

# Alutaguse National Park

## Ida-Viru County



## ALUTAGUSE NATIONAL PARK

- Alutaguse National Park was situated to protect and present massive bog, forest and coastal landscapes together with cultural heritage, characteristic to Eastern Estonia.
- Alutaguse National Park (44 331 ha) is situated mainly in Alutaguse rural municipality.
- Alutaguse National Park was situated in 2018 on the basis of 11 separate protected areas: Puhatu, Agusalu, Muraka and Selloo nature reserves; Kurtna, Smolinitsa, Jõuga, Iisaku, Struuga and Mäetaguse landscape reserves and Narva River lower course limited conservation area.
- Alutaguse National Park belongs to Natura 2000 – the over-European network of protected areas.
- Agusalu and Muraka Bog belong to the list of internationally important Ramsar wetlands.

**Alutaguse National Park** covers predominating part of the Alutaguse lowland. One of the most characteristic features of this region has always been sparse settlement and high percentage of natural landscapes. The core of the national park are vast bog areas (23 855 ha or 54%) and forested landscapes (18759 ha or 42 %). On the generally flat area variation is caused by kame and esker fields and dune areas.

Natural landscapes of the Alutaguse National Park are suitable habitats for many rare species. One can find here habitats of the Flying Squirrel (has become very rare in Estonia), the Willow Grouse and the Black Stork. In the region one can spot five different eagle species, also the Great Grey Owl and the Peregrine. Through Alutaguse migration routes of several mammals e.g. the Eurasian Wolf, the Brown Bear and the European Lynx are running between Estonia and Russia.



Willow Ptarmigan's Photo by Adus Soomets



Map and layout: Tiit Kaljuste | Foliolis OÜ

Design: Areal Disain OÜ

Front photo: Poruni River by Anne-Ly Fersel

Compiled by: Anne-Ly Fersel

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- All pets taken to the nature are threatening wildlife, therefore keep them leashed at all times.
- It is allowed to gather wildberries, mushrooms or other forest givings, that are not under protection.
- Act in the nature without leaving any marks.
- When witnessing damage to the nature or visiting objects, provide the information on free number 1313 (Environmental Information)
- Do not let detergents or your personal metabolites to water bodies.
- Do not use growing trees or bushes for fire.
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## For the visitors

- In the private land it is allowed to stay from sunrise till sunset, if not causing damage to the owner.
- For moving on fenced or marked private land owner's permission is necessary.
- With a non-propelled floating craft it is allowed to move on internal water-bodies, except bog lakes and the Lake Kõnnu.
- It is permitted to drive your motor vehicle on officially available roads and pathways. Parking is allowed in parking lots. Tenting and making fire is allowed only in prepared and designated locations.
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Muraka raised bog. Photo by Tiit Kaljuste

**The largest bog massive in Estonia** is the Puhatu bog, situated in the territory of the Park. On the banks of the River Porun, running along the edge of Puhatu, one can find valuable forest sites, similar to virgin forests. Puhatu and Agusalu bog system is one of the very last extensive transitional bog areas in Estonia.

**The only continental dunes in Estonia** (or 'kriivas') are situated in the bog system of Agusalu and Puhatu. The kriivas are alternating sharply with small swampy areas, forming striated landscape patterns. High and steep sand ridges are like bridges in otherwise hardly passable swamp landscapes, they are covered by old-growth forests, mainly dry boreal pine forests.

**Bog conservation in Estonia** began in 1938 when a strict reservation area for eagle protection was situated in Ratva bog.

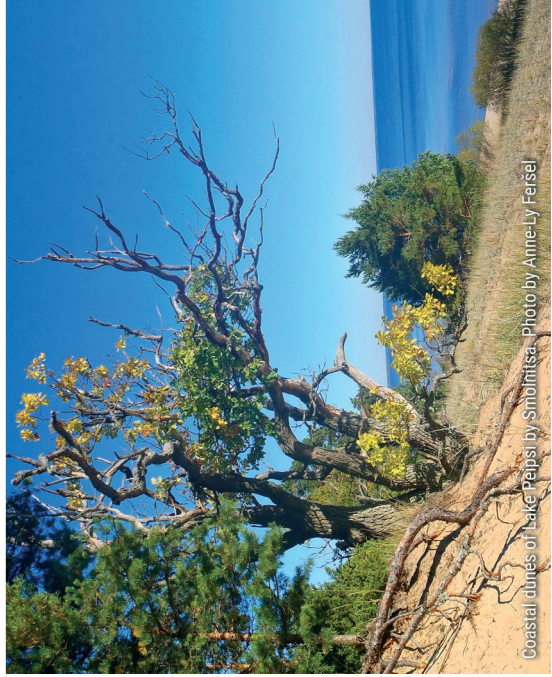
**The longest coastal sands and dune system in Estonia** (40 km) is situated on the northern shore of Lake Peipsi. In this coast the grains of sand make a sound when rubbed against each other (say, while walking), thus called „singing sands“.

Around the upstreams of the Narva River – **the river with the largest rate of flow in Estonia** – between Vasknarva and Karoli, there has been formed unique landscape of terminating distributaries of the river and lush flooded meadows.

Kurtna kame field – **the landscape with Estonia's highest density of lakes** – is comprising almost 40 lakes. There are especially valuable lakes with very rare species among them, for instance Lake Valge-järv.

**One of the northernmost oak groves in Europe** is the Mäetaguse oak grove, where the oaks are about 300 years of age. They are trees with wide crowns and full of diverse biota.

**One of the highest eskers of Estonia** is the Esker of Iisaku, the highest part of which – Mount Tärvvere – stretches about 94 m a.s.l. In the forest on top of the esker rare animals – flying squirrels reside.



Coastal dunes of Lake Peipsi by Smolinitsa. Photo by Anne-Ly Fersel

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In the **Iisaku nature centre, situated in the visitors centre of the Alutaguse National Park** there is a permanent exhibition about the local nature and sustainable life-style, different study modules are also available.

## Visiting arrangement



Kurtna Suurjärv. Photo by Tiit Kaljuste



Continental dunes. Photo by Maa-amer

## Cultural heritage

Alutaguse is a border area in several meanings. During many centuries there have met and mingled Estonian, Russian and Votic cultures, languages and religion. Until the 14th century this area was mainly populated by **Votes**, whose largest cemetery of tumuli is situated in Jõuga.

In the course of time they mingled with Russians at the Narva River and with Estonians in the middle of Alutaguse. In the surrounds of Iisaku an original nationality – **Polvnerniks** – was formed, extinct by now. In addition to the myths about Kalevipoeg there is rich lore about Mother of God, Russian hero Dobronja, grand dutchess Olga, the Great Nordic War and Charles XII of Sweden, whose golden carriage had drowned to the Lake of Jõuga. In the surrounds of Mäetaguse and Kurenäe one can find offering stones and in Metsküla a smelter with the longest usage history in Estonia. In Vasknarva, in the head of the Narva River there are „bunns“ or catercorner dams, unique in Estonia.



2 x Iisaku Parish Museum



Polvnerniks

Woman of Iisaku



