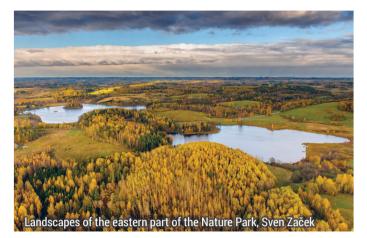
WELCOME TO OTEPÄÄ NATURE PARK!

Domes rising up between forests, fields and meadows... Lakes and bog pools hidden between depressions... The landscapes In Otepää offer a lot to discover all year round. Otepää demands dedication: it is the only way to be able to understand the true nature of its landscapes.

The landscape of Otepää is known as uplands – it rises above the surrounding plains, its boundaries being quite easy to distinguish. This physical heritage formed from sediment accumulated during the last five Ice Ages during the movement of glaciers. Here, the landforms were shaped between 15,000 and 10,000 years ago, when the last glacier retreated.



The most varied area of the uplands is in the centre of the area and forms the largest protected landscape area in Estonia – Otepää Nature Park (222 km²). The park was established in 1957 when the first areas around the smaller, already protected sites of Lake Pühajärv and Väike Munamägi Hill were placed under protection. The aim of Otepää Nature Park is to protect the natural and heritage landscapes of the Otepää Uplands. The park belongs to the Natura 2000 network of protected areas in the European Union.

The landscapes of Otepää have been used by humans since the middle of the Stone Age. Over the centuries, the hummocky landscape has set certain boundaries on human activity: its fields and meadows can be marshy and its roads hilly and curvy. Its heritage landscapes are extremely rich in species: grasslands on mineral soil here and there on the slopes of its hills and paludifying grasslands in its depressions and river valleys. However,

periodically flooded alluvial meadows have been partially preserved near the Elva River and Väike Emajõgi River.

Forests cover approximately 57% of the park. Most of Otepää's forests show signs of significant human impact; more natural are the extensive blocks of forest in the vicinity of the Elva River and the Väike Emajõgi River, which also have more varied wildlife. There are also places of refuge for larger animals, such as the elk, bear and lynx. Common forest types are eutrophic boreo-nemoral forests (dominated by the European spruce) and mesotrophic boreal forests. Eutrophic to minerotrophic swamp forests, drained peatland forests and oligo-mesotrophic boreal forests are less common.

The landscapes of Otepää provide habitats for many protected species. There are around 12 pairs of lesser spotted eagles (Clanga pomarina) in the park, which is the best nesting site for this species in Estonia. The most notable of the park's protected species are the northern goshawk (Accipiter gentilis), the northern crested newt (*Triturus cristatus*), the common spadefoot toad (*Pelobates* fuscus) and the slender naiad (Najas flexilis).

The region boasts rich historical and cultural heritage. Otepää's Linnamägi Hill has great historical value, being one of the most important centres in the ancient Ugandi County, from which the town of Otepää eventually took



Information for visitors

There are many opportunities to enjoy active vacations in the Otepää region, whether sailing by boat, cycling, hiking, picking mushrooms and berries, fishing or visiting local attractions. Many sights are related to nature.

Beautiful views of the surrounding landscapes can be enjoyed from the top of Harimägi, Tehvandi, Kuutsemägi, Väike Munamägi and Trepimägi hills. In good weather, the peaks of the Karula Uplands can be seen from the Harimägi observation tower on the southern edge of the uplands.

The most picturesque places are located in the villages of Pühajärve, Nüpli, Pilkuse, Mäeküla, Vana-Otepää, Neeruti and

Lake Pühajärv (290.7 hectares), located in the heart of the nature park, is considered one of Estonia's most beautiful lakes. Located close to Lake Pühajärv are: 10 Otepää Nature **Centre**, where you can get further information about the natural features of the protected area and hiking trails and, when requested in advance, visit the permanent exhibition showcasing the natural environment of Otepää. Environmental educational programmes and events are run at the centre. Pühajärve hiking trail (14 km) starts by the centre.

2 Lake Nõuni (78.8 ha). In 1981, a dugout (a canoe made from a hollowed tree trunk) from the 17th century was found in the lake. The dugout can be viewed at Valga Museum.

3 Hellenurme Watermill Museum. The red-brick and granite watermill (built in 1880) on what was once the estate of the Middendorffs is still powered by water today. Over its four floors you can see, touch, feel and taste all of the things that can be made from grain.



(4) Uandimägi Hill (140.6 m). The Uandimägi Hill strong hold was used briefly during ancient times. Many oral tradi-

tions are associated with Uandimägi Hill: according to one,

the destruction of the stronghold was the result of a fight

(5) Trepimägi Hill (167.4 m). Beautiful views over Lake

Pilkuse open up from the top of this hill. On its western slope,

the protected Trepimäe Oak (552 cm in circumference) and

the Pilkuse Oaks (587 and 463 cm in circumference) grow.

celebrating the blue, black & white flag of Estonia.

7) The Estonian Flag Museum tells the story of how the

national flag came to be. The flag was officially adopted in

the pastorate of Otepää as a student organisation flag in

1884. Later, it became the national flag of Estonia.

between the leaders of ancient Estonia.

(8) Otepää Linnamägi Hill. This hill, resembling a bear's head, is one of the symbols of the town. 2000 years ago, a stronghold was situated on Linnamägi Hill which saw occasional use; it was not until the 7th or 8th century that a permanently manned fortress stood here. This fortress became one of the most important centres in Ugandi County. In 1225, a castle of the Bishopric of Tartu was built here, which was the first stone castle in Estonia. Next to it, in the area around the current church, the medieval Otepää region of the 13th century developed. The bishopric castle was destroyed by the order in 1396. People say that the large cellars inside Linnamägi Hill are filled with treasures and weapons of war. It is believed that an old lady with a dog guards the hill while spinning golden yarn or knitting a sock, but only a little bit every day.



9 Tehvandi Sports Centre. The first ski jump line was constructed in Tehvandi in the 1960s. The Tehvandi Hill K90 jump tower has an observation deck (34 m), which can be accessed by stairs or by an elevator. The stadium building is home to a Winter Sports Museum, where you can explore the history of Estonian winter sports.

(10) Väike Munamägi Hill (207.9 m). The Munamägi stone, located on the north-eastern slope of this hill, is one of the biggest glacial boulders in the region (measuring 3x2.1x2 m and with a circumference of 10 m). According to folklore, it was the hero of the national epic, Kalevipoeg, who threw it here – hence the local name, "Kalevipoeg's stone". Above it lies the Väike Munamägi spring, which is locally known as the source of the Emajõgi River. The viewing tower on the hill is a great place to appreciate the views of the surrounding

11) Apteekrimägi Hill (170 m). Apteekrimägi features three ski jumps (the highest being 35 m) for young enthusiasts and

forest trails for sports lovers and hikers. In 1882, the locals

found Otepää's first apothecary, a man named Jürvelson,

poisoned under an enormous tree (an unhappy marriage

12 Armuallikas (the Spring of Love) is the best known of

the springs near Lake Pühajärv. According to folk stories, the

water from the spring relieves pain and has healing proper-

ties. It is said that if drunk from a silver goblet on Midsummer

(13) Kiigemägi Hill (Swing Hill). This hill was named after

the swings built for the Estonian film Kui saabub õhtu ('When

Night Falls', 1954). Previously it was called Uue-Kolga Hill

Night, its waters will ensure a great, ever-lasting love.

being the reason for his committing suicide).



and forest being sacred. In the 19th century, the lord of the local manor had pathways built through the forest to form a recreation area. Both the park and the beach remain popular places for relaxing today.

(18) Pühajärve War Oak. This oak tree was named after a peasants' revolt against the lord of the manor in 1841. Its circumference is approximately 7 metres and its age is estimated at around 400 years.

19 Pühajärve War Oak Wood was planted in the second half of the 20th century. On 11 September 1971, on the 130th anniversary of the Battle of Pühajärve, a monument was unveiled in the middle of the wood. The monument was created by sculptor Lembit Paluteder.

② Soome boulder. This granite boulder (measuring 7.1x 5.7x2.4 m, with a circumference of 19.3 m) is located on the lands of Soome Farm and is the biggest boulder in the Otepää Uplands.

(21) Mõrsjakivi Stone. This stone was named after a girl who was unable to choose between two suitors and was therefore torn in two by bulls on the orders of the lord of the manor. A stone was placed on her grave and a cross carved into it.

22 Lake Arula Perajärv and Emaläte spring. Arula Perajärv (7 hectares) has numerous springs. On the western side of the lake is Emaläte (or Immutuläte) spring, which the locals consider to be where the Emajogi River rises. The water in the spring is clear because it contains very little iron.

23 Kuutsemägi Hill (218 m). This is the highest peak in the Otepää Uplands. A wooden tower used for measuring land once stood on the top of the hill. Today, there is a mobile phone mast and viewing platform here. At the bottom of Kuutsemägi Hill, on Kuudse Farm, beloved Estonian writer Mats Traat (1936) was born and spent his childhood.

Kuigatsi Hill Fort. A fortress was located on Kuigatsi Hill, on the south-east peak of the ridge, from the middle of the first millennium until the 12th century.

(25) Harimägi Hill (also Leenardi or Leonhardi Hill, 213.3 m). At the top of the 24-metre viewing tower here you will enjoy views over the Otepää hills and across the Väike Emajõgi River to the Karula Uplands. Internationally renowned astronomer and geodesist Friedrich Georg Wilhelm Struve (1793-1864) surveyed this area from 1816-1819.



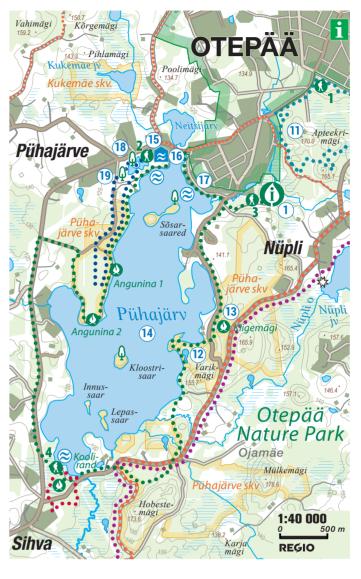
Sangaste Hill Fort. This fortress is believed to have been used from the end of the first millennium through to the beginning of the second millennium. On the other side of Lake Kirgjärv, an important ancient road passed by which led from Otepää to Latvia. Traditionally it is believed that there was a town or a castle on the hill which fell into Lake Kerikjärv (Kirgjärv). In the early hours of Midsummer's Day, tower tops and a weather vane are said to be seen at the bottom of the lake.

king planted oak trees in the shape of a cross by a former

28 Märdi Mill Dam. The angle of the Väike-Emajõgi River's fall is relatively steep here and its flow is fast. Protected Amur cork tree grow on the right bank of the Väike-Emajõgi.

tacular districts of its kind in Estonia, situated like a string of beads in an old valley running in a north-west to south-east direction. There are a total of 10 lakes, most of which are more than 10 metres deep.

30 Struve Geodetic Arc point location in Arula. Under the aegis of University of Tartu Professor of Astronomy and Geodesy F. G. W. Struve, a geodetic arc was surveyed from 1816-1855 to establish the exact size and shape of the Earth. It represented the most extensive measurement of longitude in the 19th century, with the resulting meridian running for 2822 km from the Arctic Ocean to the Black Sea. The surveying proved extraordinarily precise, with a variation of just +/- 12 metres along the entire length of the meridian. Measuring commenced in Harimäe, with the second point along the meridian being in Arula (both in Estonia). The Struve Geodetic Arc is on the UNESCO World Heritage List.



NATURA 2000





from 100% recycled fibres. Paper: Nautilus Classic – uncoated printing paper made Printing: Ecoprint rayout and maps: Regio Back cover photo: Margust Front cover photo: Lake Pühajärv, Arne Ader Text by Margit Turb

> www.kaitsealad.ee/eng 5626 997 27E+ dd Kolga tee 28, 67405 Otepää Otepää Nature Centre

www.loodusegakoos.ee/en 7717 979 77E+ yd Management Centre State Forest arrangements Responsible for visiting

www.keskkonnaamet.ee/en 9547 089 278+ dq info@keskkonnaamet.ee Environmental Board Mature Reserve Management



rights and obligations:

 You may ride bicycles on the roads and trails, while motor vehicles (incl. ATVs and snowmobiles) may be driven and parked only on the roads and in the car parks meant for

• It is only permitted to use non-powered floating vessels on water bodies in the protected area.

herbs, hazelnuts and other natural produce that are not protected provided that people are permitted to be in the picking area. To pick natural produce on private land (if enclosed by a fence and marked with a sign), the

• Camp and make fires only in the designated places (see the map). When leaving, always put out your fire. If a fire hazard warning has been issued for forests, open fires are always forbidden, incl. in campfire areas.

 When moving about in nature, dogs must be kept on a leash at all times.

 Try not to leave any traces of your visit: if you have any rubbish, take it with you.

Wash yourself on dry land.

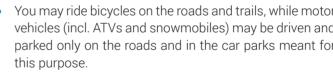
- Boardwalks, stairs and bridges may be slippery.

Environmental emergency hotline 1313

For emergency services, call 112

Instructions for visitors

When visiting the protected area, you have the following



 Seek the permission of the owner when on marked/ fenced private land. Fields, plantations and apiaries are not open to hikers.

 You may always pick wild berries, mushrooms, flowers, permission of the owner is required.

- All warning and danger signs are for your safety.
- The natural environment can be unpredictable.
- You are responsible for your own behaviour.





Kicksledding on the ice of Lake Pühajäry, Margit Turb

15 Pühajärve Spa and Holiday Resort. Pühajärve Manor, originally named Wollust, was one of the oldest in the area (first mentioned in 1376). In 1836 it was renamed Heiligensee (Pühajärv). Since being acquired by the state in 1919, the manor has served mainly as a recreational institution. Murrumetsa hiking trail (3.5 km) starts by the centre.

(16) Pühajärve Manor Park is located around the main building and has been under protection since 1929.

17 Lake Pühajärve park and beach. It is said that this is the oldest gathering place by Lake Pühajärv, with both the lake

? Ristitammed oaks (3). According to folklore, a Swedish castle here. The remaining three oaks are under protection.

29 Chain of Lakes in Kooraste is one of the most spec-



Otepää

Valga County

Nature Park



