

The approximately 19-kilometre-long section of the protected area has, all in all, 43 sandstone outcrops, which are eye-catchingly picturesque with their layers of different colours, shading from yellow to purple-brown.

TAEVASKODA

For ages, the sandstone outcrops have been called “taevaskoda/-kojad” (*Heaven’s Halls*) by local people, as the high outcrop walls with the primeval forests on the top and the sky hanging above remind “shrines of the nature”. The Taevaskojad belong to the most beautiful places in Estonia. The highest outcrop (about 20 metres at the highest point) with its length of 150 metres is called **Suur Taevaskoda** (*Small Heaven’s Hall*). The height of **Väike Taevaskoda** (*Grand Heaven’s Hall*) reaches ten metres. Spring waters have eroded two caves into the rock. One of them is the spring of Emaläte (*Mother’s Spring*), while the other is called **Neitsikoobas** (*Virgin’s Cave*) – according to the legend a pretty towheaded young girl, who is weaving cloth on her golden loom, lives there.

Near the Taevaskojad, you might come across Ahja’s most famous birds – **the kingfisher** and **the white-throated dipper**. Although the kingfisher seems to be brightly coloured, it has, however, a splendid camouflage – seeing it from upside down it fuses with the sparkling river water, and from downside up with the sandstone outcrops.

HIKING TRAIL

The Taevaskojad hiking trail, which starts at the Saesaare car park, is three kilometres long. The trail runs on both riverbanks, winding its way up and down along the valley, in places close to the edge of the outcrop, producing extraordinary views to the forest and river below.

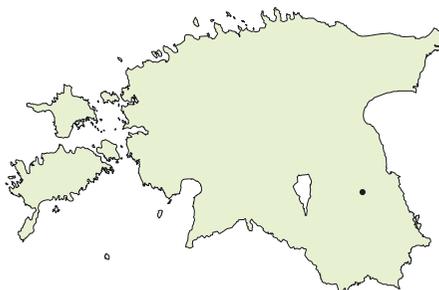


Photo: Kingfisher, M. Kose

DOS AND DON'TS FOR VISITORS

- Keep the forest, river and river banks tidy.
- Do not engrave on the outcrops.
- Walk only on the roads and trails.
- You can pick berries, mushrooms and other forests goods in the protected area.
- You can put up a tent and make a fire only in the prepared and marked places. At the time of wildfire hazard, making an open fire, even on special grounds, is forbidden.
- You can move about on private land from sunrise to sunset unless you do damage to the landowner. In case the private land is fenced or marked, you will need the landowner’s permission.
- Drive your motor vehicle only on the provided roads and leave it only in the car park.
- You can use only non-power watercraft on the bodies of water.
- Keep your dog on the leash while moving about in the nature.

When you see damage done to the nature or visiting objects, inform the Environmental Inspectorate by phone 1313.



Ahja
River Ancient
Valley
Landscape
Protection
Area

ADMINISTRATIVE AUTHORITY

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AHJA River Ancient Valley Landscape Protection Area

