *Acrocephalus* genus, ducks, great crested grebes and mute swans. The waters of Lake Käsnu are in quite good condition and a few rare plant species can be found here, including the eight-stamened waterwort. Even small ponds play a crucial role in maintaining biodiversity, serving as reproduction sites for such amphibians as the common toad, common frog, moor frog and smooth newt. Frogs, in turn, are an important food source for many other species.

## The sea

The sea plays a great role in defining the natural environment and cultural history of the area. It dictates the weather, shapes coastal communities and functions as a food source. Landforms brought about by the earlier stages of the Baltic Sea can be seen quite far inland.

It rarely happens that you will not spot at least a couple of birds when looking out to sea. In summer you can spot various duck species breeding or moulting (goosanders, mallards and velvet scoters) as well as plovers and common redshanks scuttling around on the shore. Cormorants sit on rocks, drying their wings, and common gulls take care of their nests, built on large erratic boulders. Occasionally you might spot grey herons and white-tailed eagles in search of food. These birds build their nests in



Sandy beach on Käsnu Peninsula, Jaak Nilson



Folk dancers in Lahemaa, Toomas Tuul

trees. Small islands are especially popular among birds and are used by herring gulls, great black-backed gulls, Arctic terns, common terns, mute swans, eiders, diving ducks and ducks as breeding sites. Birds abound in spring and autumn because the migration route of birds that breed in the Arctic and winter in warmer climates runs along the coastline of the Gulf of Finland. In the small hours, thousands of cranes gather in shallow bays to spend the night, making their presence known by loud calls. In winter, the bays are alive with the calls of long-tailed ducks, while the air hums with the whizzing of the wings of common goldeneyes and swans.

Another inhabitant of these waters is the grey seal, the population of which in the Baltic Sea is on the rise. This seal species seeks out the open sea. In autumn you can spot them in river deltas and shallow bays when they follow fish migrating to their spawning grounds. Grey seals feed mostly on cod, flounder, salmonids and herring. Fishermen traditionally catch Baltic herring, perch, whitefish and flounder, and recently an increasing amount of Prussian carp and round goby, considered to be introduced species in these waters.

Obtaining a comprehensive overview of the abundant biota living on the seabed would require diving, but even a walk on the seashore reveals a lot, provided you carefully examine what has been washed ashore: bladder wrack and green algae; amphipods; smooth, pink Baltic clams; and striped common cockles.

There is a variety of beaches in Lahemaa. Sand ryegrass with bluish-grey, sharp-edged leaves, sea sandwort and sea pea, a protected species, all grow on sandy beaches. Further inland where the sand is more stable, it becomes covered in lichen, and in some places crowberry takes root, giving the dunes a grey-and-russet appearance. In addition to modest-looking rushes, shingle beaches are home to the restharrow with its pink blossoms and the sea aster with its blue flowers. Various types of reeds grow in shallow bays, such as the common reed, sea-clubrush and bulrush. Reed beds are a breeding and feeding site for a number of bird species.



Stone-cist graves called the Hundikangrud, Toomas Tuul



## CULTURAL HERITAGE OF LAHEMAA

In Lahemaa, traces of human activity date back to the Middle Stone Age. The area has been permanently settled for 4000 years and landscapes here have been preserved in their original form for centuries. Heritage landscapes, including 68 settlements of various kinds, cover around half of the park's area. The population of the national park reaches into the thousands.

However, the Baltic Klint in Northern Estonia divides the area into two distinct regions. On one side are land and villages where life is dictated by major roads and agriculture; on the other are coastal villages shaped and fed by the sea. By the 19th century, the manors of Kolga, Palmse, Sagadi and Vihula had developed into extensive complexes with parks and lanes. The national park encompasses the territories of three parishes (Kuusalu, Kadrina and Haljala) which stand out for their rich folk culture heritage. As far as is known, five dialects were spoken by the locals here, with modern standard Estonian evolving on the basis of the middle-North Estonian dialect, while a great number of folk songs and popular sayings have been recorded in the North-Eastern dialect. The villages in Lahemaa have always had very active community life. The region has served as a source of inspiration for locally-born researchers, scientists and artists as well as for those from other parts of Estonia and elsewhere in Europe.

The park's village landscapes and architecture are multi-layered – here, traditions spanning thousands of years as well as innovations created by creative minds exist side by side. Typically, the whole village would get involved in all activities, whether major works or celebrations. People sang when on the village swing, during festivities, at weddings and funerals, to their children and when working. Creation myths in runic verse originating in these coastal areas have been associated with those known from the Finnish national epic Kalevala. Many Estonian folk dances have been recorded in this region. Locals used to dance to the music of the bagpipes, violin and diatonic accordion. Farming, raising livestock and fishing have been traditional sources of livelihood in these areas. All of the necessary objects were made by specialised craftsmen. The people here were able to forge iron objects and build ships. Worship and heritage sites known from folk beliefs were inspired by erratic boulders, the tips of capes, stones, trees and springs. So-called wishing stumps and fish chapels were distinct features characteristic of the coastal regions in the area.



## HIKING IN LAHEMAA NATIONAL PARK

To help visitors explore the region's natural and cultural heritage, a number of study and hiking trails have been established in the national park. Moreover, there are several campfire sites and camp sites.

For additional information, visitors are welcome to contact Lahemaa Nature Centre in Palmse and the RMK Nature Centre in Oandu. There visitors will also enjoy exhibitions and movies about the national park.

### Beaver trail (1 km)

This trail, winding its way through the valley of the Altja River, gives visitors the opportunity to explore the life of beavers and traces of their activity, such as dams, new river bends forming behind dams, hiding and feeding burrows and gnawed trees. The figure-of-eight trail is accessed on foot and includes one back-and-forth detour to a beaver dam located in a flood valley. Alternatively, the beaver trail can be accessed on foot by taking a one-kilometre connecting trail running along the high banks of the Altja River.

### Oandu natural forest trail (4.7 km)

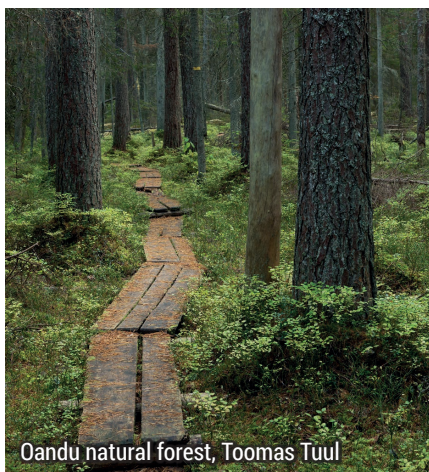
This trail provides an overview of the development of forests, various forest types, landforms and traces of animal activity. In this virgin forest, nature has been able to take its course uninterrupted by man. Stumps and large tree trunks that have fallen to the ground form invaluable habitats for rare fungi, mosses, lichens and insects. Springs flow among ferns and animal trails wind their way through the vegetation. The trail is only accessible on foot, and approximately half of it is board-walk or wood-chip trail.

### Oandu plant trail (1 km)

This trail starts outside the RMK Nature Centre in Oandu and helps explore various plant communities from dry meadows and pine forests to flood meadows and aquatic plants. There are also information boards about amphibians and dragonflies along the way.

### Oandu heritage culture trail (3.4 km)

This trail starts and ends in the yard of the RMK Nature Centre in Oandu and is accessed on foot. It allows visitors to explore traces of the lives and work of previous generations in forests and hayfields and along village roads. The trail winds its way past an old garden, a restored wolf pen (a trap for catching wolves), fences overgrown



with moss and old milestones and boundary stones. Exhibitions in old buildings are open to visitors during the opening hours of the Nature Centre.

### **Altja nature and cultural history trail (3 km)**

This trail starts in the middle of the village, passes the village swing hill and through a coastal pine forest to an erratic boulder by the Altja River and thence to the seashore. Visitors can explore old buildings characteristic of a long-standing fishing village, fishing net sheds on Cape Altja, erratic boulders as well as shingle and sandy beaches. A connecting trail accessed on foot takes visitors to the beaver trail and from there to Oandu.

### **Ojaäärse forest trail (3.5 km)**

This trail starts in the car park at Ojaäärse Nature Centre and runs in a circle in pine forests with ample light, located between the Kuresoo and Pikapõllu brooks. The trail provides an overview of folklore associated with forests as well as objects of heritage culture, such as the location of a former sawmill, boundary stones, milestones and more. It also explores modern forest management methods, such as regeneration felling, reforestation and tending works and other forestry-related activities.

### **Trails on Käsmu Peninsula**

In Käsmu there are three trails to choose from: **Käsmu nature and culture historical trail** (4.2 km), a **cycling route** (11.6 km) and a **hiking trail** (15 km). The trails enable visitors to uncover the history of the peninsula, its forest and coastal communities and the largest boulder fields and erratic boulders found in Estonia. The trails lead to Lake Käsmu as well as to the north-eastern tip of the peninsula, or Vana-Jüri Promontory, from which magnificent views open up over Saartneem, or Kuradisaar (Devil's Island). Käsmu Sea Museum provides a thorough overview of the history of seafaring in the village and of the local maritime school.

### **Viru bog study trail (3.5 km)**

This trail explores landscapes and vegetation typically found in Estonian bogs, the influence of human activity on bog ecosystems, bog restoration efforts, former coastal berms and heath forests. A boardwalk (measuring 610 m) from the edge of the bog leads to an observation tower and is accessible with wheelchairs and prams. The first platform on the tower is accessible to wheelchair users.

### **Majakivi-Pikanõmme study trail (7 km)**

This trail starts in the village of Virve and explores the elevated central section of Juminda Peninsula, where coastal berms and dunes as well as strips of forest and mire existing side by side give rise to a unique, varied landscape. The trail winds its way past the third-largest erratic boulder in Estonia (Majakivi). The trail is shaped like the number 8, so visitors can choose whether to take a shorter or longer route.



Majakivi-Pikanõmme study trail, Toomas Tuul

### **Tsitre tree trail (0.5 km)**

Winding its way through a former manor park, this trail provides an overview of native and foreign trees, some old or dried out, others young and full of life. Old pines – some up to 300 years old – are the most impressive examples here. Horse chestnuts, relics of a former lane, are more than 120 years old. Poplars, willows, bird cherries, ashes, elms and several bush species grow also here.

### **Mohni study and hiking trail**

This trail runs across the island and explores forest communities, coastal processes, lichens and the island's role in the region's history. A section of the trail is covered by a boardwalk.

### **Coastal nature study trails on Pärisepa Peninsula**

Three trails, accessed on foot, wind their way along the coastline, exploring sea and coastal habitats.

- **Hara Bay study trail (3.3 km)** – From the village of Suurpea to Pähkneeme
- **Pähkneeme study trail (1.6 km)** – Passes a former fish farm, along the seashore and through a pine forest growing on dunes to the central village road
- **Purekkari study trail (1 km)** – From the bird-watching area on Mähu Promontory to the camp site on Cape Purekkari

### **Võsu cultural history trail (3 km)**

This trail winds its way through the small town of Võsu, exploring its history through pictures and stories. It presents an overview of existing buildings, others which have already perished and of the people who once lived there. The trail is accessed on foot or by bicycle and is connected to Võsu harbour by a boardwalk starting from the car park.

### **40-kilometre section of the RMK Oandu-Aegviidu-Ikla hiking route passing through Lahemaa National Park**

This hiking route consists of three sections.

**The Oandu-Võsu hiking trail (9.5 km)** winds its way through virgin forests at the foot of the Koljaku-Oandu escarpment and is characterised by a variety of landforms and forest communities.

**The Võsu-Nõmmeveski hiking trail (18 km)** follows old forest roads, leading through the old village of Võhma and taking hikers to the Joaveski escarpment, Nõmmeveski canyon and the Valgejõgi escarpment.

**The Nõmmeveski-Liiapeksi hiking trail (16 km)** runs along the high banks of the Valgejõgi and Vasaristi valleys up to the Vasaristi cascade. From there it follows village roads up to Pärlijõgi valley, then crosses the Pärlijõgi River and leads hikers through pine forests to the Viru bog. The trails can be accessed on foot or by bicycle, and the Oandu-Võsu trail also on skis.

### **Kolgaküla health trails (longest option: 10 km)**

These health trails start in the car park of Kolgaküla Sports Club and go through a pine forest. They are suitable for walking, Nordic walking, jogging, cycling and skiing. A 1.5-kilometre section of the trail has been provided with lighting.



Fishing net sheds in Altja, Toomas Tuul



# INSTRUCTIONS FOR VISITORS

Areas in the national park are categorised into three types.

- **Strict nature reserve** (0.1%) – An area where only natural development is permitted. Visiting such areas is prohibited.
- **Conservation zone** (23.8%) – An area with exceptionally high conservation value. Stringent restrictions apply. It is allowed to visit such areas and pick mushrooms and berries, except during the following nesting periods of birds:
  - Loosaarte, Saartneeme, Ulkkari & Älvi – 1 April-15 July
  - Reiemäe – 15 March-31 August
  - Koolimäe, Metsaveere & Rüütli – 15 February-31 July
  - Laviku, Loobu, Põhjakalda & Suursoo – 1 February-30 June
  - Hara mire – 1 February-31 August
- **Limited management zone** – Areas where somewhat less stringent restrictions apply and moving around in nature is permitted at all times.

When visiting the national park, follow these rules:

- **Driving motor vehicles** is permitted on roads only; bicycles are also permitted on trails.
- **Using floating devices** is permitted according to the conservation rules of Lahemaa National Park. Restrictions apply on the use of motorised floating devices on rivers and lakes as well as on sea in the conservation zone of Ulkkari. Also, restrictions apply on using jet skis.
- **Fishing** is allowed according to fishing regulations which establish restrictions on fishing in rivers where salmonids come to spawn, near dams and fish passes on rivers as well as in river deltas. Also, using certain types of fishing gear is prohibited on the Loobu and Valgejõgi rivers.
- **Camping and making fires** is only allowed in specially designated camping and campfire sites. Visitors are permitted to collect branches lying on the ground for firewood, but it is prohibited to cut down trees (living or dead) that are still standing. Upon leaving a camp site, make sure that it is in good condition and that you have put out the fire.
- **When moving around in nature it is prohibited to:**
  - enter areas where restrictions on movement currently apply;
  - damage trees or bushes;
  - damage the habitats and nests of wild animals and birds, collect their eggs or take them with you, or damage them in any other way;
  - damage protected species or natural objects;
  - disturb the peace of locals.



Male Western capercaillie, Mäti Kose

These ethical guidelines, based on laws and customs, were followed even by our forefathers. The stress-tolerance of these fragile natural communities is not very high, which is why their undisturbed state and biota need to be protected. This way, they will be able to survive for the benefit of generations to come.

**If you become aware of activities that are potentially harmful to the environment or visitor facilities, call the Environmental Inspectorate hotline on 1313**

**For emergency services, call 112**



### Did you know?

- Lahemaa is the oldest and largest national park in Estonia (established on 1 June 1971, with a surface area of 74,784 ha).
- Lahemaa National Park was created to protect the landscape types and natural values characteristic of Northern Estonia, such as the sea, rivers, lakes, forests, meadows and mires.
- Lahemaa National Park belongs to the Natura 2000 network of protected habitat and bird sites. This area is also home to a number of protected, rare and endangered species.
- Lahemaa is the area with the highest number of erratic boulders in the North European glaciation area.
- There are 21 study and hiking trails in the national park, totalling some 120 km.
- There are 68 villages and settlements of various kinds in the national park and some 10,000 man-made structures.
- Many Estonian folk dances have been recorded in the coastal villages of this region and the area is well-known for its folk songs in runic verse.



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