



Helsinki's green treasures
200 natural attractions



Jussi Helimäki (ed.)

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Author: Jussi Helimäki (editor)
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Antti Salla (Secretary), Sanna Elijoki,
Sinikka Hangasmaa-Puska, Annika Harlio,
Johanna Joutsiniemi/Jussi Karmala, Kaisa Pajanen
Translator: Fran Weaver
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A duckboard trail to Lammasaari Island.

Get ready to explore Helsinki's green treasures

This book aims to introduce you to a selection of Helsinki's many and varied natural attractions. The city's green treasures have never been compiled between two covers in this way before. We hope you will enjoy looking through its pages, and then be inspired to head off to explore new parts of the city. The natural beauty of these places will surely bring you great pleasure.

About 1.2 million people live in the Helsinki Metropolitan Region, and the city itself is home to over 650,000 people. We hope this guide will be well used both by the city's residents and by visitors, and that it will encourage you to observe nature on your doorstep, and discover some of Helsinki's green gems. Studies show that spending time in green areas – or even appreciating a single beautiful tree – can reduce stress and improve our mental wellbeing.

I have plenty of personal experience of Helsinki's green treasures. One of my favourite places is the rocky shores on the southern tip of Lauttasaari Island, which are rich in plant and bird life. I've often walked there with my husband after work, with a flask of herbal tea made of locally picked rosebay willowherb leaves. I've also often enjoyed spotting new bird species such as citrine wagtails and bluethroats in the wetlands by Vanhankaupunginlahti Bay. I believe you can build up a lifelong love for nature by enjoying such first-hand experiences.

For a city of its size Helsinki has plenty to offer in terms of varied natural attractions and recreational areas. This book presents 200 natural areas, including most of Helsinki's nature reserves, natural monuments, other protected natural sites, interesting geological features and valued traditional landscapes, as well as a selection of the city's man-made parks and green areas. Best of all, these fascinating places can almost all be easily reached using public transport, or even by bike. Just half an hour from home or your hotel you can lose yourself in the green forests of Central Park, or stroll on a seashore viewing the windswept islands that dot the Gulf of Finland.

As the Chairperson of the Editorial Board I would like to warmly thank Jussi Helimäki for his professional work putting together beautiful photographs and informative texts for this delightful book. I am also grateful to Antti Salla and Sanna Elijoki for overseeing the project and helping with the book's maps; and to all the board members and other people who have contributed to the book. I finally wish to add that working on this project has been an enjoyable and inspiring experience for me personally.

Päivi Kippo-Edlund

Director of Environmental Protection, City of Helsinki

Introduction

The boundaries of the Finnish capital encompass land areas totalling approximately 215 km², as well as about 500 km² of the Gulf of Finland. This book spotlights 200 natural sites – almost one for every square kilometre – but these places are not equally distributed around the city. Some districts have clusters of green natural areas; while in other areas nature does not have so much of a foothold.

Helsinki's best-known natural attractions – its seashores and islands, the wetlands of Vanhankaupunginlahti Bay, and the woodlands of its Central Park – are extensively featured in this book. Attractions along and offshore of the city's seafront, including well-known destinations like Kaivopuisto Park, the historic islands of Suomenlinna, and the former military island of Vallisaari, as well as lovely natural areas in Lauttasaari, Kallahti and Uutela, all provide incomparable settings for outdoor recreation. Right in the geographical centre of the capital, the wetlands and meadows of Viikki and Vanhankaupunginlahti Bay form a green oasis recognised as having international importance for its birdlife.

Inland, Helsinki's wooded Central Park is an irreplaceable asset, since few other capital cities have such extensive green areas so near their central districts. Central Park is the most prominent of the “green fingers” that radiate through the city. In the old-growth forests at Haltiala it's hard to believe you are still in a major city like Helsinki. Only the faint hum of distant traffic and the roar of planes heading to and from the nearby airport serve as reminders.

This book first and foremost aims to show readers how many valuable and fascinating natural areas can be found throughout Helsinki. For this reason we have also included some smaller natural features that lie within residential districts, such as rocky outcrops, stately trees, lush meadows, huge erratic boulders, potholes and smaller, local nature reserves.

In choosing sites for the book we have used factors including ecological values as well as location and accessibility. Some sites have also been added for their landscape values. We have not included areas where wildlife may be highly vulnerable to disturbance, such as remote islets where many seabirds nest. Islands owned by



The island of Lauttasaari has many unspoilt rocky shores.

the military have also been excluded. The City's excellent nature database was widely used to facilitate the selection of sites.

Most of the featured sites can be reached using public transport, though a few sites in Eastern Helsinki are less accessible, and visitors may need to walk some distance from roads and paths to find them. Helsinki is thus fortunate in having both easily reachable urban

nature, and wilder places that you might not expect to find within a capital city.

Visitors exploring natural areas in Finland benefit from a legal principle known as Everyman's Right, which gives everyone free access to natural areas, except some nature reserves, areas immediately around homes, and cultivated fields during snow-free seasons. Responsible nature-lovers should take care not to walk over terrain where the vegetation is vulnerable to erosion. Such areas include marshy shores and forest floors or rocky outcrops covered with sensitive lichens. For this reason it is best to stay on existing paths wherever possible.

Helsinki has been divided into 12 districts for the purposes of this guide. Each section of the book starts with a map of the respective district, showing the locations of the featured sites. The boundaries of some sites are only roughly marked on these maps. For details of the boundaries of Natura sites and other areas see the nature information section of the City of Helsinki's online map service at kartta.hel.fi.

The book includes photographs of the featured sites, and also images of some of the plants, animals and fungi visitors may see there. Photos from all seasons are included, since most sites are worth visiting all year round. Though these areas are most often explored between spring and autumn, it's well worth exploring them in winter too. Particularly memorable scenes can be enjoyed during cold spells when the sea is still free of ice, and mists rise from the warmer water creating a magical scene.

I wish to thank all the members of the book's editorial board for their support, particularly the board's chairperson Päivi Kippo-Edlund, who made the whole idea possible; Antti Salla, for his geological expertise and his work on the maps; Sinikka Hangasmaa-Puska and Annika Harlio for their welcome comments; Sanna Elijoki for assistance with the maps; Kaisa Pajanen for her many good ideas; and Johanna Joutsiniemi. The efforts of Marjo Kosonen, Jussi Karmala, Raimo Pakarinen, Hanna Seitapuro, Kauko Kyöstiö and Katja Pellikka were also much appreciated. I am additionally grateful to Edita Publishing's staff members Raimo Savolainen, Arja Olin and Anu Mikkonen for their many helpful tips.

Jussi Helimäki

Southern Helsinki

- 
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1.1 Observatory Hill

The wooded park on Observatory Hill in Ullanlinna is regularly visited by migratory songbirds. In autumn, red-breasted flycatchers are often seen there, for instance. Whitethroats and blackcaps nest in the park. The hill offers views over Helsinki's South Harbour and the islands of Laajasalo to the east. The park has well-kept paths, benches and a pleasant summer cafe in the observatory's courtyard.





1.2 Kaivopuisto Park

Helsinki's most famous park is also a good place to enjoy nature. Kaivopuisto's rocky hill offers splendid views over the nearby coastal promenade and out to the open sea. Many bird species including starlings nest in the park, which is also an important resting place for migrating thrushes and songbirds. Hawk owls occasionally visit the park during the winter months. A small observatory on the hilltop, run by the local astronomical society Ursa, is occasionally open to the public for stargazing and solar observation.





1.2.1 A sheepback rock

This rocky outcrop is a geological feature known as a “sheepback”. During the Ice Age it was worn smooth by a huge ice sheet. Scratches and grooves indicate the direction of ice flow.

1.2.2 A rocky crevice

A narrow crevice runs through the rocks on the northern side of hill. Stone steps lead up into the crevice from below. This striking natural feature was protected back in 1922, as Helsinki’s first natural monument.





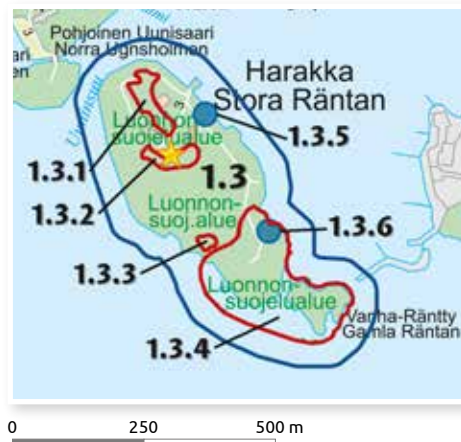
1.2.3 An erratic boulder and migmatite outcrops

This small boulder, made of rapakivi granite, was deposited here during the ice age. Bands of migmatite can be seen in the bedrock nearby. Both features are natural monuments, marked with metal plates.



1.3 Harakka Island

The small island of Harakka, just south of Kaivopuisto Park, is rich in flora and fauna, and offers superb sea views. The island has a nature centre, run by the City of Helsinki, a nature trail and a geological trail. Guided excursions touring the island are organised in spring, summer and autumn. Visitors should always stay on the paths to avoid disturbing wildlife, and dogs may not be brought here. Just on the edge of the protected area on the island's southern tip are two good spots for watching seabirds. Many bird species can be seen here, including hundreds of nesting common gulls and barnacle geese. The island's ponds and marshy





Barnacle geese



White sticky catchfly



Wild chives



hollows are important for plants and amphibians. Harakka earlier belonged to the military, and its buildings are historically significant. Visitors have been able to enjoy the island's fine natural features and seascapes since 1989. A small ferry runs to Harakka from a pier by Kaivopuisto Park.

1.3.1 Meadows

A small nature reserve (0.4 ha) in the northern part of the island includes rocky outcrops and patches of meadow with plant species including moonwort and little mouse-ear, which are both rare in Helsinki today.





1.3.2 A sandy embankment south of the Art House

This embankment was made in the 1800s, largely of sand, making it a dry growth site suitable for many meadowland plants. Flowers found here include white sticky catchfly, alpine cinquefoil, and two exotic species probably brought here long ago by Russian soldiers posted here: green spurge and hoary berteroa.

1.3.3 A shore meadow

This small sandy shore meadow is protected as a nature reserve. Its diverse flora includes the rest-harrow, a rare flower today only found in nine known sites in Finland.



A brimstone butterfly on a purple loosestrife flower



Common gull



Lesser black-backed gull



Female eider

1.3.4 Harakka's southern tip, Vanha-Räntty, and the surrounding waters

The rocky islet of Vanha-Räntty has little vegetation, but is home to many birds. Even more birds breed on the southern tip of Harakka, including the lesser black-backed gull (a threatened species), arctic terns, common terns and eiders. The four-hectare protected area also includes the surrounding waters. Visitors may not enter this nature reserve between 1st April and 15th August.



1.3.5 Pillow lava

A geological feature known as pillow lava can be seen in the smooth rocky outcrops down by the shoreline.

1.3.6 A pothole

In the reserve in the southern part of the island (accessible only 16th Aug – 31st March) visitors can see a “pothole”. About 0.7 metres in diameter, this pothole feature formed in a meltwater river during the Ice Age.



1.4 A sea buckthorn tree in Eira

This unusually large, tree-like sea buckthorn bush grows by a path that runs along the shore. It has been protected as a natural monument since 1999. Sea buckthorn berries are famously rich in healthy vitamin C.



1.5 Suomenlinna

This famous old island fortress – listed as a UNESCO world heritage site – is popular with locals and tourists alike. Though perhaps best known for their historic attractions, Suomenlinna’s interlinked islands also have many interesting natural features. Botanists can find many unusual plant species brought here by people over the centuries. One such plant, sickle medick, particularly thrives on the islands Länsi-Musta and Kustaanmiekka.

Suomenlinna is also popular with birdwatchers all year round, since many occasional visitors can be seen here, even in winter. Owls may stay here from late autumn onwards, for instance, while redpolls and shore larks may be seen on the islands’ grassy ramparts. It’s well



Yellow toadflax



worth bringing binoculars here during the spring and autumn, when many migrant species fly over or drop in. The shipping lanes just offshore remain ice-free all winter, so they attract many water birds. Bats can often be seen hunting over Tykistölahti Bay, Varvilahti Bay



and Lemmenlampi Pond. Kustaanmiekka and Susisaari are important refuges for amphibians, including toads. The islands' many well-marked paths make it easy for visitors to explore Suomenlinna. Boats to the islands run regularly all year round from Helsinki's Market Square.



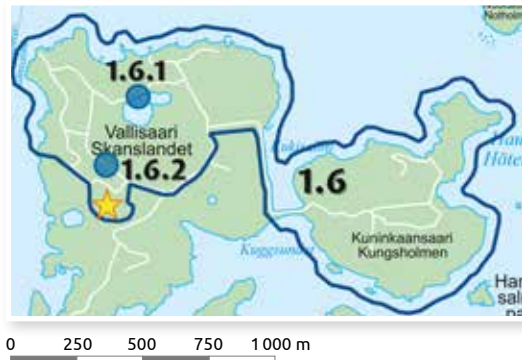
1.5.1 A pothole

On Kustaanmiekka, by the jetty just north of the historic King's Gate, is a pothole feature. Formed during the Ice Age, the hole is about 80 cm wide and 60 cm deep.



1.6 Vallisaari and Kuninkaansaari

These two former military islands have rapidly become popular with visitors since they opened to the public in 2016. Vallisaari's diverse natural habitats include lush, leafy woodlands, rocky crags, old gardens and meadows, and small ponds. The high





Old fortifications on Kuninkaansaari



Centaurea

ramparts by the Alexander Battery offer splendid views towards the centre of Helsinki and out over the Gulf of Finland. Vallisaari's flora is highly diverse, with many meadow plants that attract colourful butterflies. The island also offers suitable habitats and wintering sites for many bat species.

Vallisaari also attracts many birds including exotically coloured golden orioles. The island is best explored by walking Alexander's Trail (3 km). Informative signs along the trail describe Vallisaari's nature and history. Visitors must stay on the paths to prevent erosion and avoid disturbing nature – and also for safety reasons. The southernmost part of the island is off limits. Boat services run to Vallisaari from the Market Square and from Hakaniemi.

Kuninkaansaari can be reached by walking over a causeway from Vallisaari along the Kuninkaansaari Trail. It feels wilder than its neighbour, with more coniferous trees and rocky areas. The old defensive embankments running through the centre of the island are rich in plant life, with many meadowland flowers including twayblades and waxy lady's mantle. Bats of various species also thrive here. Visitors may swim from a small beach on the eastern shore.



Mare's-tail

1.6.1 Vallisaari Pond

Vallisaari's pond is a natural spring-fed feature. The vegetation around its shores include marshland plants that are rare in Helsinki. Swimming is not permitted.



1.6.2 Vallisaari's lime avenue

Visitors can stroll along an avenue of stately lime trees near the Alexander Battery. Such features are a rare sight in Finland. Many other grand old deciduous trees grow in the surrounding woodland.

1.7 Sheepback rocks on Mustikkamaa

The smoothly eroded “sheepback” rocks by the north shore of Mustikkamaa offer views over the strait to busy districts of Helsinki. Grooves and scratches in the rocks indicate which way the ice sheet that eroded them was flowing during the Ice Age. The pleasant island of Mustikkamaa can be reached by a road bridge from Kulosaari, or by crossing the new “Grandfather’s Footbridge” from Kalasatama.





1.7

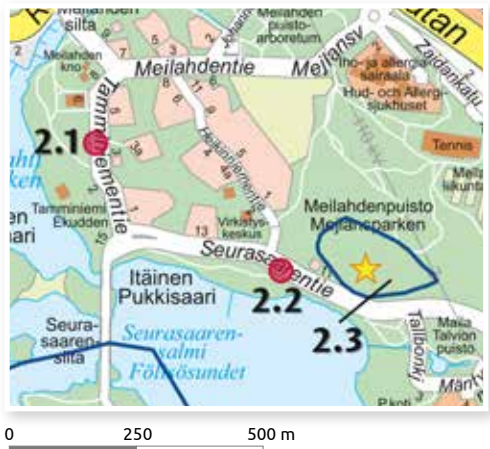
Southwest Helsinki

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2.1 Five oak trees in Meilahti

These oak trees by Tamminiementie have been protected as a natural monument since 1956. One of the trees grows right by the roadside, another tree lies back from the road, and three grow in a row on the other side of the road. The tree set back from the road is the largest of the five, about 30 metres tall and with a trunk over three metres around.



2.2 A grand old pine tree in Meilahti

Also protected as a natural monument in 1956, this stately Scots pine grows beside Seurasaaentie (near no. 11) by the shore. Its trunk has a circumference of more than 2.5 metres.

2.3 Bedrock outcrops in Meilahdenpuisto Park

The rocky slope in the southern part of this popular wooded park offers fine views over the bay. It lies beside a jogging path and a frisbee golf course.





2.4 Humallahdenpuisto Park

Located near the Meilahti hospital complex west of Paciuksenkatu, this seaside park has fine rocky slopes and a rich variety of trees and plants. Many introduced plants can particularly be found near Kesäranta Villa, the Prime Minister's official residence. This is the only place in Helsinki where spiked rampions grow, for instance. Wild plants found in the park include wood bluegrass, bilberry and hairy wood-rush. A Bronze Age burial cairn overlooks the sea in the northern part of the park. A footpath runs along the park's northern and eastern edges.



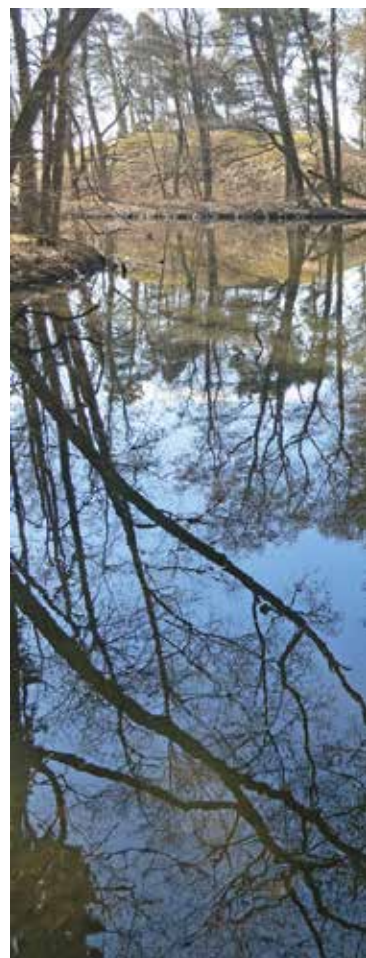


and birds are tame enough to feed from visitors' hands. Breeding bird species include oystercatchers and redshanks. Owls often winter here, preying on small birds and mammals. The island also has many suitable hibernation sites for bats. Two areas of herb-rich broad-leaved woodland and the island's southeastern shores are particularly diverse in terms of plant life.



2.5.1 A pine tree and an ants' nest

This old tree, protected since 1956 in the middle of Seurasaari Island, is one of the most sizeable pines in Helsinki. Its trunk is more than three metres in circumference. One unusual feature of the tree is the remains of an old ants' nest that the busy insects built up from its roots into a cleft in its trunk.



2.5.2 A pothole

Protected as a natural monument in 1960, this 75-cm wide Ice Age pothole lies just south of the island's playing field. Steps lead up to the main pothole, and the beginnings of a smaller pothole can be seen in the bedrock nearby.

2.5.3 Seurasaari's ponds

The largest of Seurasaari's three ponds lies near the island's southern tip. After dry spells it shrinks to form two smaller ponds. When sea levels are high, it sometimes becomes a lagoon fed by seawater. Two



2.5.3



2.5.4

smaller ponds nearby sometimes join to form a single pond when water levels are high. Plants that favour marshy conditions grow around the ponds, including reeds and meadowsweet. The ponds also attract many birds, bats and amphibians.

2.5.4 A shore meadow

This narrow grassy shore meadow at the southern end of Seura-saari is a protected biotope. It hosts many interesting meadow plants including creeping bentgrass, bird's-foot trefoil and yellow loosestrife.

2.5.5 Rocky islets off Seurasaari's southern tip

These small rocky islets have been protected as a nature reserve since 1999 to safeguard the nests of breeding gulls and water birds. Access to the islets and the waters immediately around them is



prohibited between 1st April and 15th August. But it is easy to observe their nesting birds from the main island. The islets lie just a few metres offshore, near the shore meadow.





2.6 Hiidenkiukaanpuisto Park

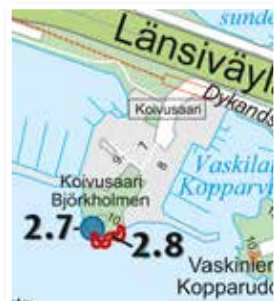
The woods and shore meadows on the western side of Lehtisaari and the smaller Kalkkipaadenpuisto Park on the island's eastern shore together form a pleasant green area of some ten hectares. The parks are home to seashore plants including few-flowered spike rush, dwarf cornel and adder's tongue, as well as grand old pine, birch and alder trees. While walking along the parks' paths visitors may spot birds including lesser spotted woodpeckers, icterine warblers and thrush nightingales. Traces of flying squirrels have even been found here. A strikingly large pine tree can be seen by the footpath near the southwest corner of Hiidenkiukaanpuisto Park. Its trunk is 330 cm in circumference, and it may be up to 200 years old. The tall office buildings of Keilaniemi in Espoo loom across the water to the west.





2.7 An erratic boulder on Koivusaari Island

Near the southwestern shore of Koivusaari lies one of Helsinki's largest erratic boulders. This impressive rock is five metres high.



0 250 500 m



2.8 Koivusaari's shore meadow

Just south of the huge boulder lies a narrow strip of shore meadow protected as an ecologically valuable habitat. Parts of the meadow are stony. Look out for plants including sea plantain and bladder campion.

2.9 Myllykallio

This rocky hill on the large island of Lauttasaari looks out over the Gulf of Finland. The birdwatching tower on the hilltop especially offers fine views in all directions. Birdwatchers especially flock here during spring and autumn when migrants including buzzards and other raptors are often visible.





Hooded crow



Brown hare

A total of 230 bird species have been observed from the tower. Many birds breed here too, such as wheatears. In the winter woodpeckers and owls are often seen. While exploring the paths on the hillside also watch out for brown hares and feral rabbits.



2.10 Kotkavuori Hill

This scenic rocky hill in the northeastern part of Lauttasaari is mainly sparsely wooded with pine trees. The best views are to the east and northeast, over the bay towards Ruoholahti and Seurasaari. On the western side of the rocky area lie traces of an ancient shoreline in the form of rounded large stones that were washed up on the shores of the Littorina Sea – an early phase of the Baltic Sea – several thousand years ago. Rough paths run through the rocky area.



0 250 500 m

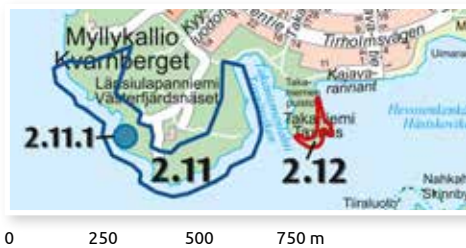


2.11 Länsiulapanniemi Point

This attractive and peaceful peninsula on the southwest shore of the suburban island of Lauttasaari attracts many birds, including eagle owls and pygmy owls. Many small birds spend the winter here. Well maintained footpaths and a few rough paths run through the area.

2.11.1 A pothole

An Ice Age pothole can be seen in the bedrock near the shore at Länsiulapanniemi, beneath a spruce tree. The pothole is 60 cm wide and 80 cm deep.





2.11.1



Silverweed

2.12 A shore meadow at Takaniemi Point

This small protected area of ecologically valuable open seashore meadow habitat lies on the west shore of Takaniemi Point. Its plant life includes sea clubrush, silverweed and valerian.

2.13 Lauttasaari's shores

The large island of Lauttasaari has many attractive natural areas that are easy to reach and explore. The island particularly has many good places for birdwatching, including the birdwatching tower



White-tailed eagle



on Myllykallio, and the peninsulas of Särkiniemi and Vattuniemi in the south. There are also good areas for birds in the north, like Nackapuisto Park, where many thrushes and songbirds including blackcaps may be seen. It's worth exploring Lauttasaari at any time of year, but during the mid-spring and late autumn migration seasons the island is a great place to spot migrating arctic water birds and other species. Many birds winter here or rest before or after their long migrations. Birds of prey, owls, waxwings and flocks of finches and other small birds can be seen in many parts of the island. The island's southern shores offer some of Helsinki's best coastal views, with extensive rocky shores, shallow bays and small islets just offshore. Many kinds of trees and plants also grow near the shore, braving the sea winds. The island also has many important habitats for bats.





2.13.1 A shore meadow on Särkiniemi

This small narrow stretch of shore meadow habitat is protected due to its diverse flora. Species found here include sea aster, blackgrass and purple loosestrife.

2.13.2 A shore meadow on Vattuniemi

This longer stretch of shore meadow habitat on the peninsula of Vattuniemi is also protected to preserve its rich plant life, including sea arrow-grass, red bartsia and narrow-leaved rattle. A good beach for swimmers lies to the west, and there are holiday cabins and good footpaths in the area.

Yellow loosestrife



Long-leaved speedwell



Bird's-foot trefoil



Green-veined white

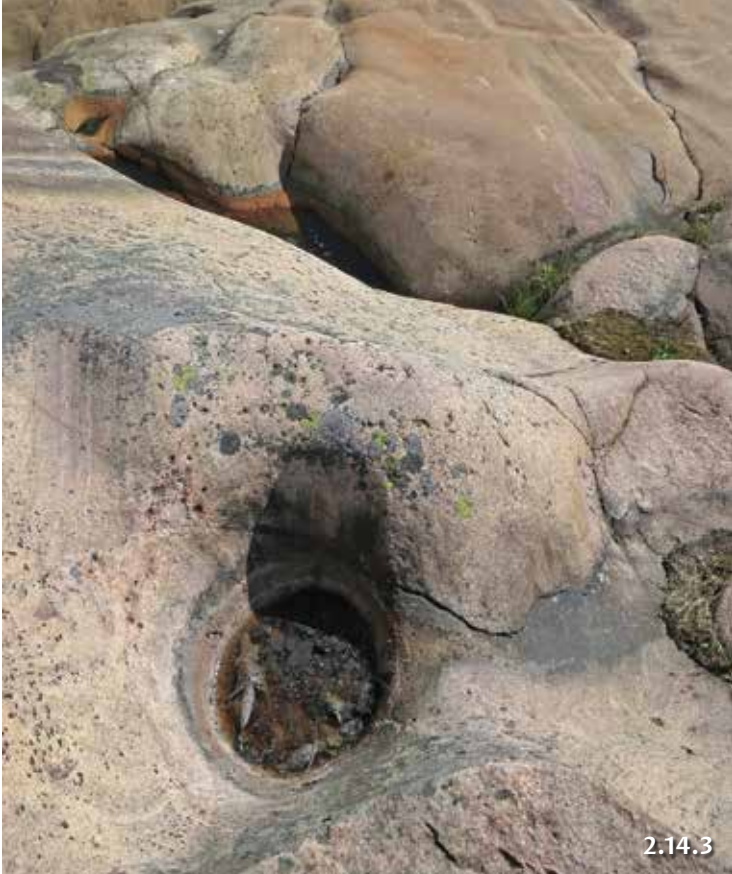


Common sandpiper



Caspian tern

a restaurant and a popular bathing beach. The islands have many beautiful rocky and sandy shores and varied woodlands. Many birds nest of the eastern island, including terns and marsh warblers. Bats are common here too, especially around the channel between the two islands. The islands' shores offer fine views out to the Gulf of Finland. A busy shipping lane runs just west of Pihlajasaari. Well signposted paths run through both islands. A small booklet for the islands' nature trail provides information on features of historic or natural interest, including historic villas.



2.14.1 Broad-leaved woodland on West Pihlajasaari

A small nature reserve has been established here to protect an area of herb-rich broad-leaved woodland just to the SE of the island's restaurant. The undergrowth consists of woodland plants including hedge woundwort and wood cranesbill.

2.14.2 A shore meadow on West Pihlajasaari

This small stone-strewn stretch of shore meadow is protected to conserve its rich flora. Look out for meadowland plants including blackgrass, creeping bentgrass and slender spikerush, as well as larger flowers like yellow loosestrife and sea clubrush.

2.14.3 A pothole on East Pihlajasaari

This small pothole near the NE shore of East Pihlajasaari formed in a meltwater river during the last Ice Age. The rocky shore here offers fine views of the city to the north.



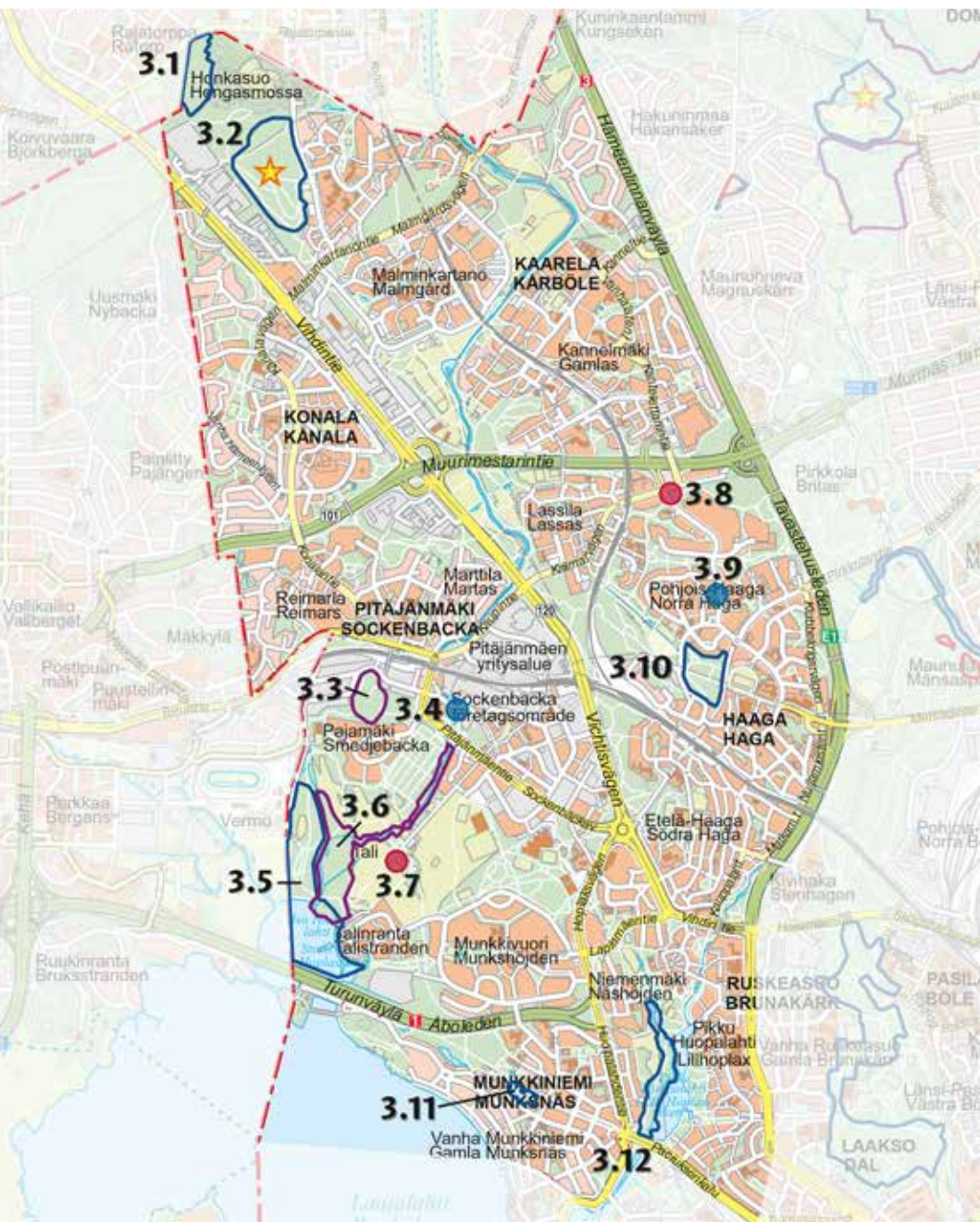
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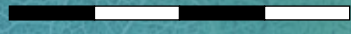
2.14.2

Western Helsinki

- 
- 3.1 Honkasuo Mire**
 - 3.2 Malminkartano Hilltop**
 - 3.3 Patterinmäki Hill**
 - 3.4 A waterfall in Strömberg Park**
 - 3.5 Iso-Huopalahti Bay and Tali Hill**
 - 3.6 Tali Woods and Mätäjäki Brook**
 - 3.7 An old oak at Tali**
 - 3.8 A “snake spruce” in Pohjois-Haaga**
 - 3.9 An erratic boulder by Näyttelijäntie**
 - 3.10 Haaga Rhododendron Park**
 - 3.11 Munkinpuisto Park’s East Pond**
 - 3.12 Woodlands west of Pikku-Huopalahti Bay**



0 500 1000 1500 2000 m



3.1 Honkasuo Mire

This wooded mire lies near the boundary of Helsinki and Vantaa. It is about 16 hectares in extent. Pine trees dominate, while tall Labrador tea plants, bog rosemary, bog bilberry and cloudberry thrive in the undergrowth. Wood warblers and blackcaps sing in the surrounding woodlands in spring. A few paths lead through the mire, which can be very boggy at times.



Bog rosemary





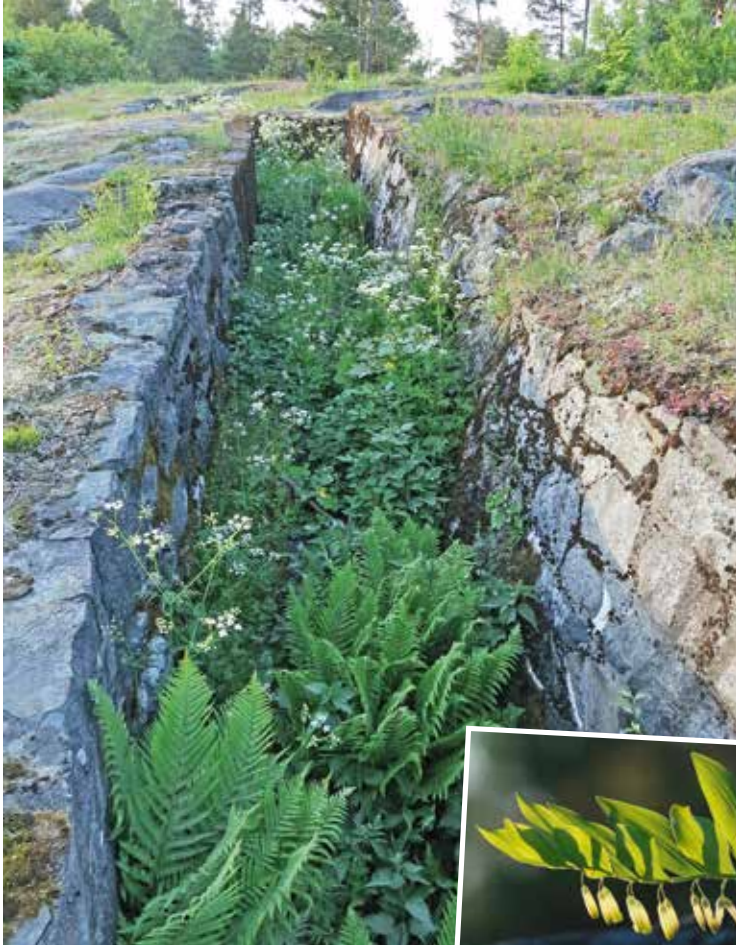
The hilltop offers fine views of the skies.



3.2 Malminkartano Hilltop

In the northwest corner of Helsinki this large artificial hill, made of landfill material, rises to a height of 91 metres above sea level, offering splendid views over the surrounding suburbs and forests. This spot is particularly popular among bird-watchers, as during spring and autumn many migrating birds can be seen here, including raptors and songbirds. On summer evenings corncrakes and Blyth's reed warblers can be heard in the grassland and scrub covering the hill, and in winter flocks of redpolls gather. The summit can easily be reached along footpaths or up a long flight of steps.





Scented Solomon's seal

3.3 Patterinmäki Hill

This five-hectare nature reserve in the district of Pajamäki is valued for its scenery and for remains of historic fortifications, as well as for its rich flora. The rocky “Battery Hill” used to form part of Helsinki’s defences. Its woodlands and meadows are at their most beautiful in May and June, when dozens of flowers such as sticky catchfly, mountain everlasting, heart’s ease and heath violet all bloom here. Many ferns grow around the old fortifications. Paths lead around the area and up to the rocky hilltop.



0 250 500 m



3.4 A waterfall in Strömberg Park

This free-flowing waterfall, almost three metres high, may surprise visitors exploring the Helsinki district of Pitäjänmäki. The falls are particularly striking during the spring thaw. Just downstream lies the pleasant Strömberg Park, with its lush vegetation and inviting paths.





Greater celandine

3.5 Iso-Huopalahti Bay and Tali Hill

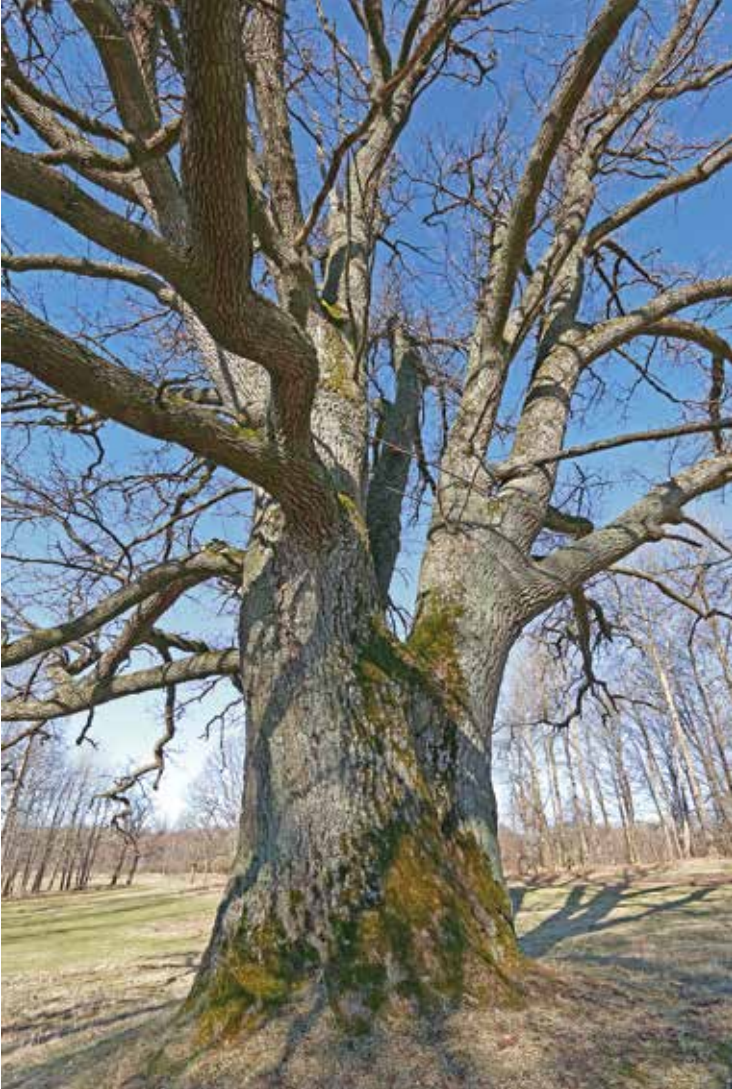
Iso-Huopalahti Bay lies on the boundary between Helsinki and Espoo. Its eastern shore is fringed with extensive reed beds, where birdwatchers might spot bearded reedlings. When water levels are low, waders feed along its silty shores. Terns, gulls, swallows and swifts also come here to feed. In autumn dozens of grey herons may gather to fish near the shore. Many water birds also breed here. The scrubland and grassy habitats on the former landfill site of Tali Hill echo on summer nights to the calls of breeding birds including corncrakes and river warblers. Many passerine species also flock here on migration. The area has well maintained paths and a frisbee golf course.





3.6 Tali Woods and Mätäjoki Brook

These marshy and herb-rich woodlands have rich vegetation including irises and ground elder, while reeds thrive by the shore in the south. Many different tree species can be found here. There is also plenty of ecologically valuable decaying wood, providing habitat for rare polypore fungi. Look out for birds such as lesser spotted woodpeckers and river warblers. The brookside woodlands also make some of the best habitat in Western Helsinki for flying squirrels. Bats also feed over the waters of the wide Mätäjoki Brook. A total area of 16 hectares has been designated for conservation. The area has good footpaths and cycle paths. Further north along the brook, in Kaarela, one of Helsinki's few natural river courses can be explored. This area also has rich flora.



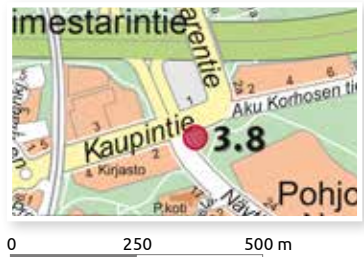
3.7 An old oak at Tali

This old oak, which grows by Tali Golf Course, has been protected as a natural monument since 1958. With its circumference of over 615 cm it is thought to be the seventh thickest tree anywhere in Finland. It is more than 20 metres high, and still in good condition, though sulphur polypore fungi can be seen growing on it.



3.8 A “snake spruce” in Pohjois-Haaga

This spruce tree has a genetic defect that gives it an unusual form, with many long branches that hang straight downwards. Known in Finnish as “snake spruces”, such trees are quite rare, though individuals grow naturally in all regions of Finland. Protected as a natural monument since 1956, this more than 25-metre-tall tree grows by a busy crossroads, but can be viewed from a nearby footpath.





3.9 An erratic boulder by Näyttelijäntie

This three-metre-high block of rapakivi granite lies in a small park by Näyttelijäntie 3. It is an erratic boulder, transported here during the Ice Age.

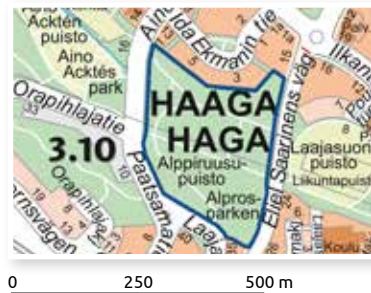




Labrador tea

3.10 Haaga Rhododendron Park

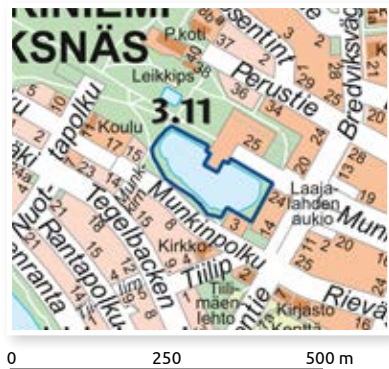
This popular rhododendron park in the district of Haaga is of international value. The public park is also used by the university for field trials. Its oldest rhododendrons were planted in 1975. The park is at its finest in May and June, when many visitors come to view its colourful shrubs. The park’s viewing platforms are accessible to disabled visitors. Its rhododendrons flower more prolifically every second year, alternating with sparser blooms. Tall pine trees, bilberries and Labrador tea grow in the park naturally.





3.11 Munkinpuisto Park's East Pond

This two-hectare pond, near the eastern end of Munkinpuisto Park, provides habitat for waterside plants including lesser bulrushes, as well as water birds such as moorhens, mallards and goldeneye ducks. Northern bats and Daubenton's bats feed on flying insects over the pond, and moor frogs have recently been observed here. Good views of the pond's wildlife can be enjoyed from the shore near the large office block partly built over the water.





3.12 Woodlands west of Pikku-Huopalahti Bay

About eight hectares of lush, leafy woodlands with rich birdlife can be explored along the western shore of Pikku-Huopalahti Bay. Birch trees predominate, but dense willow thickets grow in wetter areas, and small areas of meadowland habitat lie on the woodland margins. Reed beds and silty shores can be found by the water. The area is home to birds including barred warblers and marsh warblers. In summer many gulls and terns fly over the bay, and in spring and autumn migrating waders may be seen along the shore. A well maintained footpath and many smaller paths run through the area.



0 125 250 m

Southern Central Park

- 
- A photograph of a forest path. In the foreground, two people are walking away from the camera: one in a light blue jacket and another in a bright yellow jacket. To their right, a cyclist in a black jacket and red pants is riding a bicycle. The path is surrounded by tall trees and green undergrowth. The background is slightly blurred, showing more of the forest.
- 4.1 Haaganpuro Brook**
 - 4.2 A hazel grove in Maunula**
 - 4.3 Taivaskallio Hill**
 - 4.3.1 An erratic boulder
 - 4.4 Large aspen trees in Käpylä**
 - 4.5 A pothole in Käpylä**
 - 4.6 A hazel grove in Pasila**
 - 4.7 Ruskeasuo Valley**
 - 4.8 Alppila Hill**
 - 4.9 Around Töölönlahti Bay**
 - 4.10 Kaisaniemi Botanical Gardens**
 - 4.11 A crack willow tree in Kruununhaka**



4.1 Haaganpuro Brook

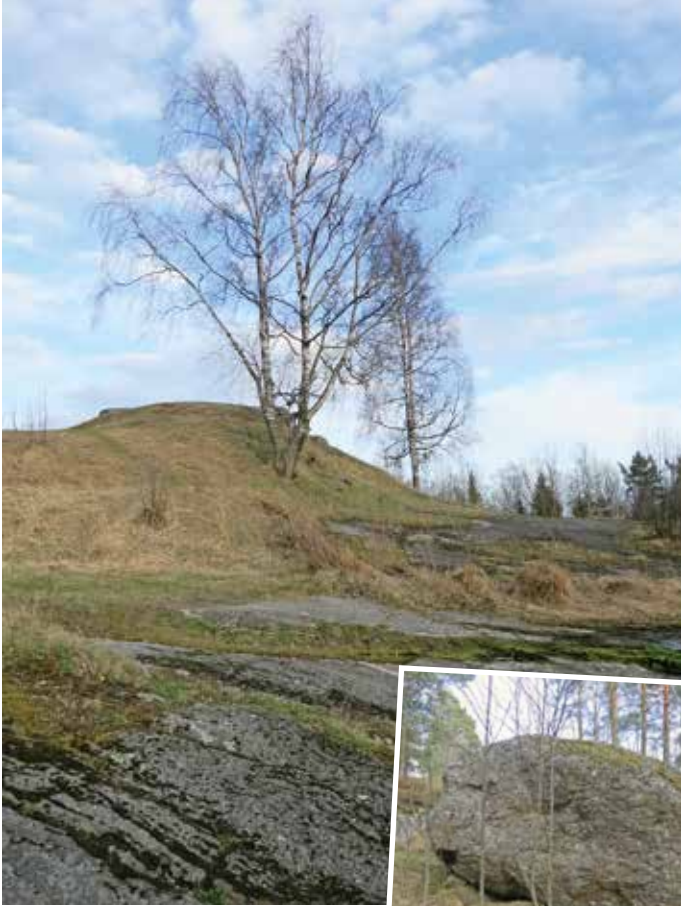
This small river flows through the districts of Maununneva and Pakila on its way to Pikku-Huopalahti Bay. The eastern stretch of the brook flows from Suursuonpuisto Park in Pakila past a garden of remembrance in Maunula. The brook and its tributaries have a total length of more than 12 kilometres. It is a valuable spawning water for migratory brown trout, and in recent years the brook's banks and bed have been restored to benefit the fish, with gravelly spawning beds created and its banks protected against erosion. To conserve the brook's fish populations most forms of fishing are prohibited in stretches with strong currents. Lure fishing is only permitted by agreement with the river's owner. Parts of a 3-km nature trail at Maunula run along two stretches of the brook. The trail's picnic area is located near a set of allotments where local residents grow crops and flowers.



4.2 A hazel grove in Maunula

Two parts of this two-hectare hazel grove are protected as valuable woodland habitat. More than a hundred hazel shrubs grow here, including many larger tree-like hazels. Small-leaved lime trees and woodland plants including wood sorrel, hepatica and stone bramble also thrive here. Many paths run through the area. The path leading through the more southerly protected area particularly offers fine views of the grove.



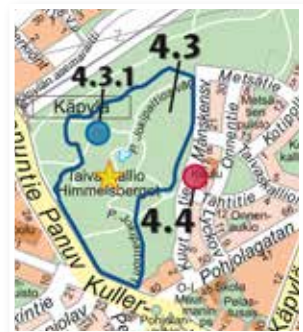


4.3 Taivaskallio Hill

This scenic rocky hill is dotted with old fortifications and has an artificial pond, as well as traces of a stony raised beach formation on its northern slopes. Look out for violet heart's ease flowers and woodland birds including colourful redstarts. A weathered erratic boulder can be seen near the corner of Panuntie and Osmontie. Good paths lead into the area from most directions.

4.3.1 An erratic boulder

This impressive boulder, three metres high, was transported here during the Ice Age.





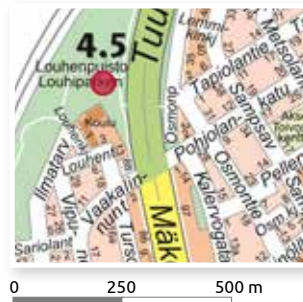
4.4 Large aspen trees in Käpylä

Ten aspen trees of an unusual form known as giant aspens, growing by Kuutamotie, have been protected as a natural monument since 1950. The leaves of these rare trees are noticeably larger than those of typical aspens, but the trees themselves are not exactly giants at less than 20 metres tall.



4.5 A pothole in Käpylä

This Ice Age pothole, about 1.5 metres in diameter, was the largest feature of its kind known in Helsinki until the much larger pothole in Pihlajamäki was discovered in the 1990s. It has been officially protected since 1958. Visitors are protected by metal railings erected around the pothole.



4.6 A hazel grove in Pasila

This small hazel grove is protected as a valuable biotope. It has more than 20 hazel shrubs over two metres in height. Other plants flourishing here include lily of the valley, wood anemone and greater stitchwort. The grove is largely protected by a high fence, but it can be viewed from the footpath beside Mäkelänkatu, or explored along a path that starts by the adjoining Velodrome's grandstand.



Hazel catkins





Cauliflower fungus



Black woodpecker

4.7 Ruskeasuo Valley

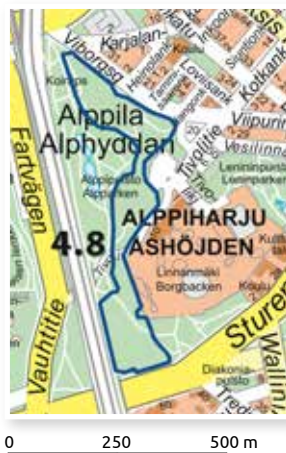
The southern parts of Helsinki's Central Park are very popular with local residents. The area known as Ruskeasuo Valley has many well-signposted footpaths and cycle paths. Horse-riding is also popular here. The park's forests are mainly dominated by Norway spruce stands, interspersed with rocky areas where Scots pines predominate. An area of herb-rich forest near Lääkärinkatu is dominated by common alder trees, with bogbean plants growing in the undergrowth. While exploring the park look out for woodland birds including black woodpeckers and wrynecks. For many mammals these forests are a precious green corridor among Central Helsinki's densely built-up districts. Flying squirrels even thrive here. The woods around Laakso are rich in polypore fungi.





4.8 Alppila Hill

This scenic rocky hill lies just west of Linnanmäki Funfair. The rocks offer views in all directions, also overlooking nearby Alppipuisto Park. Another fine rocky hillside lies on the other side of the railway beyond Vauhtitie, near the open-air swimming baths.





Some of the mallard ducks that gather in winter in the open water by Tokoinranta have unusual plumage.

4.9 Around Töölönlahti Bay

This green area is an extension of the southern parts of Central Park. Many fine broad-leaved trees grow by the western shores of the bay, in Hakasalmi Park and Hesperia Park, including oaks, elms, ash trees, and horse chestnuts, whose white flowers grow in tall clusters called candles. Rare plants including the exotic sedge *Carex melanostachya* also grow here. Many birds nest around the southeastern shores of the bay, including mute swans, coots, sedge



warblers and reed warblers. Northern bats often feed over the bay at dusk. The waters in the easternmost part of the bay and beyond the railway by Tokoinranta remain free of ice during the winter, when many water birds and gulls gather here. A footpath can be followed for 2.2 km to circuit the entire bay, with many places to stop and enjoy the views. Water quality in the bay has improved greatly in recent years.

4.10 Kaisaniemi Botanical Gardens

These gardens in downtown Helsinki are known for their rich birdlife. Flocks of migrating passerines gather here in spring and autumn, including rare species like eastern members of the leaf warbler family. Hawfinches and goldfinches have been observed nesting here, while bats are often seen near the shore just north of the gardens. Many grand old trees grow here, including a Canadian black poplar whose trunk is almost five metres round, and Finland's largest wych elm (trunk circumference 561 cm). Entry to the gardens is free during opening hours.



Finland's largest
wych elm tree



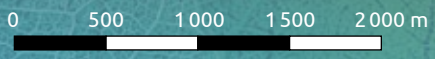
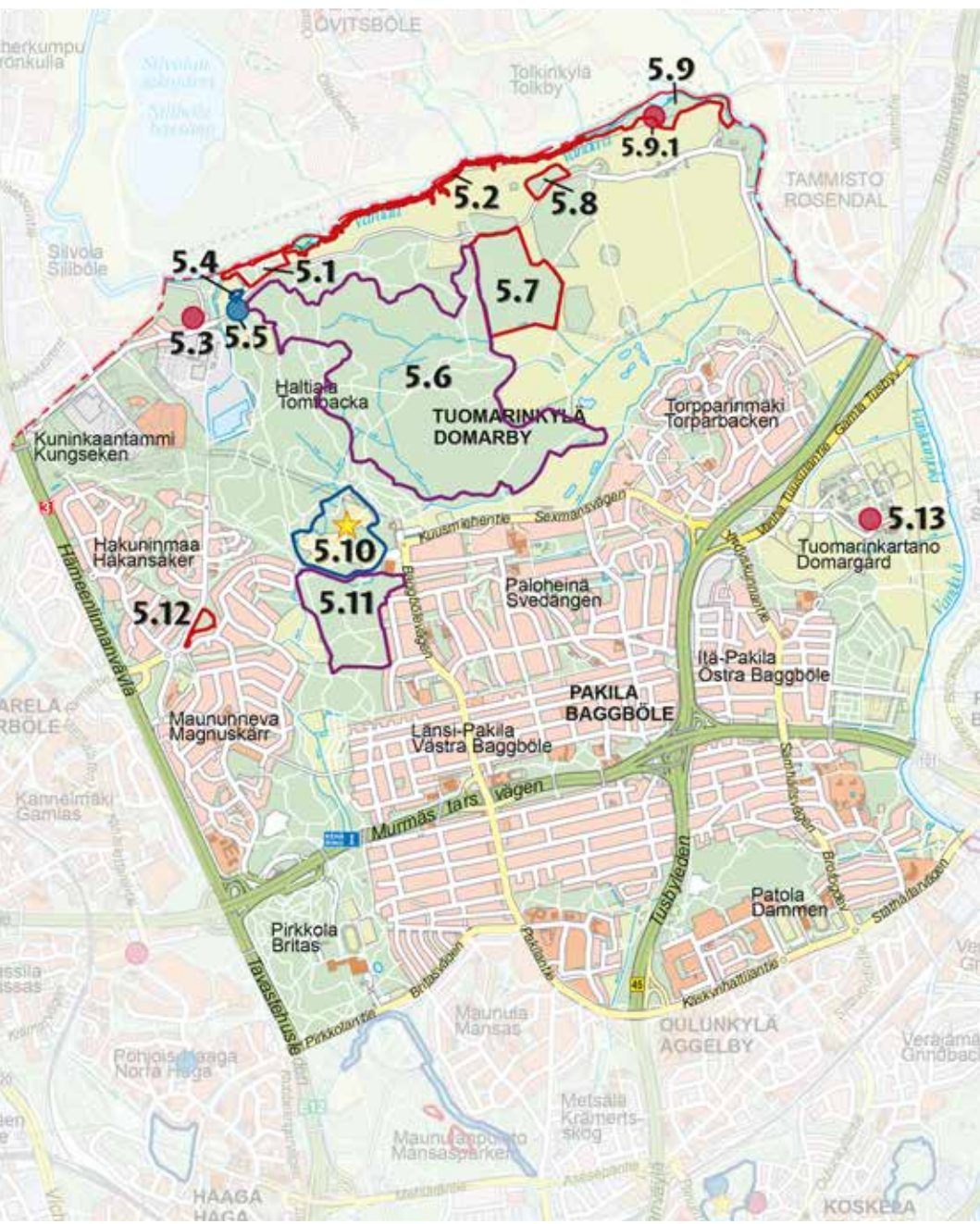
4.11 A crack willow tree in Kruununuhaka

This crack willow tree has an unusually thick and crooked trunk. It was designated as a natural monument back in 1924, making it the oldest protected tree still standing in Helsinki. Crack willows are not true natives of Finland, but they have spread into the wild, where they particularly thrive by water.



Northern Central Park

- 
- 5.1 Woodlands by Pitkääkoski Rapids**
 - 5.2 The south bank of the River Vantaa**
 - 5.3 The King's Oak**
 - 5.4 Pitkääkoski Meadow**
 - 5.5 An erratic boulder at Pitkääkoski**
 - 5.6 Paloheinä-Haltiala Forest**
 - 5.7 Old-growth forest at Haltiala**
 - 5.8 Niskala Arboretum**
 - 5.9 Ruutinkoski Rapids**
 - 5.9.1 White elms
 - 5.10 Paloheinä Hill**
 - 5.11 Pakilanmetsä Forest**
 - 5.12 Maununneva Bog**
 - 5.13 A "snake spruce" at Tuomarinkylä**





5.1 Woodlands by Pitkäkосki Rapids

Nearly five hectares of riverside woodlands have been protected here since 1984, including a stretch of 700 metres of the southern bank of the River Vantaa in Helsinki, as well as woodlands across the river in the City of Vantaa. These rapids are the longest along the lower reaches of the river. Many grand old Norway spruce trees grow on the slopes leading down to the river. Hazel shrubs, fly honeysuckle and spring pea also grow here. In early summer many songbirds can be heard around dawn and dusk. Woodpeckers, bats and flying squirrels also thrive here. In winter the rapids often remain free of ice, and this is one of the best places in the Helsinki area to spot dippers. From the bridge you might also spot an otter or a mink, or at least their tracks in the snow. All stretches of the River Vantaa in Helsinki are protected in the Natura conservation network. The river hosts Finland's most significant population of thick-shelled river mussels. Visitors can explore the area's woodland



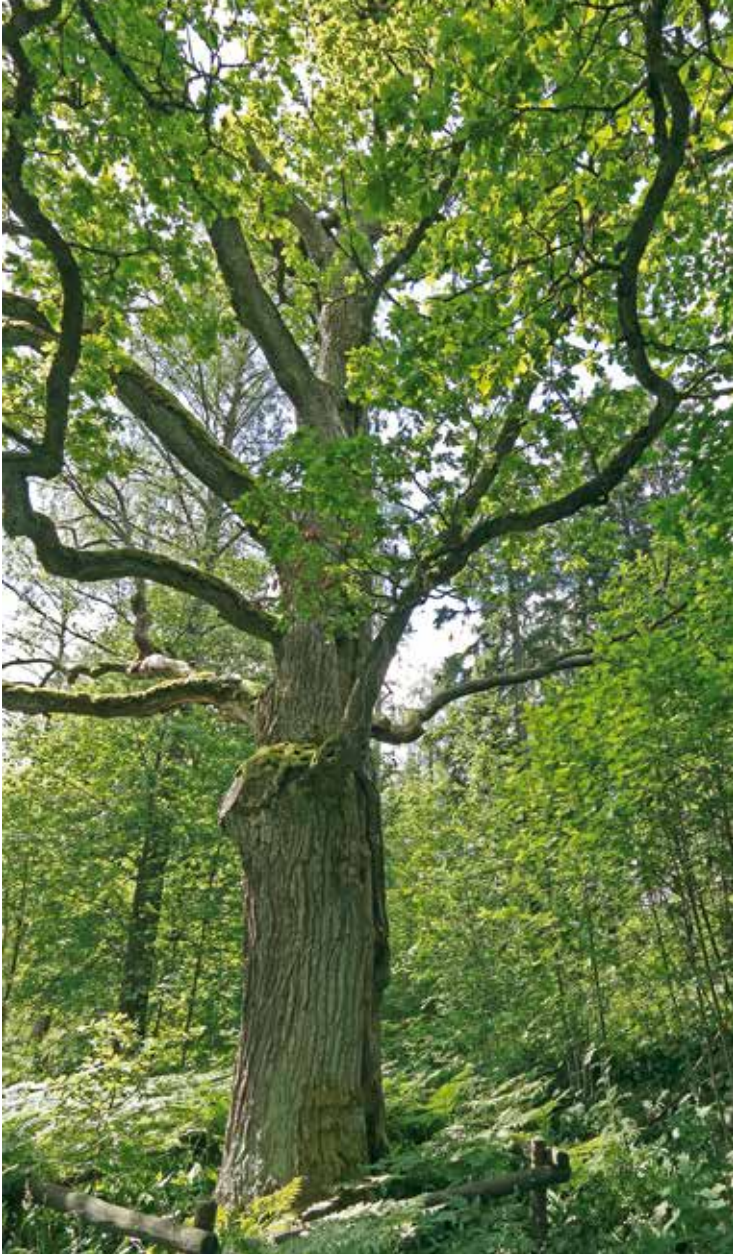


paths on foot or on skis, and view the rapids from two platforms. Cyclists must dismount and push their bikes along these sensitive paths, and all visitors must keep to the paths. Fishing is restricted here, though fishermen using lures may wade out from access points on the north bank into unprotected parts of the river to fish. Signs at entrances to the nature reserve provide useful information for visitors.

5.2 The south bank of the River Vantaa



Continuing eastwards along the river from the reserve by Pitkäkoski Rapids is a newer nature reserve, designated in 2012 to protect almost 1.5 kilometres of the river's south bank. This area has various well-preserved herb-rich woodland and meadowland habitats with diverse flora. Woodland plants found here include baneberry and wonder violet. Watch out for scrubland birds such as red-backed shrikes and scarlet rosefinches. Bats and otters also thrive here.



5.3 The King's Oak

Just north of the water treatment plant at Pitkääkoski and the road Kuninkaantammentie grows an old oak tree with an impressive trunk more than four metres round. The tree is said to have been planted by the King of Sweden in the 1700s. It has been protected since 1956.



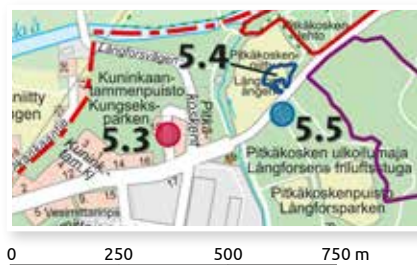
A painted lady on a red clover plant



This pine tree on the meadow is embraced by a birch trunk.

5.4 Pitkäkосki Meadow

This provincially significant rocky meadow is just 0.3 hectares in size, but it is home to many rare and interesting plants, including pyramidal bugle and dark mullein. The dominant plants are meadow foxtail and sweet vernal grass. The meadowland flowers attract many butterflies in summer.





5.5 An erratic boulder at Pitkäkосki

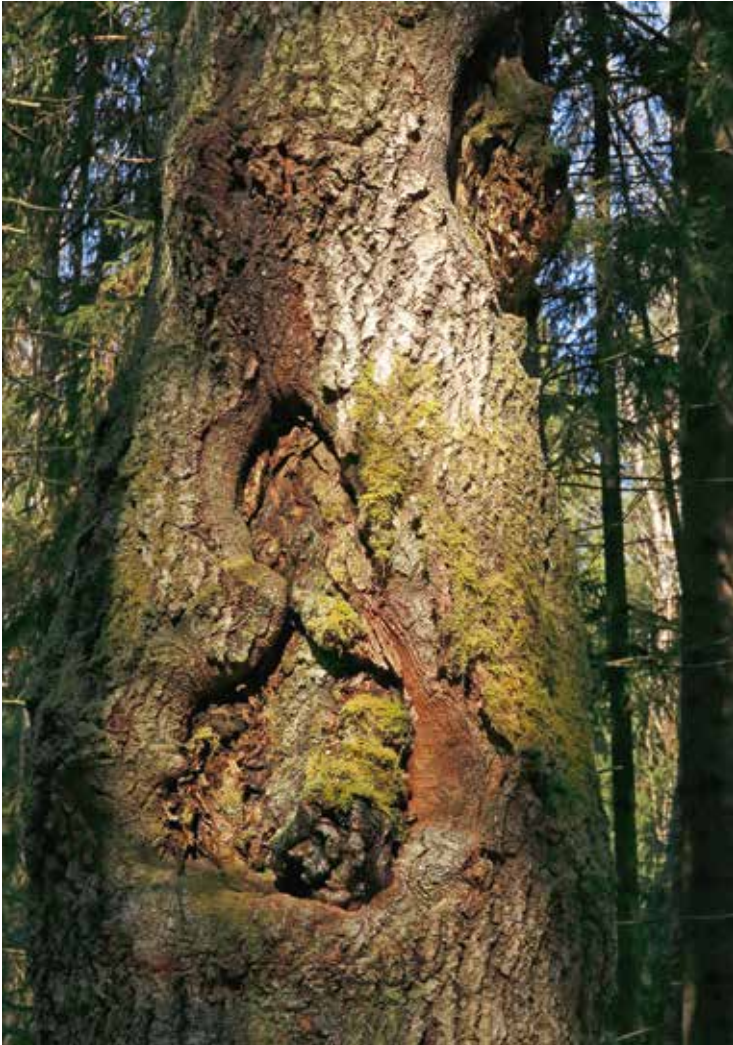
By the path near the Cafe Pitkäkосken ulkoilumaja lies an impressive rapakivi granite boulder, about 2.5 metres in height. Ring-like feldspar crystal formations can be seen in the boulder.

5.6 Paloheinä-Haltiala Forest

This large (138 hectares) and ecologically valuable area of forest lies in the northern part of Helsinki's Central Park, between Paloheinä Sports Park, Pitkäkосki Rapids and the old-growth forest at Haltiala. One large nature reserve has been designated here. This is one of the best places in Helsinki to come and experience nature. Forest habitats include herb-rich woodlands and dark spruce mires, interspersed with mixed forest growing on mineral soils. Many woodland birds thrive and breed here, including black woodpeckers, hazel grouse, red-breasted flycatchers and nutcrackers. It is also an important hunting area for birds of prey. Many large old trees grow here, and there is plenty of decaying wood for species that depend on it. For this reason many species of polypore fungi rare elsewhere







5.7 Old-growth forest at Haltiala

Helsinki's finest old-growth forest has been protected in a 23-hectare nature reserve here at Haltiala since 1984. The forest has been spared from the axe since the 1950s. Spruce trees dominate, especially in waterlogged areas. These woodlands are rich in flora and fauna. The abundance of old, decaying wood enables many fungi to thrive, especially polypores, as well as many insects, which in turn provide



Great spotted woodpecker

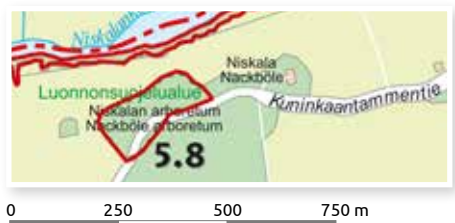
food for many birds. Badgers, mountain hares and flying squirrels are among the many mammals found here. Nesting birds include greenish warblers, red-breasted flycatchers and bullfinches. To protect the forest habitat visitors may only explore the area along marked trails. Informative notice boards mark the three entrances to the reserve. The Hältiavuori nature trail runs through the eastern and northern part of the reserve.



Greater stitchwort

5.8 Niskala Arboretum

This interesting arboretum was established by the owner of nearby Tuomarinkylä Manor, Jakob Kavaleff, during the years 1905–1917. Inspired by his great interest in nature and forestry, Kavaleff brought the seeds of many exotic trees and shrubs to Finland, and he used the arboretum as a showroom for the products of his tree nurseries. Two hectares of forest in the centre of the arboretum are protected as a nature reserve. The arboretum has more than 750 species and varieties of trees and shrubs from around the world, many of which are labelled. These trees provide shelter for many birds and bats. Breeding birds include hawfinches and chiffchaffs. You can explore the arboretum along several paths, or the Haltiavuori nature trail which skirts it to the south, but please do not stray off these paths. There is a picnic area with tables in the western part of the arboretum. The arboretum was given a major facelift in 2016.





5.9 Ruutinkoski Rapids

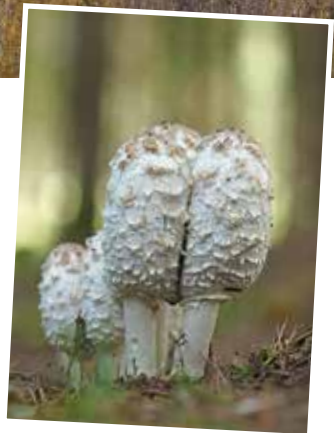
The lowest rapids on this stretch of the River Vantaa, Ruutinkoski, are about 300 metres long. An 8.6-hectare nature reserve protects them and their surroundings on the boundary between Helsinki and Vantaa. Reedmace and water horsetail plants grow by the calm waters downstream of the rapids. The reserve also includes areas of meadow, scrub, swampy riverside marshland and a small pond. Look out for woodland plants such as yellow anemone, solid-tubered corydalis and yellow star of Bethlehem. In late spring and early summer many warblers and other songbirds perform nocturnal concerts. During the daytime corncrakes and icterine warblers may



This view from the top of Paloheinä Hill encompasses another artificial hill at nearby Malminkartano.



Coltsfoot



Shaggy ink-cap

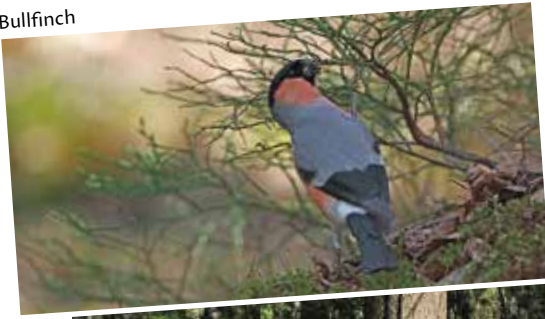
5.10 Paloheinä Hill

This artificial hill was created from landfill material in the 1960s. Today it is a popular recreational area. Most parts of the hill are treeless, and crisscrossed by paths, though some small areas have been planted with trees. The hilltop offers good views and is popular among birdwatchers, especially during migration seasons. Flocks of Goldfinches often gather here to feed on thistle seeds.



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Bullfinch



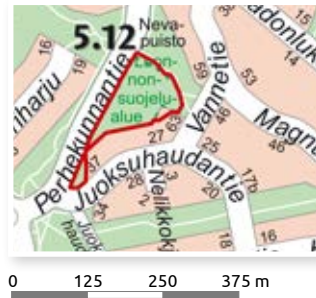
5.11 Pakilanmetsä Forest

This area of 25 hectares of valuable and varied forest habitat largely consists of mature spruce forest and mixed woodland. Plants such as bilberry, small cow-wheat and May lily thrive in the undergrowth, together with many ferns including narrow buckler fern. More than 70 species of polypore fungi have been observed here, including several regionally threatened species. Locally breeding birds include wood warblers, blackcaps and goshawks. Flying squirrels also live here. Many paths large and small run through the forest.



5.12 Maununneva Bog

This small bog (1.5 ha) has patches of Spruce mire and Pine mire habitat as well as areas of treeless bog vegetation where floodwater accumulates during the spring thaw. Plants found in this nature reserve include sphagnum mosses, cotton grass, marsh cinquefoil and Labrador tea. Visitors are asked to keep to the marked paths and duckboard trails.



Labrador tea



5.13 A “snake spruce” at Tuomarinkylä

This unusually formed spruce tree has been protected as a natural monument since 2002. It is more than three metres in circumference and 27 metres tall – making it unusually high for such trees. The tree is fenced off in the parkland near Tuomarinkylä Manor.

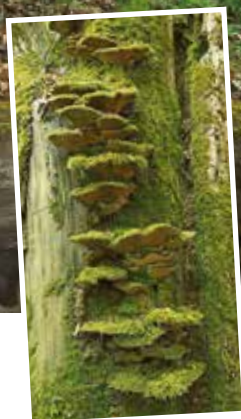


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Viikki

- 6.1 Riverside woodlands in Oulunkylä**
- 6.2 Rocks overlooking Pikkukoski Rapids**
- 6.3 Rocks near Jokiniementie**
- 6.4 Vanhankaupunginkoski Rapids**
- 6.5 Coastal meadows at Kyläsaari**
- 6.6 An alder grove at Pornaistenniemi**
- 6.7 Lammassaari Island**
- 6.8 Kuusiluoto Island**
- 6.9 Viikki-Vanhankaupunginlahti Bay**
- 6.10 Erratic boulder by Hakalanniementie**
- 6.11 Farmland at Viikki**
- 6.12 Shore meadows by Purolahti Bay**
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- 6.22 Woodlands in Herttoniemi Manor Park**
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 - 6.23.1 A hazel grove near Viikintie
- 6.24 A rocky hillside by Kauppamyllyntie**
 - 6.24.1 Potholes
- 6.25 Two potholes in Roihuvuori**



6.1 Riverside woodlands in Oulunkylä

These lush broad-leaved woodlands by the banks of the River Vantaa are protected in a national conservation programme. Many maples, large spruces, larches and aspens grow here. Lily of the valley and ground elder are widespread in the undergrowth. There is plenty of old and decaying wood, and rare fungi have been observed here. A wide footpath runs south of the woods, and smaller paths run through them.





6.2 Rocks overlooking Pikkukoski Rapids

This extensive rocky hillside, whose Finnish name means “Devil’s rocks” overlooks a popular bathing beach by Pikkukoski Rapids. It’s worth scrambling to the highest parts of the rocky hill to get good views along the River Vantaa. Ecologically valuable broad-leaved woodlands, rich in plant life and polypore fungi, lie east and west of the rocks.

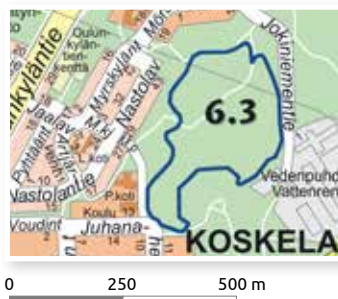


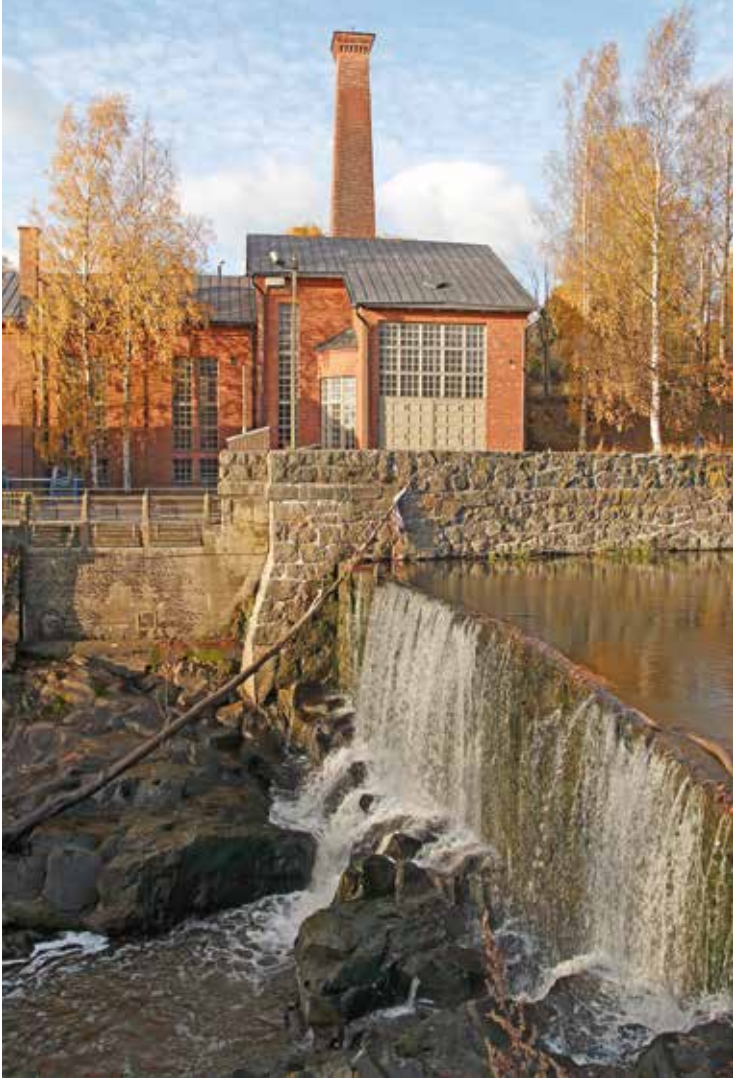
0 250 500 m



6.3 Rocks near Jokiniementie

This scenic treeless rocky area lies just northeast of Juhana Herttuan Tie, offering expansive views over Vanhankaupunginlahti Bay. Old pine trees grow here, and many ghostly grey “kelohonka” pines can be seen, still standing long after they have died. Colourful redstarts breed here. The best way to walk up onto the rocks is from paths lying to the southwest and north.





6.4 Vanhankaupunginkoski Rapids

Just before its mouth, the River Vantaa divides into two branches. The western branch has been dammed to generate hydroelectricity, while the eastern branch flows through a fine set of rocky rapids. The rapids are particularly spectacular during the spring thaw, when flow rates may reach almost 150 m³/s. The calm





Dipper

waters below the rapids are popular with fishers. In autumn large salmon and trout may be seen heading upstream. The eastern branch of the river was rechannelled in 1999 to facilitate fish migration. Dippers sometimes fly in to seek food in the open rapids during the winter, and keen-eyed visitors may also spot otters or minks. An international annual kayaking event is held here in April. The old buildings around the dam on the western branch date back to the 19th century. An interesting Museum of Technology lies on the island between the two river branches.



Goldfinch



6.5 Coastal meadows at Kyläsaari

The open areas by the seashore at Kyläsaari are rich in grasses and weeds that provide food for many birds. The area also has several brooks and a small pond. Nesting bird species include yellow wagtails and little ringed plovers. During spring and autumn many flocks of migrating passerines can be seen here. In winter birdwatchers may spot redpolls, goldfinches and rare shore larks. The area's diverse flora also attracts many butterflies. Many paths run through the meadows, especially by the shore, but the terrain is challenging away from these paths.

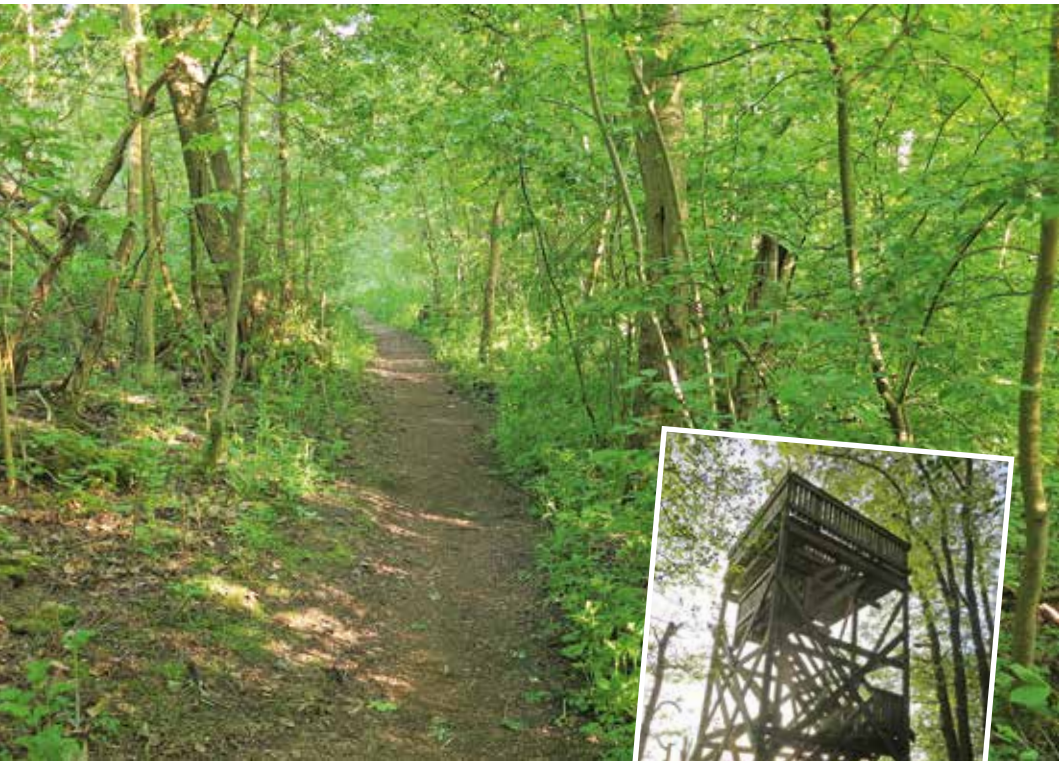




6.6 An alder grove at Pornaistenniemi

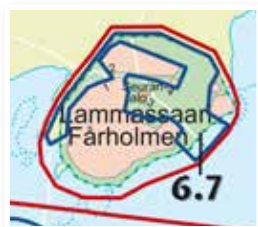
This swampy alder grove, just west of the extensive Viikki-Vanhankaupunginlahti Bay Nature Reserve, has been protected in a separate 8-hectare nature reserve since 2016. Birches and willows also grow here. These woods are occasionally flooded when sea levels are high. Polypore fungi thrive here due to the abundance of decaying wood. Look out for birds including lesser spotted woodpeckers, icterine warblers and stock doves. Rare white-backed woodpeckers often spend the winter here, and it is hoped that they may soon breed here. A nature trail runs through the grove. On the eastern side of the reserve there is a popular viewing tower, and a duckboard trail leading to a birdwatching hide.



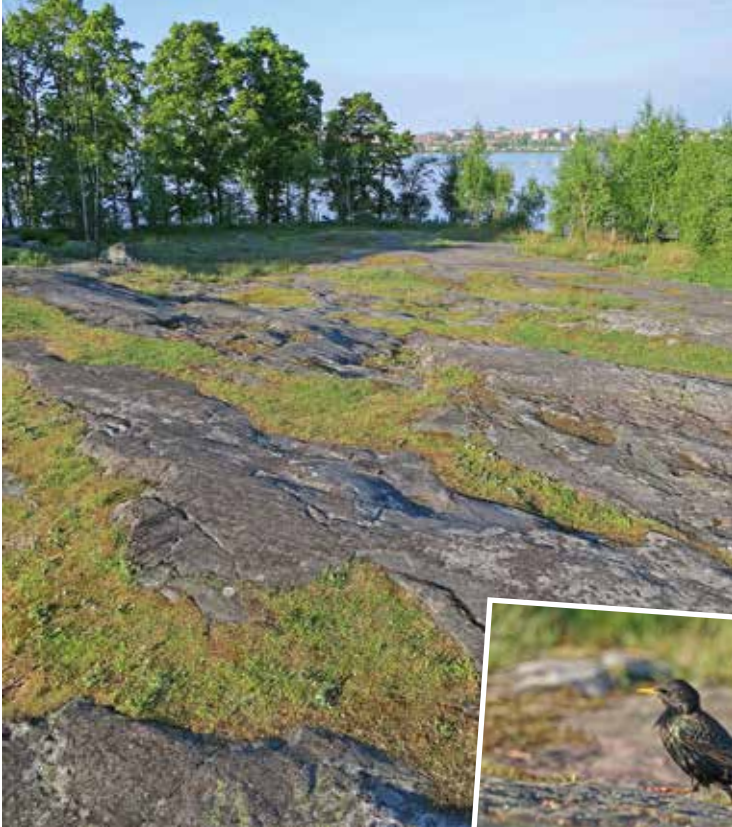


6.7 Lammassaari Island

A duckboard trail leads from Pornaistenniemi through extensive reed beds to Lammassaari. A tower by the woods in the northern part of the island offers excellent views over nearby wetland pastures and their rich birdlife. Eagle owls may be seen here in the winter. The island is also home to several bat species, including long-eared bats. Visitors should keep to the island's paths and not disturb the residents of summer holiday cabins. Another duckboard trail leads from the western shore of the island towards Kuusiluoto.



0 250 500 m



Starling

6.8 Kuusiluoto Island

This small island offers fine views over the bay to the south. Deciduous trees dominate the vegetation, but there are a few more open rocky and grassy areas. Many bird species nest here, including lesser spotted woodpeckers, starlings and common sandpipers. This is one of the best places in Helsinki to spot stock doves, since the island's trees have many natural holes, and suitable nest-boxes have also been put up. Bats also thrive here, sheltering or breeding in the island's old wooden buildings. Sheep graze on the island in summer and autumn.

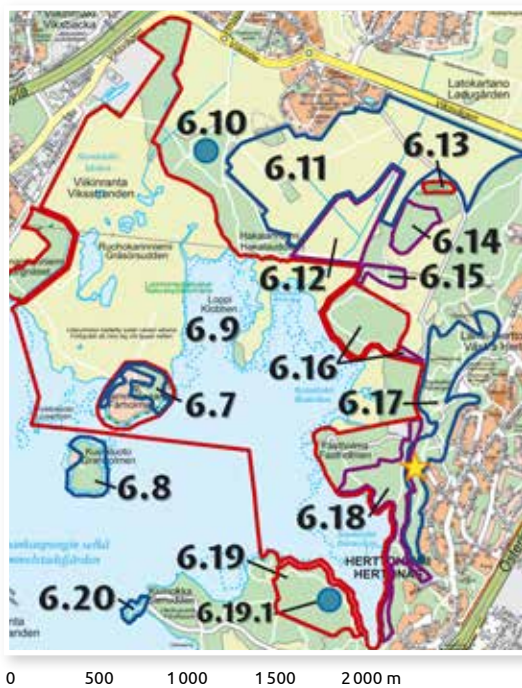
6.9 Viikki-Vanhankaupunginlahti Bay

This protected wetland area in the geographical centre of Helsinki is the city's largest nature reserve, at more than 300 hectares in extent. Ornithologists first studied the area's birdlife in the early 19th century, and more recently the wetlands' rich birdlife has been systematically monitored over the last 30 years. Parts of the wetlands were first



designated for protection more than a century ago, and the total area under protection has gradually expanded ever since.

More than 300 bird species have been observed in the area encompassing the bay, the wetlands and the nearby woodlands and farmlands of Viikki. Many rare species are spotted by visiting birdwatchers each year, especially during migration seasons. Almost 2,000 pairs of birds of about 100 different species nest here regularly, including many red-listed species.





Locally breeding birds to look out for include great crested grebes, water rails, citrine wagtails, sedge warblers, reed warblers, bearded reedlings, Eurasian penduline tits and lesser spotted woodpeckers. Grey herons have also bred here since the early 2000s, and can often be seen by the shore, or on the small wooded island of Loppi in Purolahti Bay, where they have a nesting colony in the trees. Thousands of migrating ducks, geese and swans feed and shelter in the waters of the bay in spring and autumn, when flocks of waders and starlings also gather by the shore and on the pastures. The area also has plenty of suitable habitat for amphibians, and this is one of the few places in Helsinki where moor frogs thrive.

Sedge warbler



The bay and adjoining areas of shore meadow habitat belong to a Natura site designated to protect the wetlands and their rich birdlife. Visitors are asked to stay on the marked paths to avoid disturbing nesting birds or crops in the fields. Many cycle paths and smaller footpaths run through the area, enabling nature-lovers to explore its reed beds, meadows and patches of scrubland and woodland. Nine birdwatching towers and platforms have been built in good vantage points. Four nature trails are also worth exploring: a trail spotlighting the tree species grown in Viikki's arboretum; Viikki nature trail for kids; a nature trail at Pornaistenniemi; and a trail at Kivinokka also accessible to disabled visitors. Also the duckboard trail to Lammassaari is suitable for disabled visitors.

6.10 Erratic boulder by Hakalanniementie

This huge rapakivi granite boulder, about four metres high, lies inside the Viikki arboretum. Large stones deposited on an ancient beach after the Ice Age can be seen just southwest of the boulder.



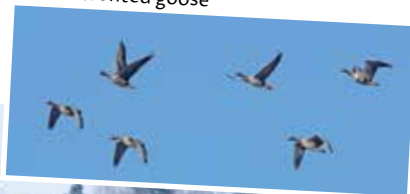


6.11 Farmland at Viikki

The fields at Viikki, used for training and research by Helsinki University's agriculture department, are also visited by many bird species. They offer varied farmland habitats such as fallow fields, crop fields, pastures, meadows and tree stands. Nesting bird species include lapwing, curlew, yellow wagtail and red-backed shrike. During migration seasons they also attract large flocks of geese and passerines, as well as birds of prey. Please keep to the tracks and footpaths that lead between the fields.



White-fronted goose



6.12 Shore meadows by Purolahti Bay

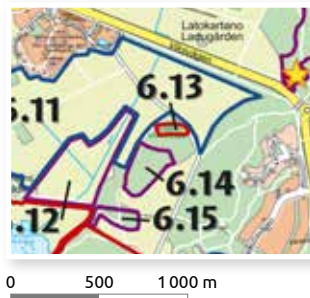
This largish area of marshy meadowland is valued for its diverse flora and birdlife. Waders and water birds can often be seen feeding and resting here, including rare migrants such as great snipes. Nesting bird species include whinchats and common snipes. These meadowlands are also listed as a regionally valuable heritage landscape. Look out for marshland and meadowland plants such as marsh cranesbill, alpine bistort and matgrass. The large ditch Viikinoja flows through the meadows and enters the sea here. Many stretches of this 7-km watercourse have been restored to make it more attractive to migratory fish. There is a birdwatching tower on the southern edge of the meadows, and a viewing platform overlooking the area from the east.



Spring vetch

6.13 A hazel grove at Viikki

Dozens of hazel shrubs grow in this small (0.9 ha) protected area, as well as small-leaved lime trees and woodland plants including spring vetch and ostrich fern.





6.14 Badger Wood

This attractive area of five hectares of protected mixed woodland lies between Viikki's open fields and meadows. Finland's most common tree species, pine, spruce, birch and aspen all grow here, and there are many dead standing trees where insects can thrive. Nesting bird species include wood warblers and stock doves. Badgers also live here, as the wood's name suggests. Good paths make it easy to explore the wood.



6.15 Bäck's Meadow

This small patch of protected meadowland habitat by Bäck's Croft probably formed due to years of grazing. Look out for meadowland plants like moonwort, mountain everlasting and maiden pink. To the east lies an old croft yard now taken over by trees. Birch trees have grown in the southwestern part of the meadow. A wide path runs through the meadow.



This rocky outcrop in Mölylä Wood offers fine views over Vanhankaupunginlahti Bay.

6.16 Mölylä Wood

Mature spruce trees predominate in the northern and central parts of this protected area of natural woodland, while deciduous trees are more dominant near the shore, and alder stands thrive in the lush, moist southernmost part of the wood. The oldest areas have plenty of decaying wood, and are valuable for their diverse populations of bats and polypore fungi. In late spring listen for the songs of red-breasted flycatchers. The shrill calls of black woodpeckers may be heard all year round. A 13-hectare area of woodland has been protected in 2016. Several small paths run through the wood.

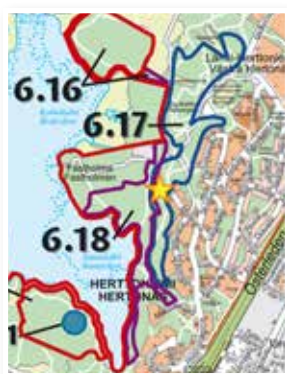




Female chaffinch

6.17 Rocky crags at Länsi-Herttoniemi

These scenic crags offer fine views over the waters of Vanhankaupunginlahti Bay. Birdwatchers often come here to scan the skies for migrating birds. Even in winter many birds can be seen here, including various owl species. The crags can be reached from several directions, including a path from the end of Majavatie.



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6.18 Fastholma and woodlands east of Saunalahti Bay

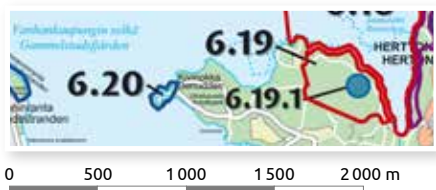
Alder trees and lush undergrowth dominate the moist woodlands at Fastholma. Woodland birds including wood warblers and lesser spotted woodpeckers nest here, and hawfinches may be spotted. Frogs and bats also thrive in Fastholma.

The woodlands east of Saunalahti Bay are also dominated by alder trees near the shore. They are home to many birds, including breeding thrush nightingales and blackcaps. The undergrowth is dense, with many shrubs and plenty of decaying wood where insects can thrive. A good path for walkers and cyclists passes through the area, and smaller paths also run through Fastholma.



6.19 Old-growth forest at Kivinokka

Some of the most ecologically valuable woodland habitats in this part of Helsinki can be found on the peninsula of Kivinokka. This 12,5-hectare nature reserve consists of spruce dominated old-growth forest, which is also home to many birds, bats, and a wide range of fungi including rare polypores. Nesting bird species include crested tits, treecreepers





and black woodpeckers. Good paths near the shore lead around the area. A platform suitable for viewing the bay's rich birdlife has been built near the northern shore. A special trail just over 300 metres long, and suitable for disabled visitors, runs through the forest.

6.19.1 Potholes

Two Ice Age potholes, 1.7 metres and 0.7 metres in diameter, can be seen by the main path through the old-growth forest of Kivinokka.



6.20 Kivinokka Point

The rocky shore on the northernmost tip of Kivinokka peninsula offer fine views over the bay. A good path leads to the point.

6.21 An old pine tree in Herttoniemi

This old pine, whose trunk is more than three metres in circumference, has been protected since 1958. It stands by the shore of Kipparlahti bay in a fenced off area belonging to a boat club, but can easily be viewed from a nearby footpath.



0 250 500 m





Goldeneye duckling

6.22 Woodlands in Herttoniemi Manor Park

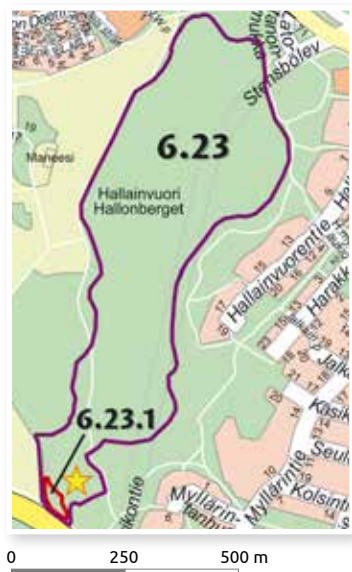
Parts of the parkland belonging to Herttoniemi Manor consist of fairly natural lush, herb-rich woodland habitat. Tree species include maple, white birch, roan, alder, bird cherry and planted lime trees. The shrub layer features species earlier cultivated here, as well as guilder-rose and currant bushes. Woodland plants visible in the undergrowth include Suffolk lungwort, greater stitchwort and red campion. Bats and many bird species, notably jackdaws and icterine warblers, thrive in the park. Goldeneye ducks and other water birds breed by the park's small but attractive ponds. Many pleasant paths lead through the park.





6.23 Hallainvuori Hill

This protected rocky forest-clad hill is about 20 hectares in extent, and forms an ecologically important part of one of Helsinki's "green fingers". Lovely views over the fields of Viikki can be enjoyed from the crags in the southwest of the area. Pine trees generally dominate, including many grand old specimens with thick bark, but spruce and some deciduous trees also grow here, and there are two lime groves in the south. In some small marshy areas Labrador tea, cotton grass and buckthorn can be found. Watch out for coniferous forest birds such as





goldcrests and coal tits. Many polypore fungi grow here, especially species that thrive on decaying pine wood, but the very rare spruce-dependent polypore *Antrodiella parasitica* has also been observed. A path in the southern part of the forest passes a stony raised beach, which formed about 8,000-9,000 years ago when the Baltic Sea was a huge freshwater lake. Several large erratic boulders can also be encountered around the forest, which can be explored along the main cycle path or smaller paths.



6.23.1 A hazel grove near Viikintie

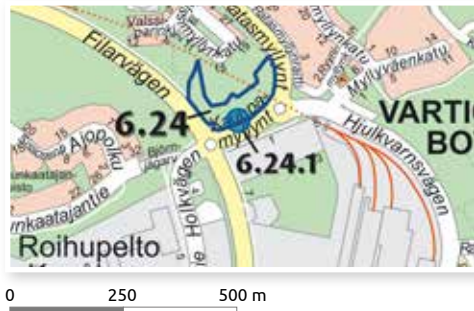
About 50 largish hazel shrubs, more than two metres tall, grow in this small protected grove. Spruce trees, mountain currant bushes and woodland flowers including hepatica also thrive here. A cycle path runs along the southern edge of the grove.

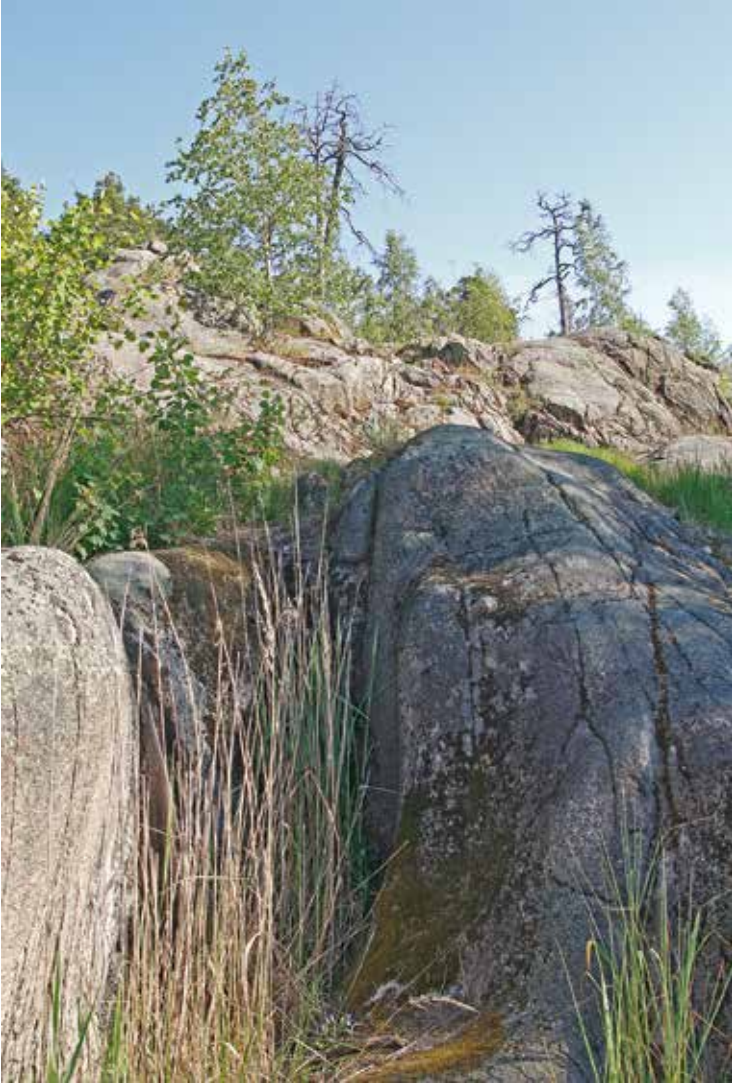
Lingonberry



6.24 A rocky hillside by Kauppamylyntie

This scenic rocky slope is largely open, but a few pine trees and plants including lingonberry, sticky catchfly and angular Solomon's seal grow here and there. Look out for crested tits in the trees. The hillside can be accessed by paths from the north.





6.24.1 Potholes

About ten small examples of the early phases of pothole formations can be seen in the southern part of the rocky hillside about 20 metres from Kauppamyllyntie. The largest of these early-stage potholes is about 1.5 metres wide.




6.25 Two potholes in Roihuvuori

These two smallish potholes, formed by stones spinning in meltwater rivers towards the end of the Ice Age, have been protected since 1960. They are 25 cm and 45 cm in diameter, and lie behind a metal frame and chain. A path leads up to the potholes from a nearby cycle path.



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Northern Helsinki

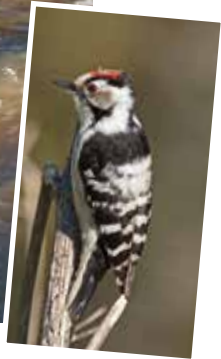
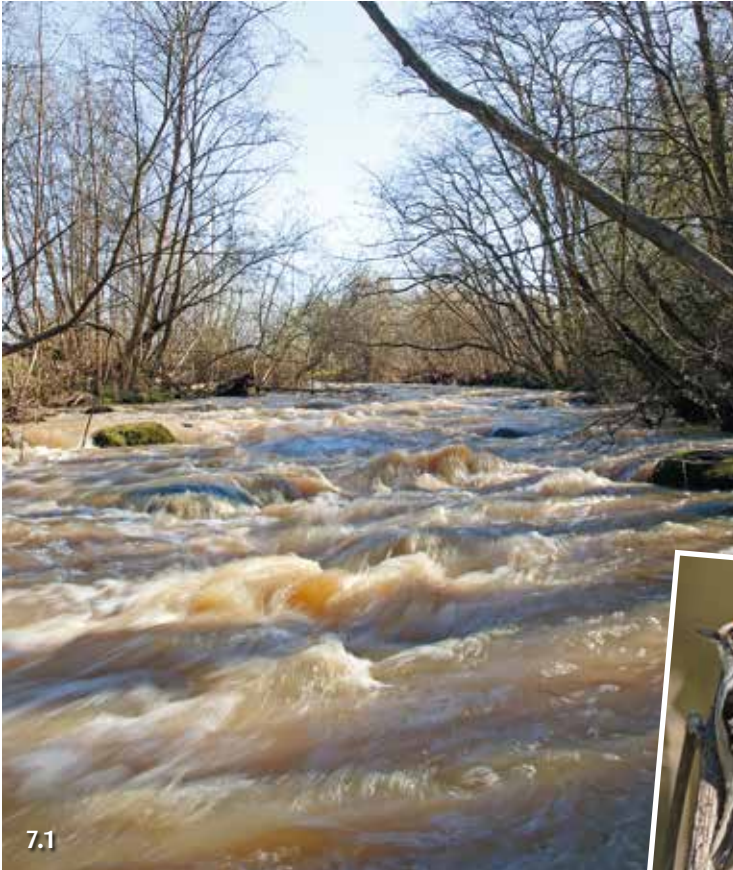
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- 7.1 Kirkonkylänkoski Rapids**
 - 7.2 An erratic boulder near Ripetie**
 - 7.3 Longinoja Brook**
 - 7.4 Potholes
by Rapakiventie**
 - 7.5 Vuolukivenpuisto Pond**
 - 7.6 An old maple tree in Pihlajisto**
 - 7.7 Craggs by Pihlajamäentie**
 - 7.8 Malmi Cemetery**



7.1 Kirkonkylänkoski Rapids

These rapids on the River Keravajoki, on the boundary between Northern Helsinki and Vantaa, are lined by lush woodland and have several small islets. Maple and bird cherry trees grow here, with large bitter-cress, common meadow-rue and guelder rose in the undergrowth. Lesser spotted woodpeckers thrive here, while the rapids are visited by common sandpipers in the summer and dippers in the winter. A path runs south of the rapids, which can also be viewed near the mill on the northern bank.





Lesser spotted woodpecker

7.2 An erratic boulder near Ripetie

This three-metre-high granitic gneiss boulder lies in a small patch of woodland between the roads Tapanilankaari and Ripetie.



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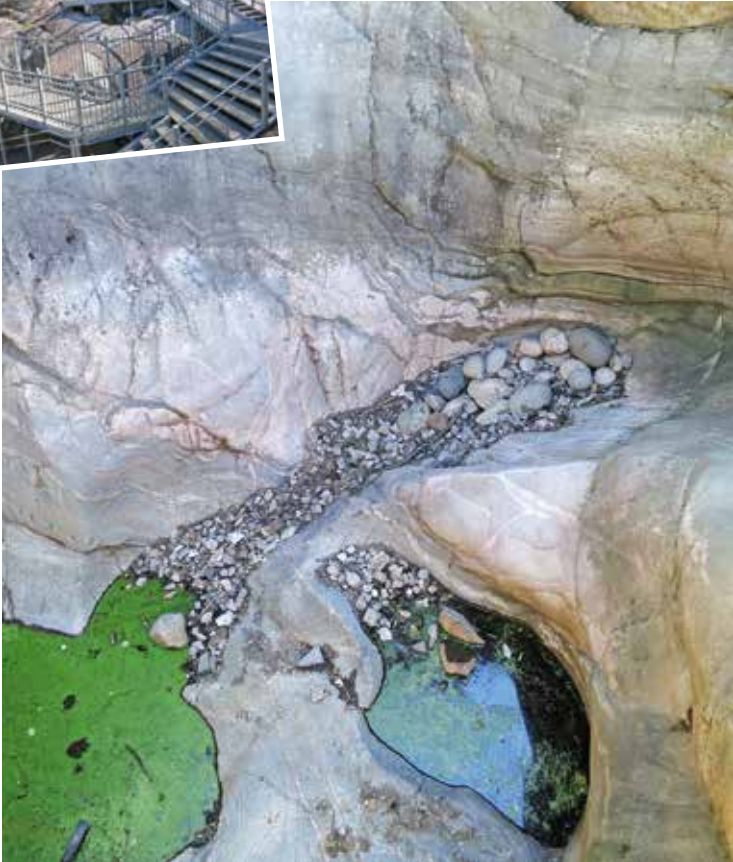
Brown trout



7.3 Longinoja Brook

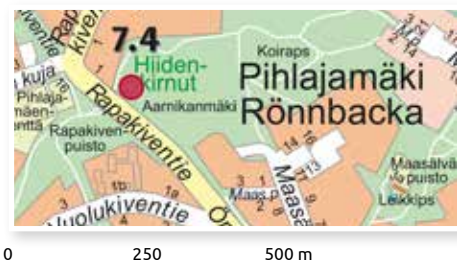
At 15 km in length Longinoja is one of Helsinki's longest streams, though many stretches have been channelled through artificial banks and underground culverts. Varied natural habitats can still be found along its banks, including pleasant areas east and west of Latokartanontie in Ala-Malmi. Reintroduced stocks of brown trout thrive in the brook, largely thanks to the restoration of natural stream channels and gravel beds. More than a dozen fish species can be found here. Nearby open areas like the fields at Fallkulla and Malmi Airfield are rich in birdlife. The brook can be easily explored along well maintained footpaths. There is also a nature trail that is 2 kilometres long.





7.4 Potholes by Rapakiventie

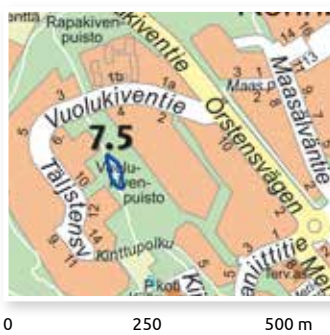
These two potholes in Pihlajamäki have been protected as a natural monument since 1995. The larger of these potholes is 6.9 metres wide and 8.5 metres deep, while the smaller feature is just 1.6 metres in diameter. These potholes were formed in meltwater rivers at the end of the second most recent glaciation phase, which adds to their scientific interest. They were only discovered as recently as 1993–94 during local roadworks.





7.5 Vuolukivenpuisto Pond

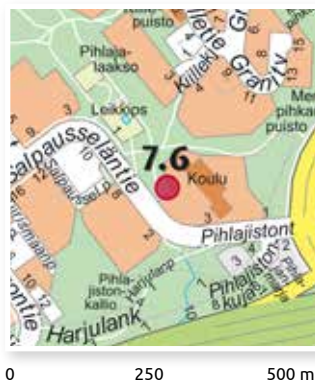
This attractive small pond in Pihlajamäki lies by a footpath leading through a small patch of woodland in the middle of a densely populated housing estate. Rocky slopes on the far side of the path add to the scene. mallard ducks often swim on the pond, and in summer large hawk dragonflies may be seen feeding over its waters.





7.6 An old maple tree in Pihlajisto

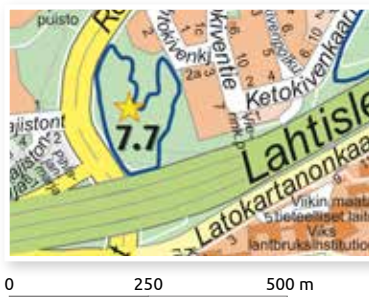
Located near Pihlajisto Primary School, this tree was chosen as Helsinki's most beautiful maple tree in the year 2000, when the city celebrated its 450th anniversary. Unfortunately it was badly damaged by a storm in the summer of 2017, and many trunk sections and boughs had to be removed for safety reasons.



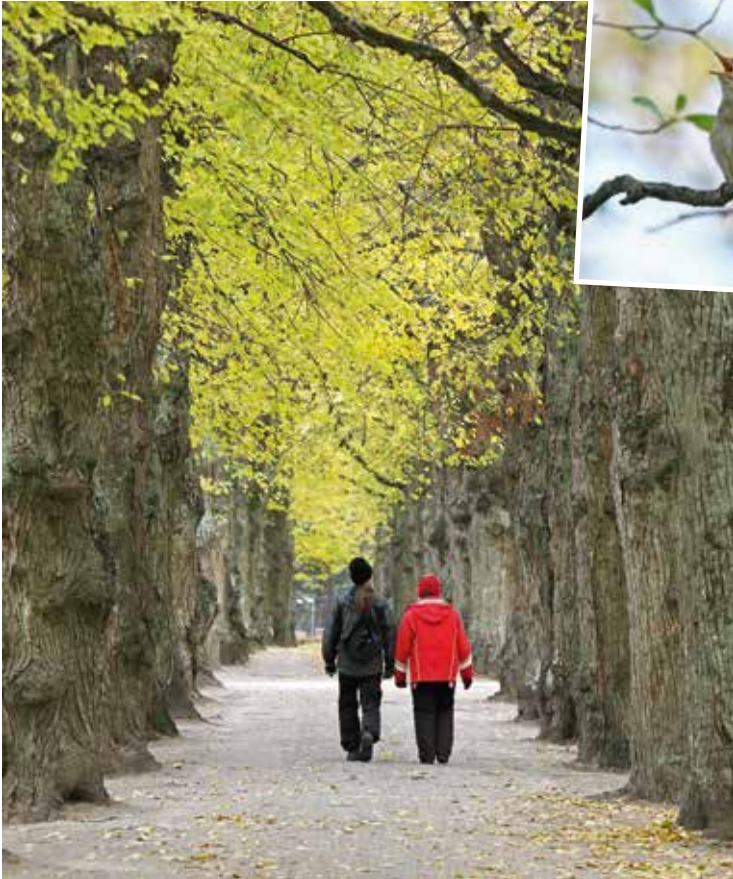


7.7 Crags by Pihlajamäentie

This scenic rocky area beside the Lahti Motorway offers views over the fields of Viikki and the waters of Vanhankaupunginlahti Bay. The stepped profile of the craggy slopes is a result of the quarrying of building stone. Many hardy rowan trees manage to grow in the rocky ground. The area is best accessed from Johtokivenkuja.



Thrush nightingale



7.8 Malmi Cemetery

The parkland in this large cemetery features many grand old trees, several stately avenues, and a few patches of denser woodland. Due to the rich diversity of trees many woodland birds thrive here, including woodpeckers, tits, flycatchers, thrush nightingales and linnets. In autumn the cemetery is often invaded by nutcrackers originating from Siberia, who come here to feed on the seeds of stone pine trees.



Laajasalo and Vartiosaari

- 
- 8.1 An old oak tree in Tullisaari**
 - 8.2 A forked lime tree in Tullisaari**
 - 8.3 An old lime tree in Tullisaari**
 - 8.4 A knobbly pine tree in Tullisaari**
 - 8.5 Kruunuvuorenlampi Pond and its marshy shores**
 - 8.6 A lime grove in Kruunuvuori**
 - 8.7 Old mine and woodlands in Stansvik**
 - 8.8 Tahvonlahdenharju Esker**
 - 8.9 An enchanted pine tree in Yliskylä**
 - 8.10 An old pine tree in Laajasalo**
 - 8.11 Laajasalo Beach**
 - 8.12 A silver poplar tree in Laajasalo**
 - 8.13 An erratic boulder on Vartiosaari Island**
 - 8.14 Woolly butterbur plants on Vartiosaari Island**
 - 8.15 A pothole at Rahkoniemi**
 - 8.16 Alder woods at Rahkoniemi**
 - 8.17 Rocky slopes on Vartiosaari Island**
 - 8.18 Jollas Mire**
 - 8.19 Itäniitynlaakso**
 - 8.20 Two potholes on Karoliininvuori Hill**
 - 8.21 Tonttuvatso (Elf Hill)**

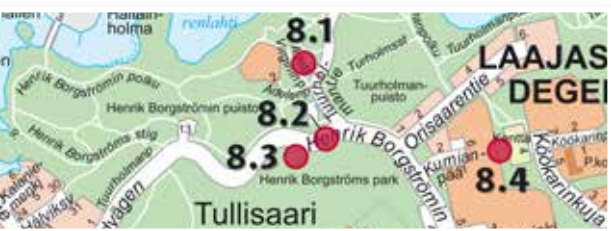


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8.1



0 250 500 m



8.2

8.1 An old oak tree in Tullisaari

This ageing oak, located by cycle paths and a grassy field near Tullisaari Manor, has been protected since 1956. Its trunk has a circumference of about four metres, and some of its larger boughs are so heavy that they sag right down to the ground.

8.2 A forked lime tree in Tullisaari

Also protected since 1956, this small-leaved lime tree by the road Henrik Borgströmin tie, where a side road turns off towards the manor house, has two twin trunks. The larger trunk is about 4.5 metres around, and grows to a height of about 25 metres.



8.3 An old lime tree in Tullisaari

This protected small-leaved lime tree grows in a pleasant, leafy grove just south of Henrik Borgströmin tie. Its trunk, approximately four metres in circumference, rises at a sharp angle from the sloping ground. Wood anemone and hepatica flowers carpet the grove in the springtime.



8.4 A knobby pine tree in Tullisaari

This old Scots pine tree has unusual knobby growths on its trunk, branches and roots. Such pines may be found across Southern and Central Finland, but they seldom grow over ten metres tall, while this specimen is more than 20 metres in height, and its trunk is 2.3 metres in circumference. Protected as a natural monument since 1956, this unusual tree grows in a small wood surrounded by apartment blocks.

8.5 Kruunuvuorenlampi Pond and its marshy shores

This natural marsh-fringed pond provides wildlife habitats that are rare in Helsinki. Some of its boggy shores are open, while pines and spruces also grow in some of its marshy margins. Aquatic plants seldom seen in Helsinki such as dwarf white water lilies thrive here. Marshland plants including bogbean, cloudberry and common sundew also grow in damp spots around the pond,



Common sundew



Common toad

while intermediate wintergreen grows in the surrounding woodland. The pond attracts many breeding frogs and toads in spring. Look out for woodland birds including common crossbills and coal tits. The paths leading through this two-hectare nature reserve are often wet and muddy.

8.6 A lime grove in Kruunuvuori

More than twenty small-leaved lime trees grow in this small protected grove in two main stands. Woodland plants including mezereon, solid-tubered corydalis and May lily also grow here in the stony ground.

Solid-tubered corydalis





Wren



8.7 Old mine and woodlands in Stansvik

This 5.5-hectare nature reserve includes the remains of an iron ore mine that operated between 1766 and 1839, as well as lush woodlands known for their highly diverse flora. In sites that have calcium-rich soils due to the nature of the bedrock, plants such as maidenhair spleenwort, Scandinavian cotoneaster and mouse-ear hawkweed thrive. In herb-rich growth sites peach-leaved bellflowers and baneberry plants grow, while blackcaps, chiffchaffs and cuckoos may be seen or heard. Paths run through the area, with steps in steep places. The old mineshafts, today full of water, are fenced off to protect visitors.





Bat

8.8 Tahvonlahdenharju Esker

Tahvonlahdenniemi Peninsula consists of a well-preserved gravel esker formed by a meltwater river at the end of the Ice Age. Grand old pine trees grow along the esker, which is protected in a 3.5-hectare nature reserve. Leafy woodlands with small-leaved limes and other deciduous trees grow on the eastern side of the peninsula, where a narrow sandy beach lines the shore.

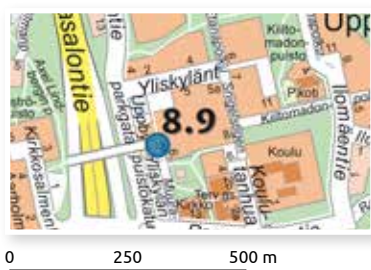
The western side of the esker has shore meadows, sandy beaches and shingle deposits. Plants growing here include chives, common meadow rue and seaside centauray. The whole area provides valuable habitat for bats, with its varied shores, old buildings, gardens and meadows, and marshy hollows.





8.9 An enchanted pine tree in Yliskylä

This name given by local people to this grand old Scots pine, which grows by Yliskylän Puistokatu, suggests that it is haunted by elves or gnomes.



8.10 An old pine tree in Laajasalo

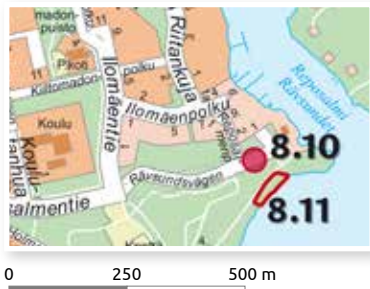
This large Scots pine standing by Reposalmentie has been protected since 1956. Its trunk is well over 3.5 metres round at the base, but branches into two trunks higher up. This is one of the largest pine trees in the Helsinki area.



Japanese rose

8.11 Laajasalo Beach

This small stretch of sandy shore, which lies near a bathing beach and a good footpath, hosts plants including lyme grass, sheep's sorrel and tall fescue.





8.12 A silver poplar tree in Laajasalo

Protected as a natural monument since 1956, this old silver poplar tree has a broad trunk more than 4.5 metres round. It grows in Laajasalo Sports Park by Holmanmoisionpolku. Most of Finland's silver poplars grow in parks.



0 250 500 m



8.13 An erratic boulder on Vartiosaari Island

One of the largest erratic boulders left by the receding ice sheet in the Helsinki area during the Ice Age, 4.5 metres high, lies by a path near the southern shore of Vartiosaari Island. It is made of rapakivi granite. Small rowan trees grow on top of the rock.





8.14 Woolly butterbur plants on Vartiosaari Island

The woolly butterbur is classed as critically endangered in Finland. Its only known growth site here is this sandy shore meadow on the island of Vartiosaari, protected in a small nature reserve which is bordered to the north by a path lined with white willows, and to the east by a road to a small pier.

8.15 A pothole at Rahkoniemi

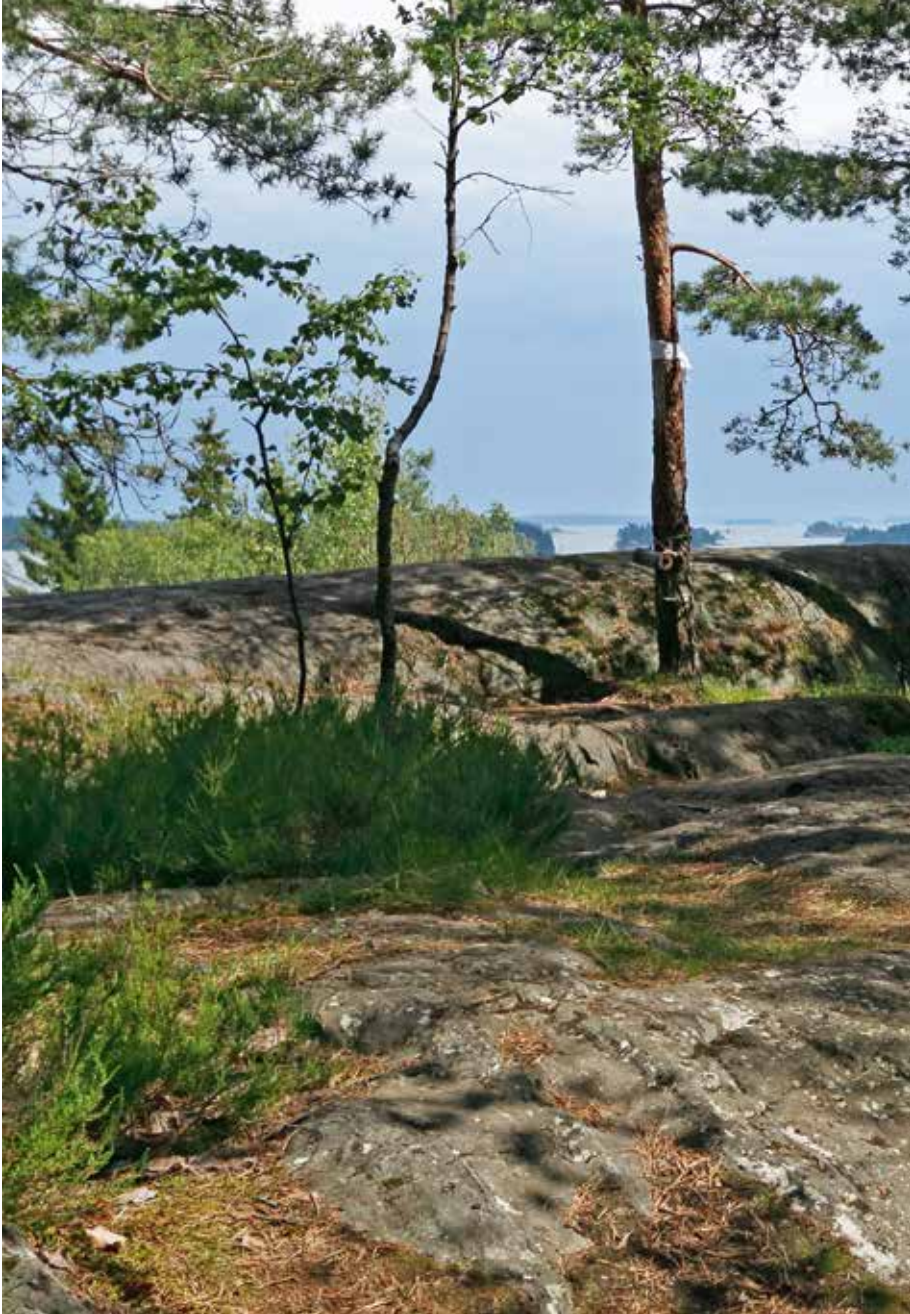
This Ice Age pothole is about 1.5 metres wide and deep. It lies near a good path and is fenced off to protect visitors.

8.16 Alder woods at Rahkoniemi

This area of moist woodland has many common alder trees, as well as lush undergrowth featuring meadowsweet and many fern species, including large ostrich ferns and smaller lady ferns. Yellow anemones, rare elsewhere in Helsinki, also thrive here. Like many parts of Vartiosaari Island this is also a good place to spot bats.



8.15



8.17 Rocky slopes on Vartiosaari Island

The highest parts of these rocky slopes offer fine views out to sea. A tall stone cairn at the hilltop earlier served as a sea mark. Polypore fungi grow on many trees in this part of the island.





8.18 Jollas Mire

This pine mire is protected in a 4-hectare nature reserve. Pines grow in the central parts of the mire, while spruces dominate its fringes. The mire was artificially drained about 50 years ago to improve the growth of its trees, but more recently measures such as the damming of ditches have been realised in an attempt to restore its natural marshy conditions. Marshland plants like Labrador tea and wood horsetail thrive here. Visitors are asked to keep to the duckboard trails and marked paths leading through the mire.

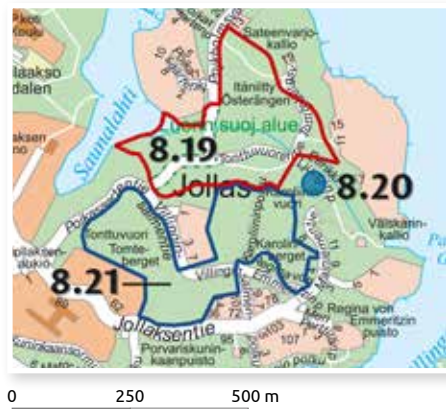




Solomon's seal

8.19 Itäniitynlaakso

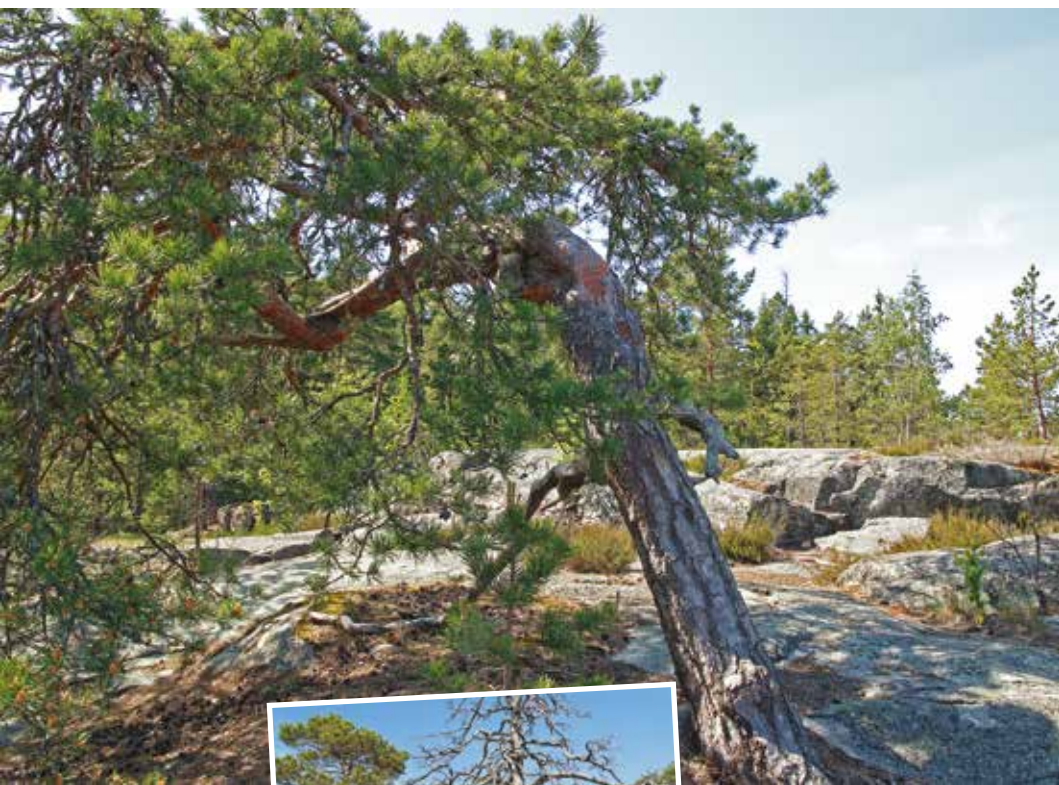
This pleasant area of woodland has been protected in a 7-hectare nature reserve since 2009. Many areas are rich in herbs and broadleaved trees. Plants rare in Helsinki such as twayblade, wood vetch and baneberry can be found here. The central part of the reserve used to be a meadow, but it has been taken over by herb-rich woodland. This area has Helsinki's most extensive occurrence of Solomon's seal. The reserve's bird life includes lesser spotted woodpeckers, greenish warblers and woodcocks. Bats also thrive here. A notice board describing the reserve stands near Poikasaartentie. Visitors can explore the woods using several paths, which run along duckboards in marshy spots.





8.20 Two potholes on Karoliinivuori Hill

This unusual double pothole can be seen beside a path leading up Karoliinivuori Hill. The larger of these potholes is about a metre wide and two metres deep.

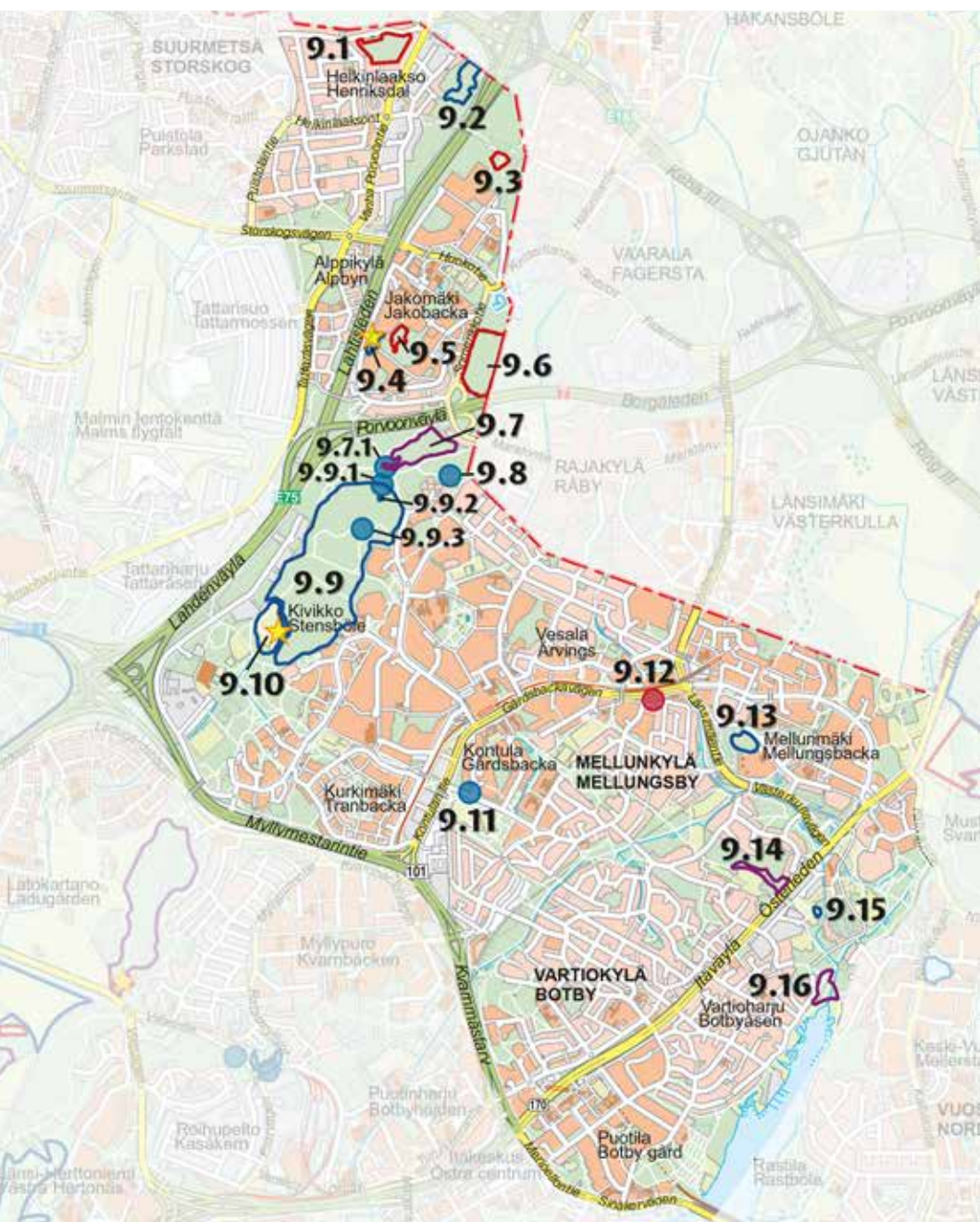


8.21 Tonttuvatvuori (Elf Hill)

This attractive rocky hill around in the district of Jollas can be easily explored from nearby roads including Villinginsalmentie. The forest is dominated by pines, and is home to birds including black woodpeckers and crested tits.

Heikinlaakso and Vartioharju

- 
- 9.1 Roosinmäki Hill**
 - 9.2 A rocky hill at Heikinlaakso**
 - 9.3 A hazel grove in Jakomäki**
 - 9.4 Jakomäki Hill**
 - 9.5 An ancient raised beach in Jakomäki**
 - 9.6 A raised bog at Slättmossen**
 - 9.7 Rocky outcrops at Kivikko**
 - 9.7.1 Ice Age potholes
 - 9.8 Potholes at Kivikko**
 - 9.9 Kivikko Forest**
 - 9.9.1 A granite boulder
 - 9.9.2 A stony raised beach
 - 9.9.3 An erratic rapakivi boulder
 - 9.10 A man-made hill at Kivikko**
 - 9.11 An erratic boulder beside Porttikuja**
 - 9.12 An old pine tree in Vesala**
 - 9.13 Naulakallio Cliffs**
 - 9.14 Uussillanpuisto Meadow**
 - 9.15 Linnavuorenpuisto Meadow**
 - 9.16 Varjakanpuisto woodlands**



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Buckthorn

9.1 Roosinmäki Hill

This 4.5-hectare nature reserve lies near the boundary of Helsinki and Vantaa. The bedrock here consists of gneiss rich in quartz and feldspar, with narrow layers of limestone and some granitic formations in the south. The forest is dominated by Scots pines. The mineral-rich soil enables rare flowers like field gentian, spring vetch and fly honeysuckle to thrive here. The reserve also has many old trees, so fungi that feed on decaying wood are also common. An ancient raised beach can be seen near Kalkkivuorentie. These rocks and stones were deposited here after the Ice Age when this was the shore of a vast meltwater lake. In the northeastern corner of the reserve there is a large boulder made of rapakivi granite, bearing signs of extensive weathering. Paths run through the reserve.





9.2 A rocky hill at Heikinlaakso

The highest parts of this rocky area are open, but trees grow on the hill's lower slopes, which are strewn with stony raised beach deposits that make it hard to walk in some areas. The hilltop lies 63 metres above sea level, which makes it Helsinki's second highest natural hilltop, though trees largely obscure the views. Paths enable visitors to explore the area.





9.3 A hazel grove in Jakomäki

One of Helsinki's finest hazel groves can be found here in the suburb of Jakomäki in a small nature reserve. The grove has about 100 hazel shrubs, most of which are over two metres tall, as well as many stately old spruce trees. Oaks, rowans and bird cherry trees also grow in the grove, as well as woodland plants like lily of the valley and wood sorrel. Most of the hazels can be seen in the area where the gravel roads running through the grove meet.

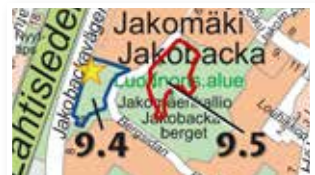


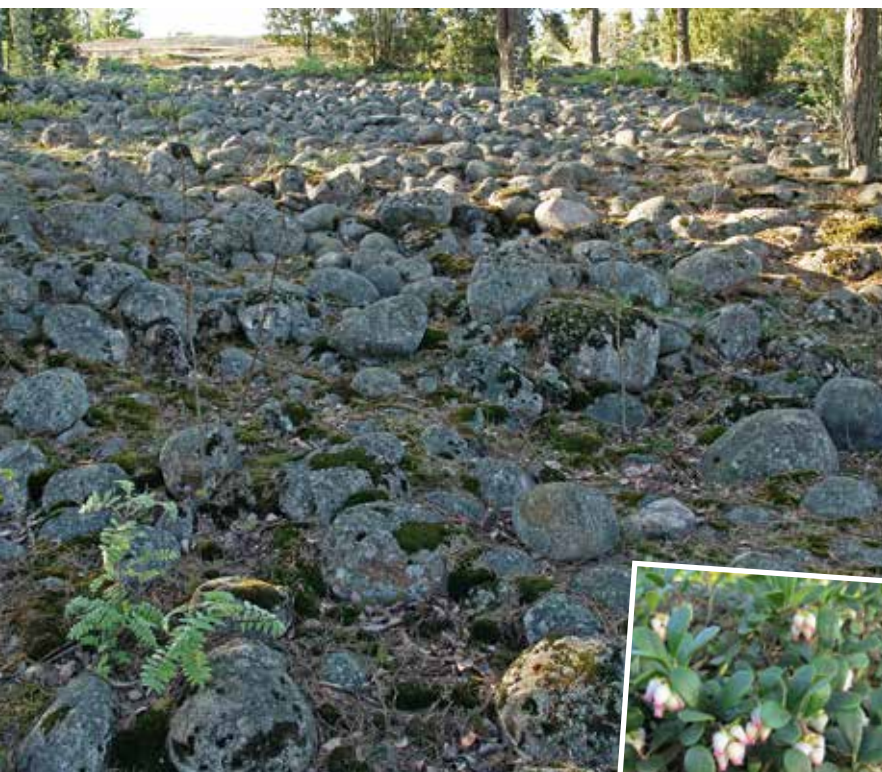


Goldenrod

9.4 Jakomäki Hill

The western side of Jakomäki Hill offers fine views over Helsinki's suburbs and the surrounding forests. In late summer many goldenrods bloom here. It is easy to climb up the hill from the nearby cycle path.





Bearberry

9.5 An ancient raised beach in Jakomäki

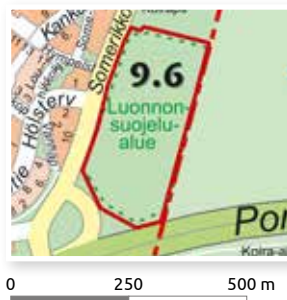
This raised beach is the highest and most important such feature in Helsinki. It dates back to the post-glacial period, about 10,000 years ago when this was the coastline of early phases of the Baltic Sea known as the Yoldia Sea and the Anclyus Lake. These extensive piles of stones are known as “devil’s fields” in Finnish. Hardy plants including bearberries may be seen growing among the rounded stones. A cycle path runs beside this small nature reserve. The hilltop just south of the reserve is the third highest natural hilltop in Helsinki, at 62 metres above sea level.



Common lizard

9.6 A raised bog at Slättmossen

This raised bog is the only feature of its kind in Helsinki. The central parts of raised bogs are higher than their edges, so they are only fed by rainwater. On higher ridges and hummocks within the bog plants such as heather, crowberry and stunted pine trees grow on top of the sphagnum moss that forms the bog. On the edges of pools and damp hollows cottongrass and bog rosemary grow. Many butterflies, moths and other insects also thrive here. In the summer look out for lizards taking the sun on the duckboard trails that cross the bog. A 7.5-hectare reserve has been created to protect the parts of the bog that lie in Helsinki, though it also continues over the city boundary into Vantaa. Visitors are asked to keep to the trails.



Willow tit



9.7 Rocky outcrops at Kivikko

This rocky recreational area includes the highest natural hilltop in Helsinki, just over 63 metres above sea level. Fortifications were built here long ago as part of a chain of defensive sites set up around Helsinki. Many types of polypore fungi grown here, as well as plants including moonwort and lady's bedstraw. The rocky hilltop was washed by the waves of the ancient post-glacial Yoldia Sea about 10,000 years ago.



0 250 500 m

9.7.1 Ice Age potholes

Towards the end of the Ice Age several potholes were formed here by stones swirling around in meltwater rivers. Soil has subsequently filled in the two larger potholes, which are more than two metres in diameter.





9.8 Potholes at Kivikko

Two shallow fluvioglacial potholes, and each about a metre in diameter, can be seen here by the cycle path.



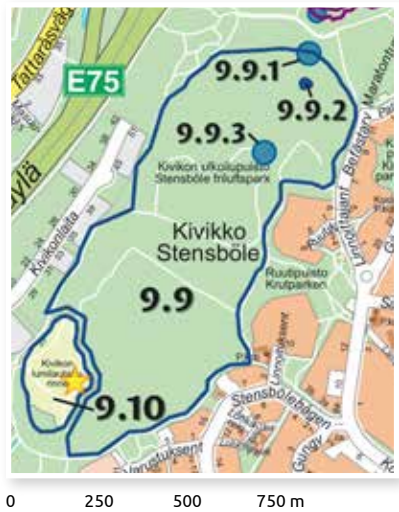
Chiffchaff

9.9 Kivikko Forest

This extensive area of coniferous forest is well used by local people for recreational activities. Pine trees dominate where the ground is rocky, but the area also has several marshier hollows. Most of the trees are old, so birds typical of old-growth forest such as willow tits may be seen here, while polypore fungi also thrive, including some very rare species. The undergrowth features plants like heather, common cow-wheat and lingonberry. Several cycle paths and smaller footpaths criss-cross the area.

9.9.1 A granite boulder

This four-metre-high erratic boulder was dumped here at the end of the Ice Age by an ancient shoreline.





9.9.2 A stony raised beach

This fine example of a stone-strewn raised beach dates back to post-glacial times when an ancient shoreline lay here.



9.9.3 An erratic rapakivi boulder

This impressive and unusual boulder lies beside a cycle path in the middle of Kivikko Forest. The western side of this three-metre-high boulder has been extensively weathered. The rock type indicates that this boulder was transported here by ice from the east towards the end of the Ice Age.

Wheatear



9.10 A man-made hill at Kivikko

A wooden platform has been built for birdwatchers at the top of this artificial hill, which is made of landfill material. Unobstructed views in many directions particularly make this a good place to watch migrating birds including birds of prey, geese and doves. Many wheatears breed in the extensive open recreational areas around the hill. South of the birdwatching platform, by a cycle path, four small Ice Age potholes can be seen, the largest of which is nearly a metre wide.



9.11 An erratic boulder beside Porttikuja

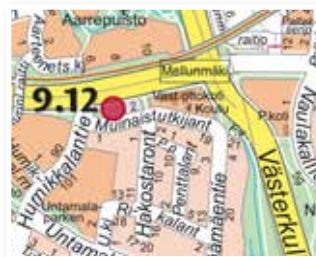
This rapakivi granite boulder is about four metres high. A metal plate set into the boulder conceals a document used to establish the residential district of Kontula. The boulder can easily be viewed from the road Porttikuja.





9.12 An old pine tree in Vesala

This Scots pine, protected as a natural monument since 2000, is thought to be about 250 years old. It lies in a small patch of woodland easily accessible from a nearby footpath.

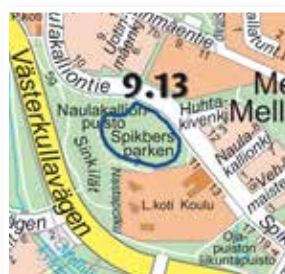




Common polypody fern

9.13 Naulakallio Cliffs

Large fragments of rock have broken off these impressive cliffs, forming small cave-like rocky clefts to explore. Common polypody ferns can be seen in many places. The cliffs can easily be reached from nearby paths and cycle paths.





9.14 Uussillanpuisto Meadow

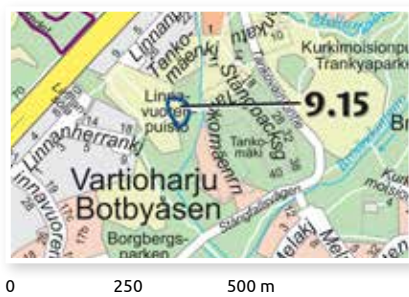
This attractive, largely open meadow, 1.5 hectares in extent, lies alongside the lane Varjakantaival. The area is protected for its rich flora, which includes many meadowland plants like maiden pink. These flowers attract many insects such as beetles, butterflies and even hawk moths. A stony raised beach, formed by the shores of an ancient sea several thousand years ago, can be seen on the sloping ground in the forest just north of the meadow.





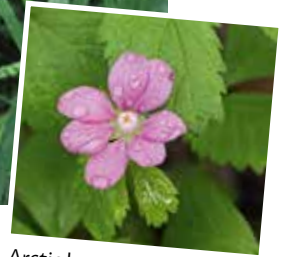
9.15 Linnavuorenpuisto Meadow

This flowery meadow probably formed in an open pasture earlier grazed by livestock. The meadowland soil is drier in higher areas, but moist in lower-lying parts of the meadow. Look out for plants including lady's bedstraw, clustered bellflower, St. John's wort, field scabious and zigzag clover. Paths lead through the meadow.





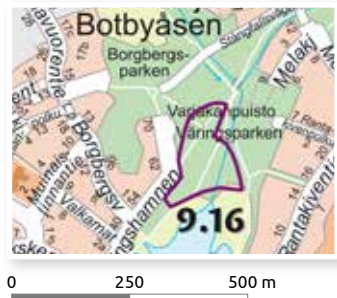
Yellow iris



Arctic bramble

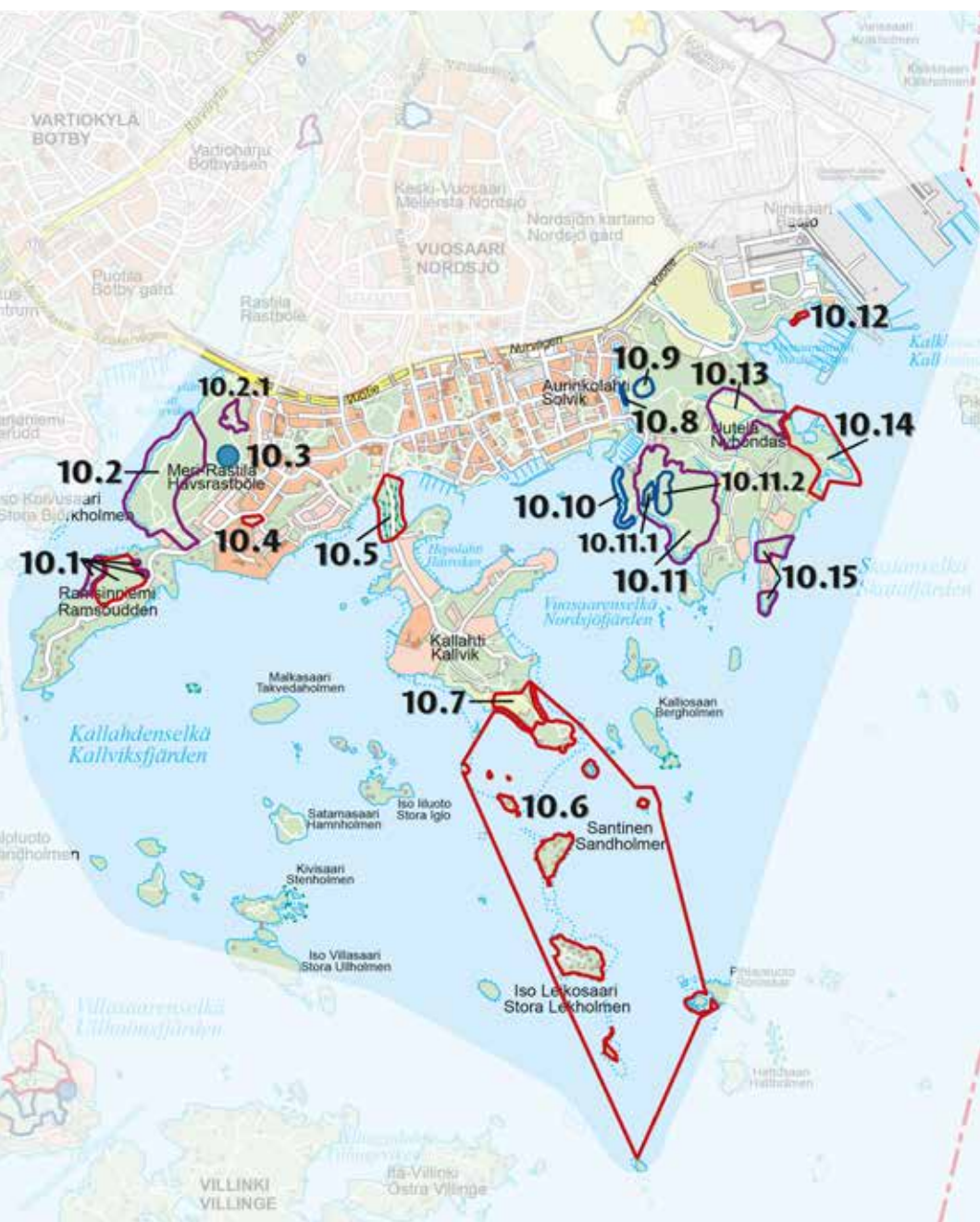
9.16 Varjakanpuisto woodlands

This smallish nature reserve consists of a swampy alder grove with lush, grassy undergrowth. Many noteworthy plants grow here, including sedges, arctic bramble, touch-me-not balsam, large bittercress, and many beautiful yellow iris flowers. Woodland birds including thrush nightingales also abound, while bats may be seen feeding here or over nearby Vartiokylänlahti Bay. A cycle path passes through the reserve.



Southern Vuosaari

- 
- 10.1 Ramsinniemi woodlands**
 - 10.2 Meri-Rastila Forest**
 - 10.2.1 A raised beach in Meri-Rastila
 - 10.3 An erratic boulder in Meri-Rastila**
 - 10.4 Rastila Bog**
 - 10.5 Kallahdenharju Esker**
 - 10.6 Kallahti Shallows**
 - 10.7 Kallahti Meadows**
 - 10.8 Open bedrock by Uutela Canal**
 - 10.9 Uutela Bog**
 - 10.10 Rocky outcrops by the shore at Nuottaniemi**
 - 10.11 Uutela Forest**
 - 10.11.1 Woodland springs
 - 10.11.2 Bedrock outcrops
 - 10.12 Shore meadows by Vuosaarenlahti Bay**
 - 10.13 Rudträsk Swamp**
 - 10.14 Särkkäniemi Point**
 - 10.15 Skatanniemi Point**



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Baneberry



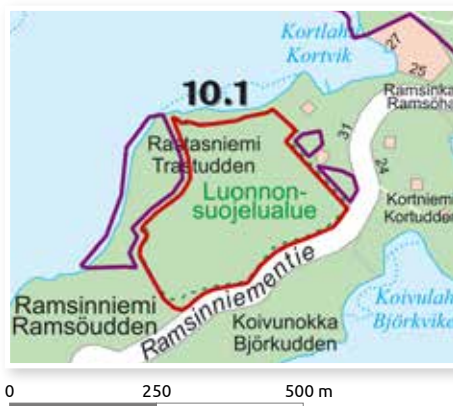
Ash



Ostrich fern

10.1 Ramsinniemi woodlands

This varied woodland nature reserve and adjoining areas designated for protection have a total area of nearly ten hectares. Shady spruce woods alternate with leafier woodland by the shore, while pines dominate in higher, rockier areas. Ostrich ferns thrive in many places. Other plants found here include hepatica, fly honeysuckle and spring vetch. Look out for woodland birds like greenish warblers, icterine warblers and grey-headed woodpeckers. The area also provides important habitat for bats and polypore fungi. A notice board describing the area asks visitors to keep to the marked paths and duckboard trails.





10.2 Meri-Rastila Forest

This 25-hectare reserve consists of a larger area of forest in the west, and a smaller area in the east with an interesting raised beach formation. Most parts of the forest are dominated by Norway spruce trees, though Scots pines predominate in drier and rockier places. The forest contains plenty of decaying wood, providing valuable habitat for rare polypore fungi. There are also a few patches of deciduous woodland, where lady ferns may be seen in the undergrowth, as well as a small treeless bog. Look and listen for birds including red-breasted flycatchers and wrens. Bats also thrive in the area. Several paths run through the forest, and the cooking shelter by the shore of Vartiokylänlahti Bay makes a good place for a picnic.



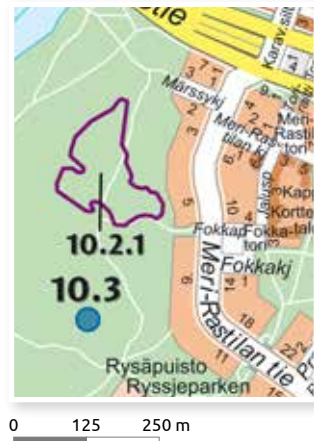


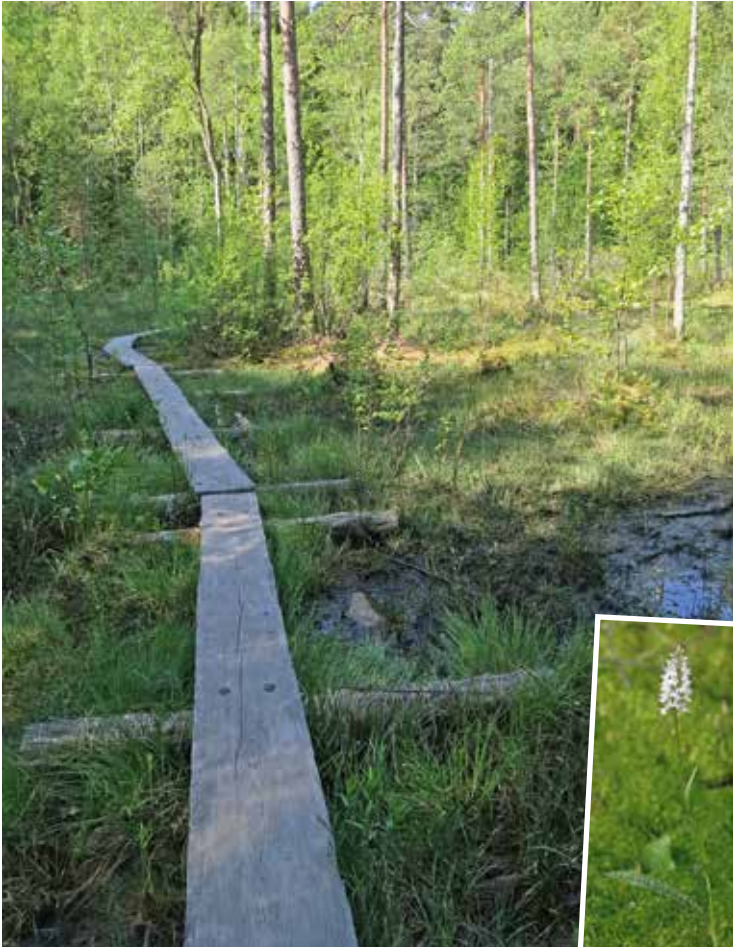
10.2.1 A raised beach in Meri-Rastila

This ancient stony shoreline, now located well above sea level, is perhaps the best example of a raised beach formation in Helsinki. These rounded stones and more rugged larger rocks were laid down several thousand years ago on the shore of the Litorina Sea. The best preserved part of the raised beach is about 60 metres long and 30 metres wide. A cycle path passes through the area.

10.3 An erratic boulder in Meri-Rastila

This 3.5-metre-high granite boulder, dumped here during the Ice Age, stands in the forest about 200 metres west of the bend in the road Meri-Rastilan tie.

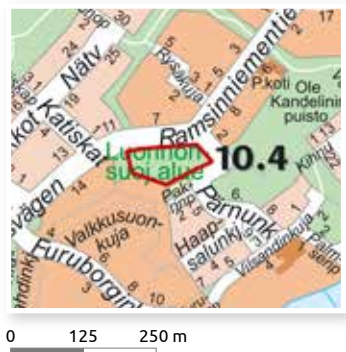




Heath spotted orchid

10.4 Rastila Bog

The central parts of this small bog, protected in a nature reserve, are treeless; but spruce trees grow on its marshy margins. Bog plants including cranberries, sundews, heath spotted orchid and bog orchid thrive here. Visitors are asked to stay on the reserve's marked paths and duckboard trails.





10.5 Kallahdenharju Esker

This short stretch of esker ridge was formed during the Ice Age about 13,000 years ago in a sub-glacial river as the continental ice sheet slowly melted. It is part of a longer intermittent chain of eskers traceable northwards as far as Hyvinkää. It is the only esker in Helsinki protected in Finland's national esker conservation programme. Grand old pines grow in the sandy soil of the ridge, while alders thrive by the shore. The whole of Kallahdenniemi Peninsula is an important area for bats. A notice board at the northern entrance to the reserve asks visitors to keep to the marked paths to protect sensitive soils and vegetation.



and many more species rest in these waters while on migration. An extensive Natura site has been designated to protect the most ecologically valuable parts of the peninsula Kallahdenniemi,



including these shallow waters as well as nearby shore meadows and the esker formation to the north. The Kallahti Shallows is nowadays a conservation area.

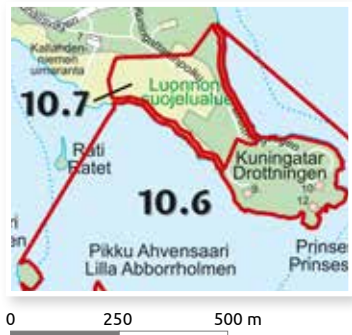




Common alder

10.7 Kallahti Meadows

These low-lying shore meadows have formed where ongoing land uplift is still gradually creating new areas of land. The ecological features of such meadows change constantly as they emerge from the sea, creating parallel zones with diverse vegetation. This five-hectare nature reserve includes habitats ranging from marshy shore meadows to moist woodlands. Junipers, bird's-foot trefoil and biting stonecrop grow in the meadows, which also attract many birds including waders and ducks. Whinchats and red-backed shrikes

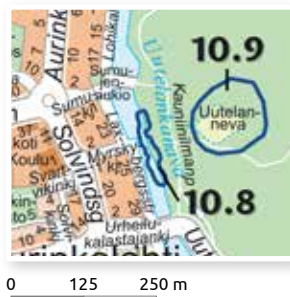




are among the birds breeding here. A signposted nature trail runs through the area. Visitors are asked to keep to the paths inside the reserve. To protect sensitive shore habitats bathing, swimming and campfires are also prohibited – though such activities can be enjoyed on the adjoining public beach.

10.8 Open bedrock by Uutela Canal

On the eastern side of Uutela Canal, just east of Aurinkolahti, an extensive area of exposed amphibolite bedrock can be seen, bearing scars eroded by the continental ice sheet during the last Ice Age.





Bog bilberry

10.9 Uutela Bog

This swampy treeless bog has evidently formed where vegetation has gradually filled in a pond. Some pines and spruces grow on the marshy margins of the open bog. Rare bog plants including lesser twayblade, bog orchid and lesser bladderwort can be found here, together with more common plants like common sundew, bogbean and bog bilberry. A cycle path passes just south of the bog, and other paths lie nearby, but visitors are urged not to try to walk onto the bog, as it is dangerously swampy, and its vegetation is sensitive to erosion.



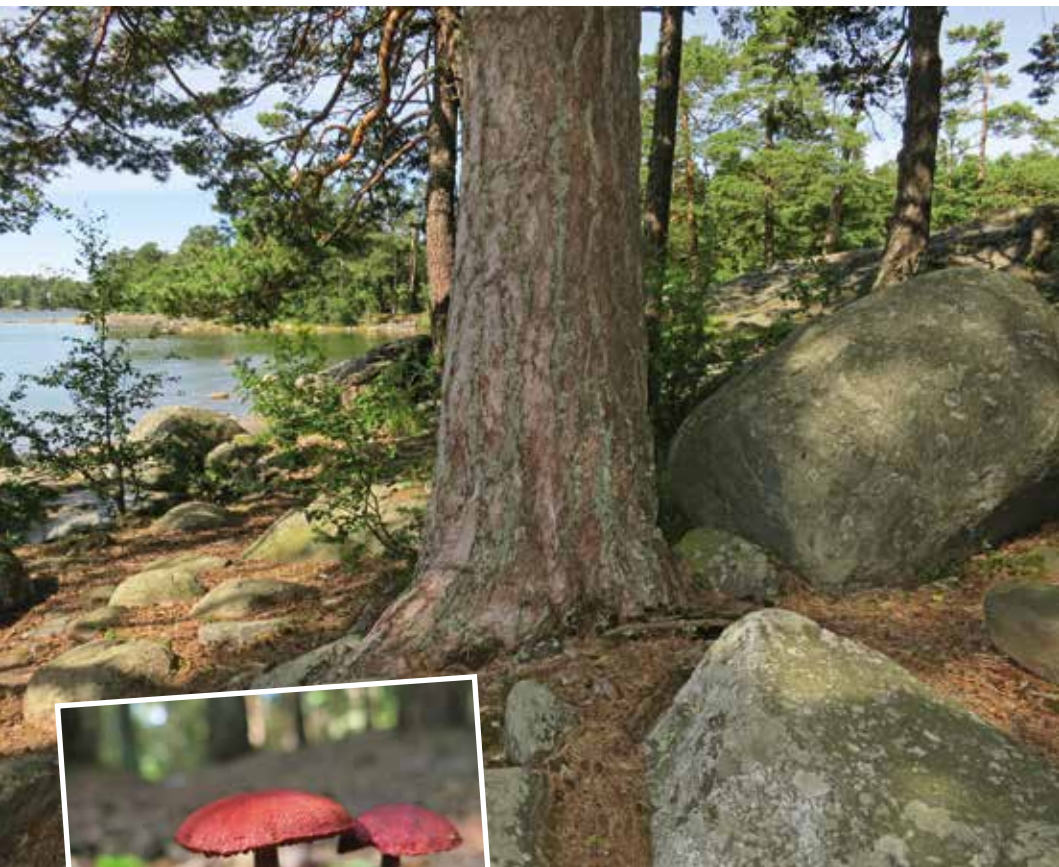
10.10 Rocky outcrops by the shore at Nuottaniemi

Layered ancient volcanic tuffite formations with fossilised lapilli deposits can be seen in the rocky outcrops along the western shore of Nuottaniemi Peninsula.

10.11 Uutela Forest

This extensive forest grows in a rocky area, extending down to the shore in a district of Eastern Helsinki





Blood red redcap

where few stretches of shoreline remain undeveloped. Many forest birds including parrot crossbills and black woodpeckers may be spotted here. Bats and amphibians are also abundant, while nearly 70 species of polypore fungi have been observed here, indicating the area's ecological value. An interesting nature trail and several other good tracks and paths run through this large protected area. Good places for a picnic include freely usable cooking shelters in pleasant seaside spots at Nuottaniemi and Niemenapaja.



Water avens

10.11.1 Woodland springs

This shady valley with moist soil is overlooked by a steep crag. The mire in the valley is dominated by large Norway spruces, while plant species associated with springs can be found in the undergrowth, including water avens and marsh horsetail.



Seaside centaury

10.11.2 Bedrock outcrops

The bedrock is widely exposed in this scenic part of Uutela Forest, also in sheer cliffs where plants such as maidenhair spleenwort, brittle bladder fern and rusty cliff fern grow.

10.12 Shore meadows by Vuosaarenlahti Bay

This small stretch of open grassy shore meadow habitat is protected due to its rich flora, which includes sea plantain, silverweed and seaside centaury.



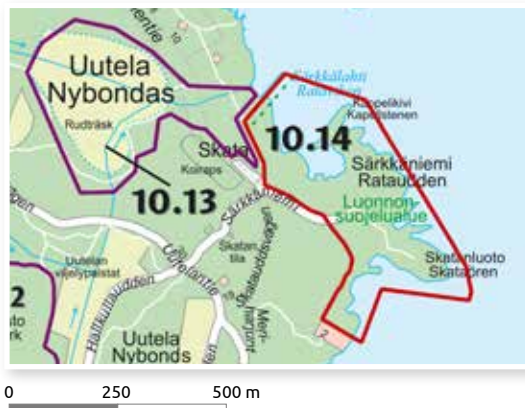
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10.13 Rudträsk Swamp

Rudträsk was earlier a lake, but since being artificially drained it has become swampy ground. The swamp has been designated for protection together with an adjoining area of forest to the east.

The most common trees are alders, spruces, and in the north white birch. Ferns and herbaceous plants thrive in the lush undergrowth, with extensive marsh fern growths particularly prominent in the south. Such swampy habitats are ideal for amphibians and bats. Several cycle paths and footpaths pass nearby.



10.14 Särkkäniemi Point

This peninsula is protected in a 14.5-hectare nature reserve to conserve its valuable natural habitats including shore meadows and



two lagoons that have been gradually cut off from the sea by land uplift. The more southerly lagoon is now a pond that is only rarely fed with seawater. Waterside plants thrive here, including tansy, meadowsweet, common reeds, bulrushes and reedmace. Ducks,





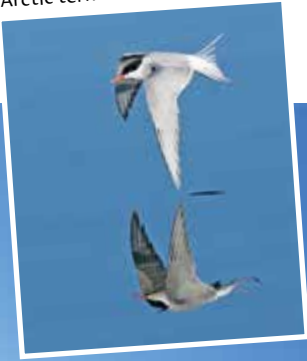
Common newt



Common frog

waders and many small birds nest in the local reed beds. Redshanks and great reed warblers may be spotted here, for instance. Frogs, dragonflies and bats also thrive in the reserve. Between 1st April and 1st August visitors must keep to the marked paths and duckboard trails. Signs indicate where fishing and swimming are permitted.

Arctic tern



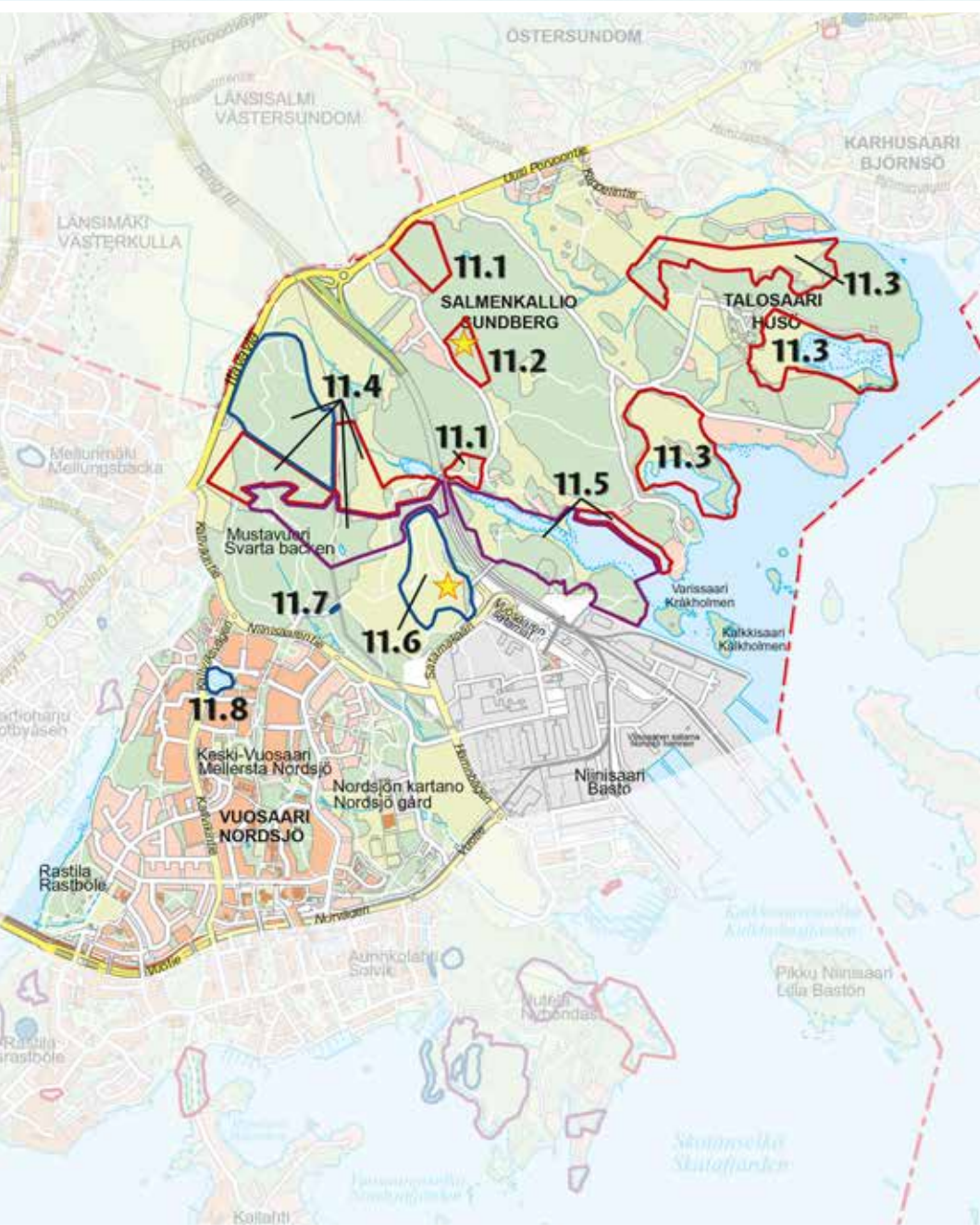
10.15 Skatanniemi Point

This three-hectare nature reserve consists of two separate sections of a narrow peninsula. The southernmost area is a spectacular rocky point that juts out into the open waters of the Gulf of Finland. Grand old pine trees grow on the rocky peninsula, where colourful flowers including sea pea, biting stonecrop and maiden pink can also be found. The tip of the point is an excellent place to watch seabirds. A small road and several good paths make it easy to explore the reserve.



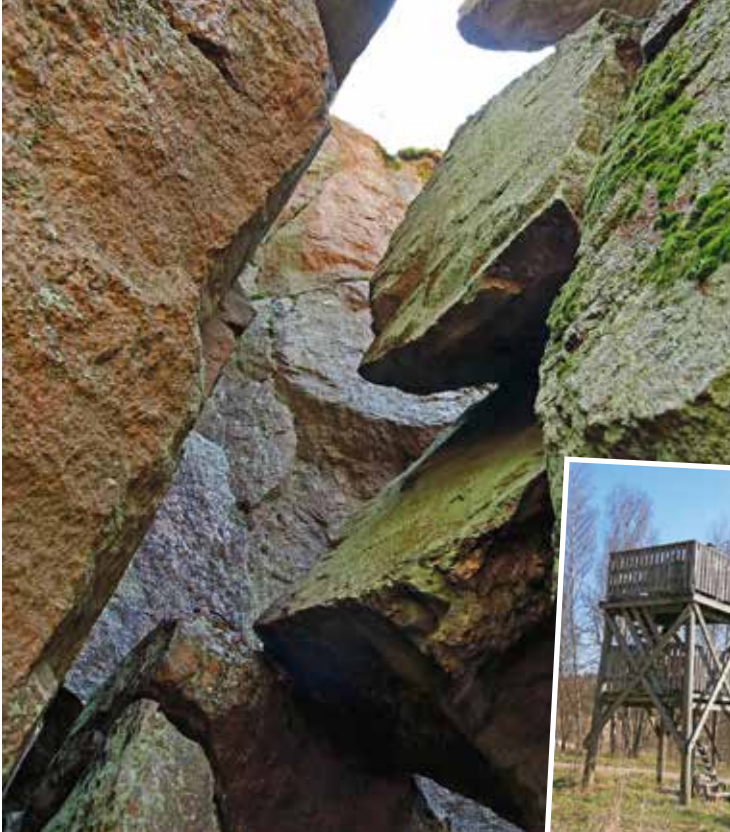
Mustavuori

- 
- 11.1 Vikkulla-Kasaberget
 - 11.2 Kasaberget-Kasakallio
 - 11.3 Östersundom Wetlands
 - 11.4 Mustavuori Hill
– Porvarinlahti Bay
 - 11.5 Porvarinlahti Bay
 - 11.6 Vuosaari Hill
 - 11.7 Pillow lava formations
on Vuosaari Hill
 - 11.8 Kangaslampi Pond



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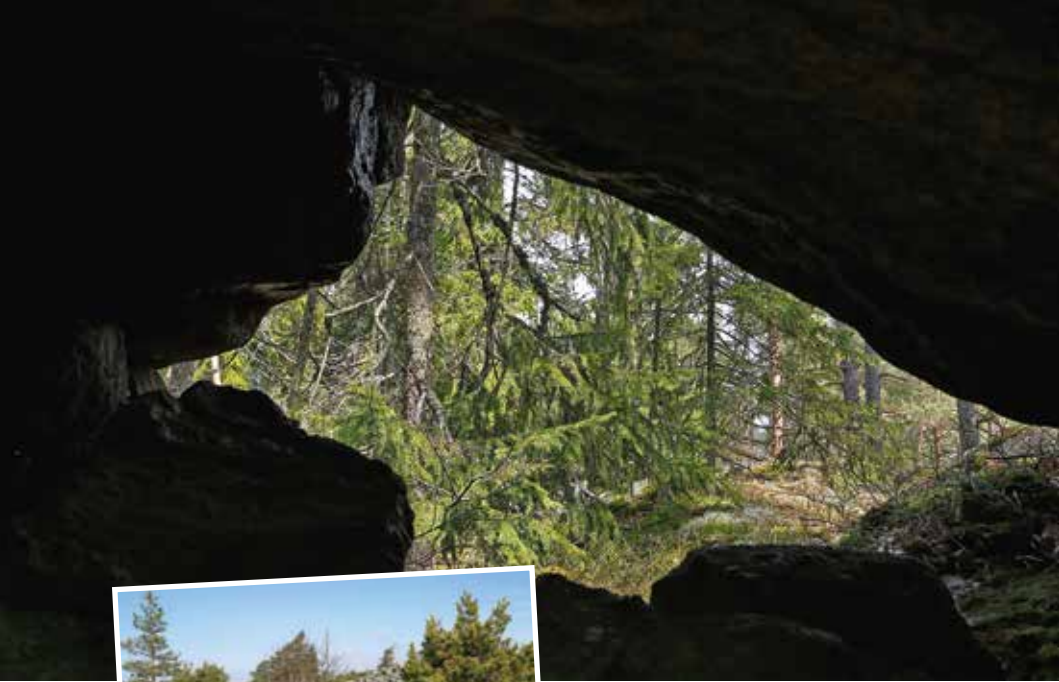


This viewing tower by Porvarinlahti Bay is popular with birdwatchers.

11.1 Vikkulla-Kasaberget

This nature reserve has two separate parts with a total area of over 14 hectares. Both areas lie within a wider Natura site encompassing Mustavuori Woods and the wetlands at Östersundom. The area at Vikkulla, by Porvarinlahti Bay, includes a lush waterside meadow with plenty of aquatic vegetation, as well as grassy areas and a sloping areas of verdant spruce forest growing on rocky terrain at Labbacka. The second part of the reserve is another rocky area northwest of nearby Kasaberget Nature Reserve, and just south of the Helsinki-Porvoo highway. The most common trees are Scots pines and on hillsides also Norway spruces. Forest birds including nightjars and black woodpeckers can be seen





A Bronze Age burial cairn

or heard in the reserve. The southern part of the reserve has a cycle path, footpaths and a birdwatching tower by Porvarinlahti Bay; while the northern area has a few paths. Mountain biking and the use of off-road vehicles are prohibited throughout the reserve.

11.2 Kasaberget-Kasakallio

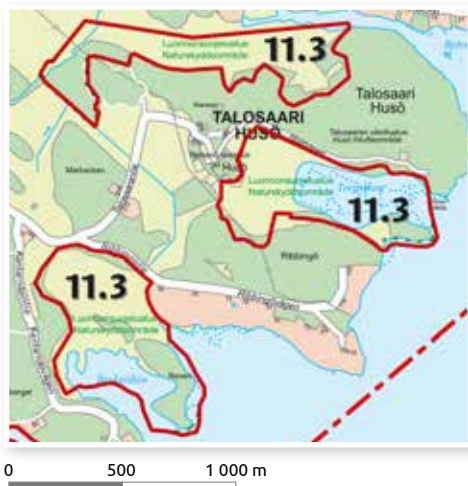
The 7-hectare Kasaberget-Kasakallio Nature Reserve lies along a long rocky ridge that extends from Porvarinlahti Bay as far as Hakunila. The bedrock contains calcium deposits in places. Scots pines dominate the forest, and vegetation is fairly sparse. The hilltop is a good place to watch migrating birds including many birds of prey. Golden eagles are often spotted here in autumn, for instance. Several notable bird species breed in the reserve, including green sandpipers. A Bronze Age burial cairn can also be explored on the rocky hilltop. Several paths lead through the reserve, which forms part of the wider Mustavuori Woods and Östersundom Wetlands Natura Site.



Mute swan

11.3 Östersundom Wetlands

These wetlands lie within an extensive Natura site. Three parts of the wetlands, with a total area of 91.5 hectares, are protected in a nature reserve. The reserve's natural habitats include three nutrient-rich shallow bays largely overgrown with extensive reed beds – Bruksviken, Torpviken and Kapellviken – as well as waterside meadows and swampy marshes. The reserve is home to nesting birds including great crested grebes, sedge warblers, ospreys, corncrakes and bitterns. Visitors must keep to the reserve's marked paths from 1st April to 31st July. Motor boats, motor vehicles and mountain bikes are prohibited in the reserve.

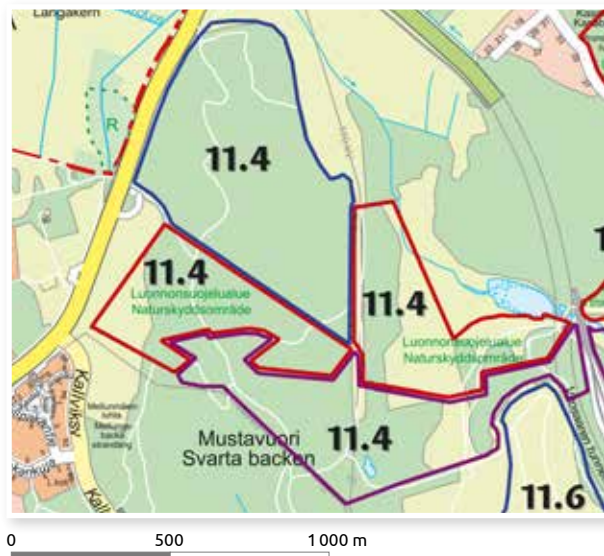




Red-breasted flycatcher

11.4 Mustavuori Hill – Porvarinlahti Bay

Highlights of this extensive protected area include the herb-rich woodlands on Mustavuori Hill, which are among the best examples of such habitat in the Helsinki area. The area's mixed forests are mainly dominated by spruce trees, but there are also patches of pinewoods, especially in rocky areas where only stunted pines grow. Many flowers bloom here in spring and early summer, including yellow wood anemone, spring vetch, lesser butterfly orchid





One of the reserve's man-made caves



Yellow wood anemone



Suffolk lungwort



Ostrich fern

and intermediate wintergreen. Mustavuori is also known for its prolific ostrich fern growths.

The eastern part of the reserve has a wetland area where many shrubs grow between areas of grassy meadow and broad-leaved woodland. This is a good place to hear birds that are active around dawn and dusk, like various kinds of warblers and spotted crakes. The woodlands in the southeast are rich in polypore fungi, including rare species. Forest habitats include herb-rich woodland, drier heathland forest, and some small rocky areas.

Mustavuori's bird life is unusually rich and diverse by Finnish standards. In spring the songs of wood warblers, blackcaps and red-breasted flycatchers can particularly be heard widely. This is also an excellent place to spot amphibians and reptiles including grass snakes and slowworms.

The whole of this area is exceptionally valuable in ecological terms. Bats are common in the woodlands south of the bay. Most of the total protected area of 109 hectares belongs to the Mustavuori Woods and Östersundom Wetlands Natura Site. Many historically interesting relics can also be seen around Mustavuori, including old artillery guns and defensive trenches dating back to the First World War, as well as several man-made caves. Visitors should take care when walking near these caves and the nearby cliffs. During the period 1st April – 15th July visitors must not leave the cycle paths and footpaths that run through the area, but there are still many interesting places to explore along these routes.



Blue tit



Great crested grebe

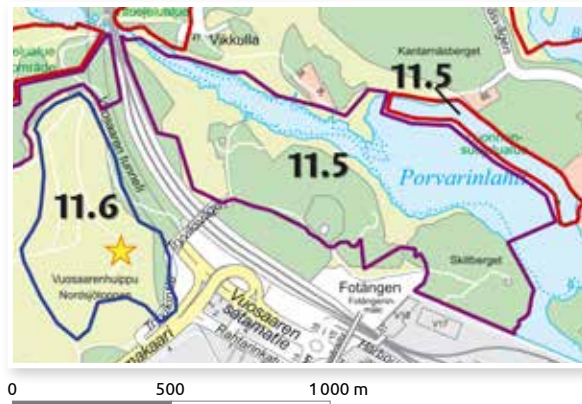


Grass snake

11.5 Porvarinlahti Bay

The eastern shore of Porvarinlahti Bay is protected in a nature reserve that also forms part of the wider Mustavuori Woods and Östersundom Wetlands Natura Site. Diverse natural habitats lie along the bay's southern shores, including shore meadows, flood meadows, herb-rich woodlands, lush mixed forest and rocky areas.

A small working farm survives in the western part of this area. Look out for locally breeding birds such as great crested grebes, tufted ducks, great reed warblers and other species associated with reed beds. With luck you may spot an osprey or a hobby falcon hunting over the bay. Many



Grasshoppers can be seen and heard on Vuosaari Hill.



rare polypore fungi have been found in the area's forests. The bay and its surroundings also provide valuable habitat for amphibians and reptiles. There are not many clear paths, but it is possible to explore the woods south of the bay along small footpaths.

11.6 Vuosaari Hill

This artificial hill is made of landfill material, but has been sensitively landscaped to create a wide range of open natural habitats and fine viewpoints overlooking the surrounding suburbs and forests. The area is especially popular with walkers and birdwatchers. Nesting birds include scrubland and grassland species like red-backed shrikes, corncrakes and occasionally even endangered barred warblers. The hilltop is a good place to watch migrating birds including raptors and flocks of doves. In the winter goldfinches, linnets and occasionally also rare shore larks gather here to feed. The hill is crisscrossed by many tracks and paths.



11.7 Pillow lava formations on Vuosaari Hill

These interesting volcanic geological formations can be seen in a small rock outcrop by the road. They are most clearly evident beneath the overhead power lines that lead towards Niinisaarentie.



11.8 Kangaslampi Pond

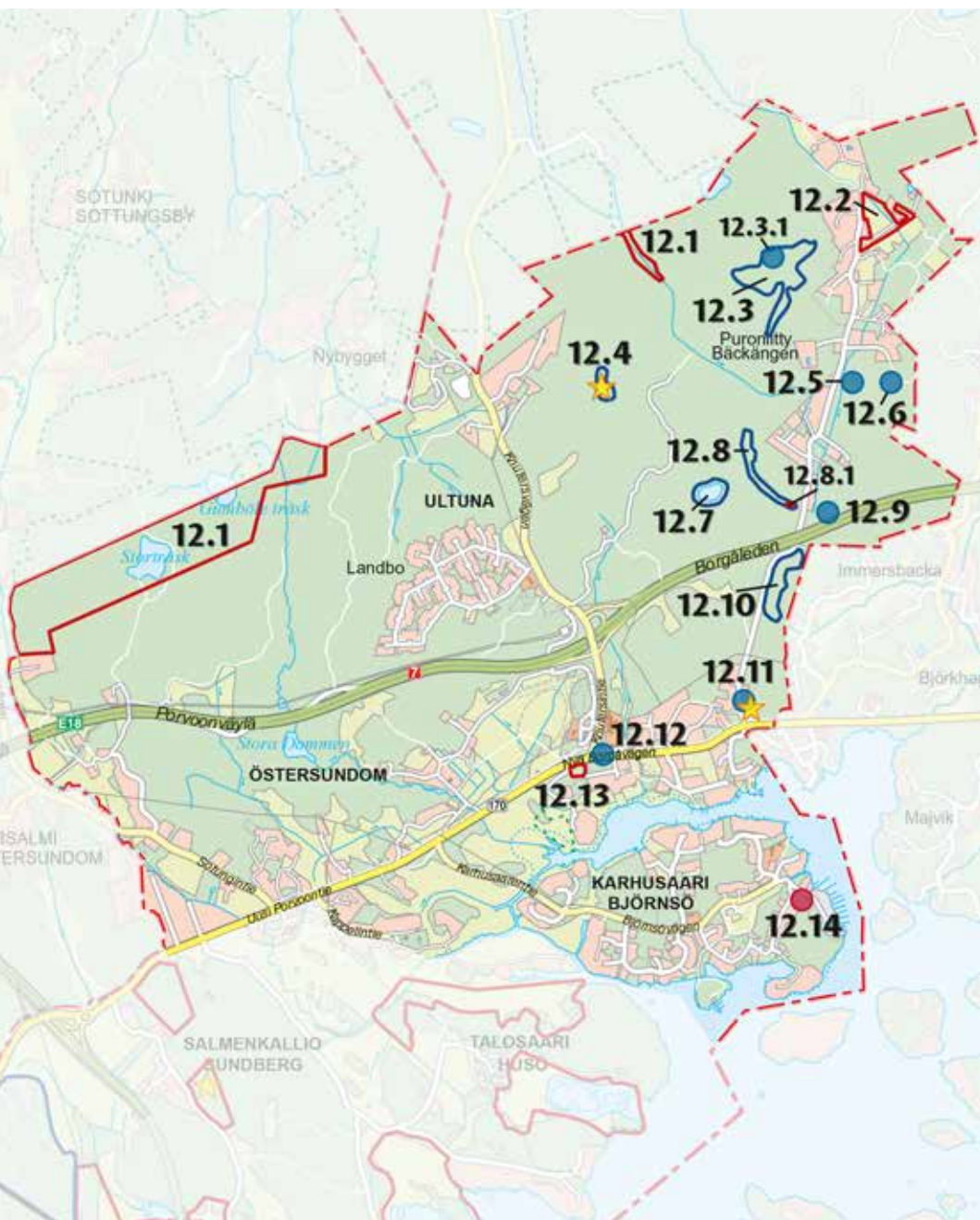
This tree-fringed natural pond lies in Ilveskorvenpuisto Park, by Kallvikintie. Large alder trees grow in places, and marsh cinquefoil thrives by the shore. Many yellow water lilies grow in the pond, which has a small island where birch trees grow. Water birds, gulls and bats often visit. A good path runs around the pond, which also has public jetties.





Northeastern Helsinki

- 
- 12.1 Spoonkorpi National Park**
 - 12.2 Saario Arboretum**
 - 12.3 Woodland and mires at Puroniitty**
 - 12.3.1 Erratic boulder field at Riängsbäcken
 - 12.4 Långkärrsberget**
 - 12.5 An erratic boulder in Skinnarskog Forest**
 - 12.6 A crumbling erratic boulder in Skinnarskog Forest**
 - 12.7 Hältingträsk Pond**
 - 12.8 Hältingberget Valley**
 - 12.8.1 A lime grove at Hältingberget
 - 12.9 Erratic boulders at Backnäs**
 - 12.10 Konungskärr woodlands and brook**
 - 12.11 Dagsverksberget**
 - 12.12 An erratic boulder by Uusi Porvoontie**
 - 12.13 Korsnäs Grove**
 - 12.14 Potholes at Vainovalkeanmäki Hill**



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Billsberry plants in bloom



Pond skater

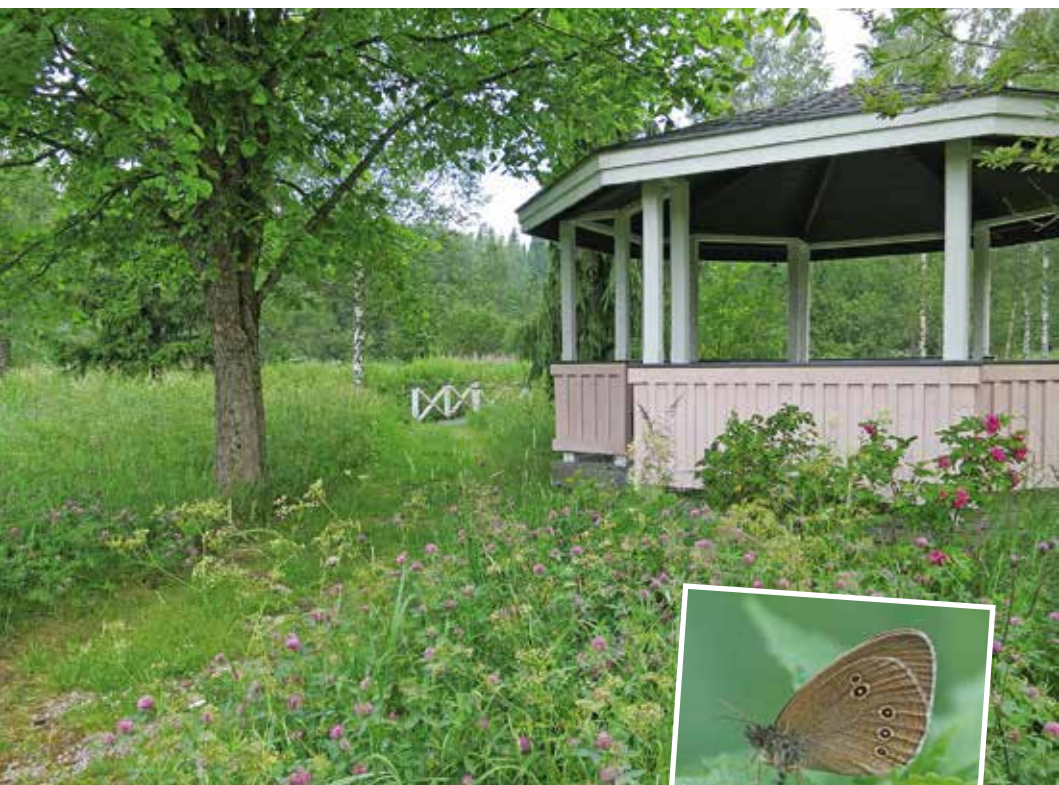
12.1 Sipoonkorpi National Park

This national park has a total area of about 23 km², shared between three municipalities: Sipoo, Vantaa and Helsinki. Only 76 hectares of the park are in Helsinki, but this area, which includes Lake Storträsk and its marshy margins, is valuable for its diverse flora. Many plants rare elsewhere in Helsinki can be found here including great sundew, small cranberry and bog rosemary. The lake and its



Yellowfoot mushrooms are good to eat.

shores also provide valuable habitat for amphibians and reptiles. A duckboard trail runs by the lakeshore. The southern half of another lake, Gumböle Träsk, also lies in Helsinki's share of the park. The rest of this National Park consists of coniferous forest with areas of mixed woodland, a few small mires and rocky areas. Paths run through the park, with information boards in places. An accessible campfire site by Lake Storträsk makes a good spot for a picnic.



Ringlet butterfly

12.2 Saario Arboretum

This six-hectare arboretum has been protected as a nature reserve since 2010, but it was first established in the early 1990s in an area that earlier consisted of meadows, pastures and fields. The most common trees are oak, maple, small-leaved lime and ash. Many interesting varieties of small trees and shrubs also grow here, as well as unusual forms of birch and aspen, and exotic conifers including Douglas firs, cypresses and larches. The arboretum can be viewed from a road that runs alongside it, or by walking along a stream that passes through the area.





Small pearl-bordered fritillary feeding on heath spotted orchid.

12.3 Woodland and mires at Puroniitty

This area includes three narrow valley mires separated by drier and rockier terrain with several crags and patches of lush hillside forest habitat. Look out for plants including crested wood fern, lesser butterfly orchid, wonder violet, hazel, bogbean and heath spotted orchid. Willow tits and other woodland birds can be seen in the forest, while frogs, toads and reptiles abound in marshy or rocky areas. Fritillaries and many other kinds of butterfly may also be seen in summer in open areas of marshy habitat. There are no clear paths through the area, and the terrain is difficult in places. Please avoid walking in marshy areas to protect their sensitive vegetation.



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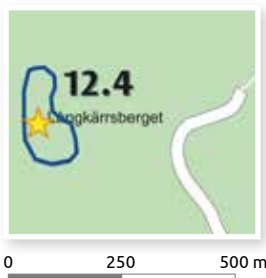
12.3.1

12.3.1 Erratic boulder field at Riängsbäcken

This impressive group of erratic rocks, dumped here towards the end of the Ice Age, includes three huge boulders, one of which is almost eight metres high.

12.4 Långkärrsberget

The highest part of this rocky area offers impressive views over the surrounding forests. The rocky ground is carpeted with lichen in many places. This area is rich in bird life, including many species rarely seen in Helsinki. To reach the viewpoint walk about 1,700 metres along the unnamed forest road that heads northeast from Knutersintie near the junction of the Porvoo motorway to a sharp bend in the road, and then west through the forest for about 300 metres.





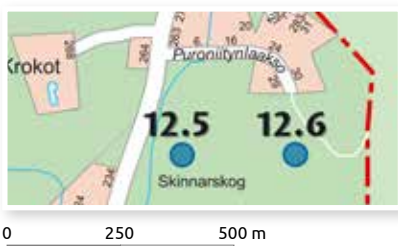


12.5 An erratic boulder in Skinnarskog Forest

This four-metre-high rapakivi granite boulder can be found in an ecologically valuable area of old-growth forest. Woodland birds such as red-breasted flycatchers may be heard singing in the nearby forest in early summer. Just south of the boulder is an area of herb-rich woodland where wonder violets grow.

12.6 A crumbling erratic boulder in Skinnarskog Forest

This two-metre-high rapakivi granite boulder is gradually crumbling away due to weathering processes. Both of the boulders in Skinnarskog lie in areas of forest with no clear paths.





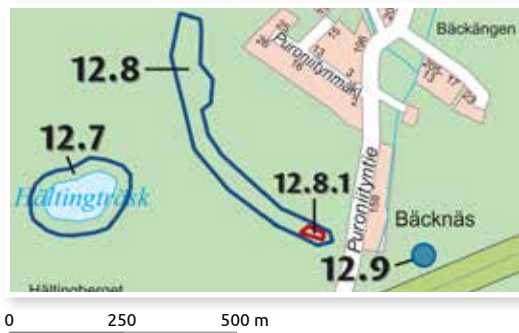
Whiteface dragonfly



Great sundew

12.7 Hälingträsk Pond

Though this marsh-fringed pond is fairly small, it is scenically and ecologically valuable. Plants including great sundew, bog arum, crowberry, cottongrass and white water lilies can be found here. Common frogs and moor frogs spawn in the pond. Grass snakes may also be seen swimming in the pond or searching for food by its shores. Many dragonfly species thrive here too, including whiteface dragonflies and skimmers. A path runs around the pond. Visitors should stay on the path to avoid damaging sensitive plants.





12.8 Hältingberget Valley

This narrow valley on the western side of a rocky hill is lined by sheer and in places overhanging crags. It is possible to walk through the narrow stretches of forest terrain between parallel sets of crags. Plants including maidenhair spleenwort grow on the rocks, while woodland plants like baneberry and hepatica thrive in the nutrient-rich soil beneath the crags.

12.8.1 A lime grove at Hältingberget

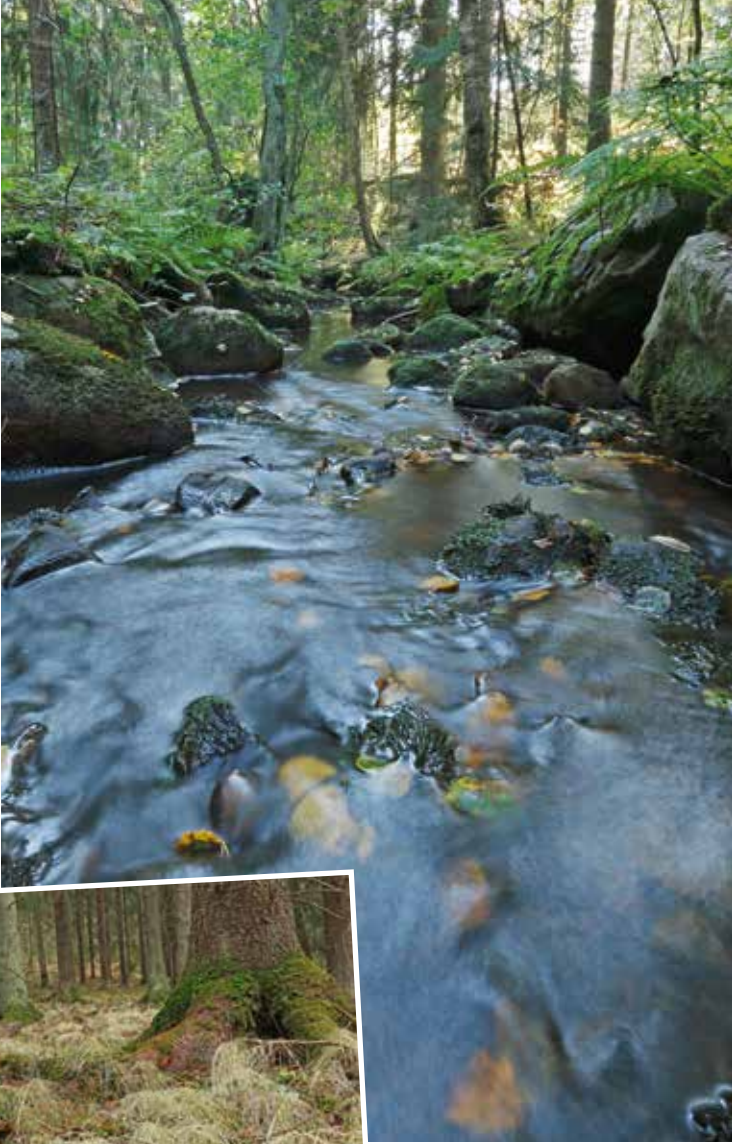
At the southern end of the rocky valley lies a small protected stand of broad-leaved trees, including about thirty small-leaved limes.



Common polypody ferns grow on one of the boulders.

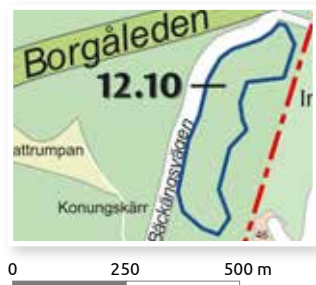
12.9 Erratic boulders at Backnäs

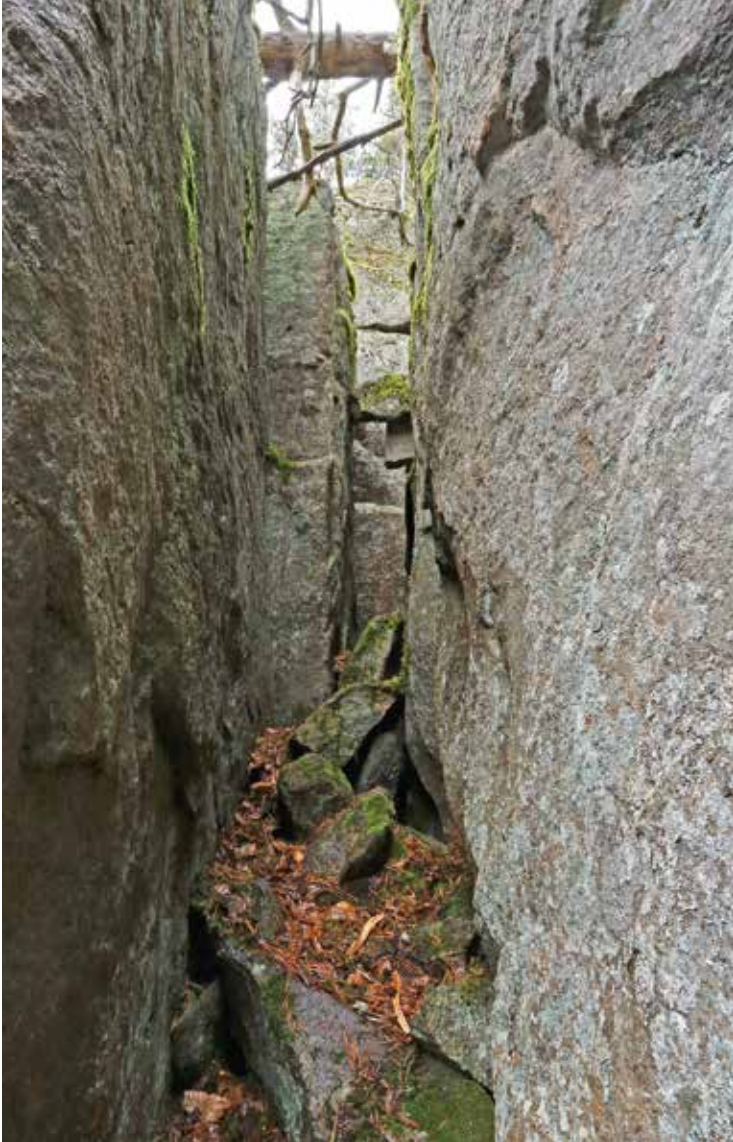
This rocky hillside dotted with several large granitic gneiss boulders is one of Helsinki's most impressive geological sites. In places small clefts and cavern-like features can be explored beneath the boulders. A small path leads through the forest towards the boulders from Puroniityntie, just north of the Helsinki-Porvoo motorway.



12.10 Konungskärr woodlands and brook

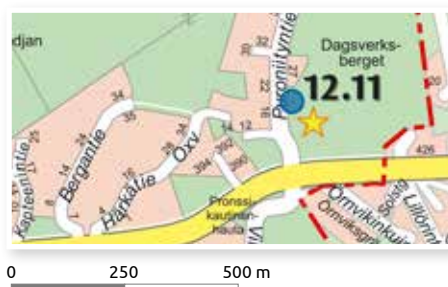
Just south of the Helsinki-Porvoo motorway the attractive Fallbäcken Brook flows through an area of herb-rich woodland where alternate-leaved golden saxifrage, mezereon, meadow horsetail and small-leaved lime trees grow. The area's relief is varied, and there are few clear paths.

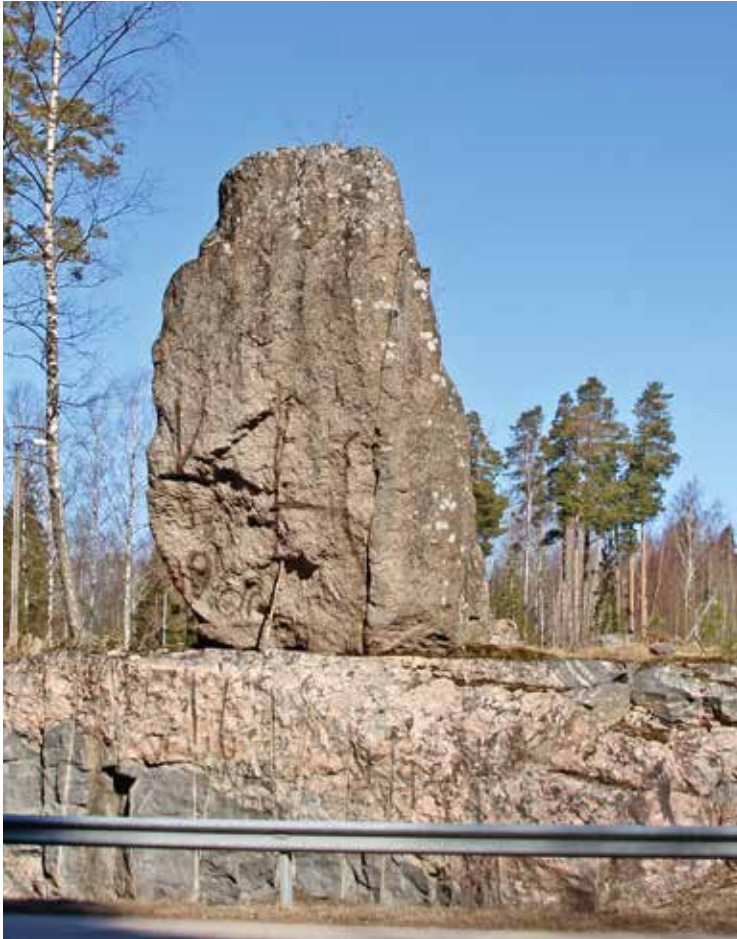




12.11 Dagsverksberget

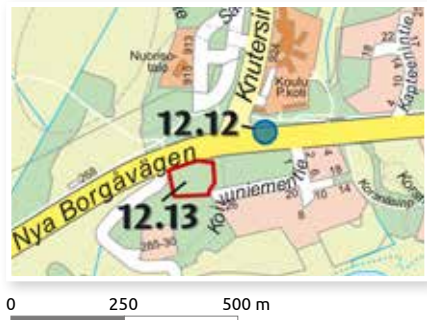
Features of interest in this rocky area include a narrow cleft between steep-sided rock walls.





12.12 An erratic boulder by Uusi Porvoontie

This impressive four-metre-high rapakivi granite boulder stands near the junction of Uusi Porvoontie and Knutersintie. It is known locally as Topelius's Stone, after the renowned 19th century author Zachris Topelius, who lived nearby.





Herb Paris



12.13 Korsnäs Grove

This small grove of broad-leaved trees is protected due to its diverse flora. Many oaks, maples and wych elms grow here. Woodland plants including wood sorrel, meadowsweet and wood horsetail abound in the undergrowth. The grove is easily viewed from nearby roads.



12.14 Potholes at Vainovalkeanmäki Hill

These Ice Age potholes, formed in a meltwater river, have been protected since 1957. They can be found near the top of a rocky rise near Karhusaarentie. The largest of these seven potholes is about 1.5 metres in diameter.

Helsinki's geology and soils

Finland lies in a geological region known as the Fennoscandian Shield, where ancient Precambrian bedrock outcrops on the surface, and is not overlain with younger rock types as in most other parts of Europe. The bedrock in Helsinki is thus extremely old and stable, though it is overlain in places by recently deposited materials that are very young in geological terms.

Bedrock

The bedrock beneath Helsinki consists largely of metamorphic rock types that formed when rocks deep underground were altered by intense heat and pressure. Metamorphic rock types including *shists* and *gneisses* form from different kinds of sedimentary or igneous rock. Volcanic rock is often metamorphosed to become dark *amphibolite*, while volcanic ash ejected by ancient volcanoes becomes layered *tuffite*. Tuffites may include calcite layers and the



Narrow quartzite and granite veins can be seen in this outcrop of volcanic rock by Uutela Canal.

remains of larger fragments of ejected material known as *lapilli*. Rocks made of cooled lava may contain features known as *pillow lava*, which form where lumps of lava solidify in water, creating rounded pillow-like shapes typically 10–70 cm in diameter. Such lava pillows indicate where ancient lava flows reached the sea.

The local bedrock also includes plutonic granitic intrusions. The shists and gneisses found in Helsinki are about 1.9 billion years old, while the local granites formed just over 1.8 billion years ago.

Granite intrusions break up shist formations, and may mix with them to form *migmatites*, such as banded and veined gneisses. Such rocks form under extreme heat and pressure. Those found in Southern Finland were formed beneath an ancient mountain range that has since been weathered and eroded away, exposing the underlying plutonic rocks that formed as magma cooled slowly deep underground. Darker plutonic rock types such as *diorites* and *gabros* are rare in this region.

Helsinki's bedrock is broken up by many fracture zones, of which the largest run in a NNE-SSW direction. The clearest examples can be seen in a chain of rocky cliffs running north from Kipparlahti Bay in Herttoniemi, and in the long valley that runs northwards from Vartiokylänlahti Bay.

Soils and traces of the Ice Age

Most of the soils in Helsinki were formed during and after the most recent glaciation. The slowly melting continental ice sheet receded from this region about 13,000 years ago. The most typical deposits overlying the bedrock consist of till; rock fragments and grains of various size. Till is Finland's most common soil parent material. In some places sandy, clayey or silty deposits overlie the till. The uppermost and thus youngest layers consist of organic material such as peat and humus-rich mud.

Traces of the slow advance of the ice sheet can be seen in many places. Such features include smooth *sheepback* outcrops marked with grooves and scratches known as *striations*, which indicate the flow direction of the ice, since they were made by rocks and stones transported in the base of the ice sheet. In Southern Finland such markings are typically aligned NNW-SSE.



This erratic boulder, made of rapakivi granite, lies among stones deposited along an ancient shoreline on Hallainvuori Hill.

Meltwater from the ice sheet formed features including sandy *esker* ridges and *potholes*. *Eskers* formed where sub-glacial rivers deposited sand and gravel on their beds. Well preserved eskers can be seen at Tahvonlahden-niemi in Laajasalo and at Kallahdenniemi in Vuosaari. Potholes formed in raging meltwater rivers where loose stones swirled around in whirlpools, eroding deep holes in rocky river beds. The large pothole in Pihlajamäki is exceptional not only for its size, but also for its age, since it formed at the end of the previous glaciation before the most recent ice advance.

Many of the *erratic boulders* found in Helsinki consist of rock types not found in the bedrock here. These huge rocks were transported here in the ice or in floating icebergs in a vast meltwater lake at the end of the last glaciation. All of these erratic boulders are made of *rapakivi granite*. This unusual rock type, characterised by exceptionally large grains of feldspar, occurs in the bedrock of Southeast Finland.

Because a massive ice sheet up to three kilometres thick had depressed the Earth's crust, relative sea levels at the end of the Ice Age were more than 100 metres higher than today. The land has since undergone a process known as post-glacial uplift, which is still ongoing. In Helsinki many traces of earlier shorelines can be seen, formed during different phases of the shaping of the Baltic Sea. These *raised beaches* lie high and dry today. Some are marked by elongated piles of stones known as "devil's fields". The oldest local examples, such as the raised beach at Jakomäenkallio, formed about 10,000 years ago during the Yoldia Sea phase, more than 60 metres



The waterfall in Strömberg Park

above today's sea level. A younger example, from the Littorina Sea phase, can be seen at Meri-Rastila.

How geology shapes vegetation and ecosystems

Since soils are mainly formed by the weathering of bedrock, the chemical composition of the bedrock significantly affects them. The chemical and physical properties of soils determine which plants can thrive in any area, and this in turn influences the flora and fauna of entire ecosystems. The bedrock in Helsinki is mainly nutrient-poor and acidic, though in certain areas such as Northern Vuosaari, calcium-rich bedrock enriches soils with minerals, enabling more diverse vegetation communities to develop. Weaker impacts on vegetation can be seen in areas with dark metavolcanic bedrock, including Vuosaari and Laajasalo. Gravel, moraine and clay deposits also have discernible impacts on vegetation and biotopes.

What is a mire?

A mire is an ecosystem in which plant material decomposes to produce peat. Mires differ in this way from other kinds of wetlands such as deltas, floodplains, marshlands, reed beds or shallow waterbodies. Finland lies in the boreal coniferous forest vegetation zone, where peat is primarily formed by the incomplete decomposition of sphagnum moss.

Bogs are more abundant in Finland than in almost any other country. About a third of Finland's land area can be classified as peatland. The cool, moist climate, in combination with gently undulating relief and relatively impermeable soils, creates excellent conditions for the formation of peatlands. Finland's peatland habitats are also considered to be among the most diverse anywhere in the world, due to varying climatic conditions in different parts of the country. Peatlands add an essential element to Finland's natural landscapes and biodiversity.

Peatlands can be classified in many different ways, according to the processes that form them, the nutrient content of the soil, their

Honkasuo Mire





Uutela Bog

hydrology, the thickness of their peat, their dominant vegetation, or their relief. In terms of their vegetation, Finland's peatlands can be roughly divided into two categories, depending on whether trees grow on them or not. Wooded mires and treeless fens can then be divided into the following main types: spruce mires, pine mires, fens, eutrophic fens, swamps and spring-fed mires. These mire types can then be further sub-divided into narrower categories and combinations of peatland types, depending on factors such as their nutrient levels and dominant vegetation. In Finland more than 100 different mire types have been described, of which about 30 are more commonly used to classify peatland habitats.

Pine mires and spruce mires are two wooded peatland habitat types commonly found around Finland. A good example of a pine mire can be seen at Honkasuo (p. 64). In such habitats trees are typically smaller and more stunted than those growing in drier forest habitats.

The Finnish peatland classification system divides open fen habitats into the nutrient-poor raised bogs of Southern Finland, which have deep layers of peat; and the more nutrient-rich aapa mires of Northern Finland, which have shallower peat. A small, nutrient-rich treeless fen can be seen at Uutela in Helsinki (p. 200). Mires that form in areas with very nutrient-rich soils are known as eutrophic fens. Such habitats are the peatland equivalent of herb-rich woodland habitats, and they typically host many demanding species, often including threatened species.

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Helsinki's "green fingers" and Natura sites



Green fingers: Helsinki's "green fingers", designated by the city's planners, form a network of interlinked ecological corridors valuable for their natural, scenic and cultural diversity. They are also very popular among the city's residents as settings for outdoor activities and recreation.



Natura sites: Four valuable natural areas in Helsinki are included in the EU-wide Natura network of protected areas: the wetlands at Vanhakaupunkilahti Bay; meadows, shallow bays and other natural features around Kallahti; the herb-rich woodland at Mustavuori and the nearby Östersundom wetlands; and the River Vantaa. The Natura network aims to preserve Europe's biodiversity, and protect habitats and species listed in EU directives.

Help to preserve Helsinki's natural treasures

In Finland everyone can freely explore natural areas under legal principles known as Everyman's Right. By following a few simple rules you can enjoy visiting natural areas without harming them. This is especially important in cities, where popular areas may be vulnerable to disturbance and erosion. The main goal is to leave no trace of your visit behind in the natural environment.







How to consider nature:

- Pack snacks and drinks in reusable containers and bottles.
- Take away all waste, including banana skins etc., in suitable bags or containers to sort and recycle at home.
- Stay on existing paths to avoid damaging sensitive vegetation. Do not walk on crop fields, in private gardens, or too near local residents' homes.
- Campfires may only be lit in the special sites provided. You may use camping stoves and portable grills wherever there are no signs prohibiting this. Never leave hot coals in any natural area or in any waste container where they may cause a fire.
- You may freely pick edible wild berries and mushrooms, but do not gather lichens or moss, or pick or damage any other plants.
- Watch wild birds and animals from a suitable distance to avoid disturbing them.
- Always keep dogs on lead.
- You may freely swim in waters, or fish using a simple rod and line (also in ice-holes). Permits are needed for fishing with lures and other equipment. In certain places fishing is totally prohibited. For more details see www.ahven.net.
- Do not disturb other visitors in natural areas – though other nature-lovers may appreciate it if you share any interesting observations with them!

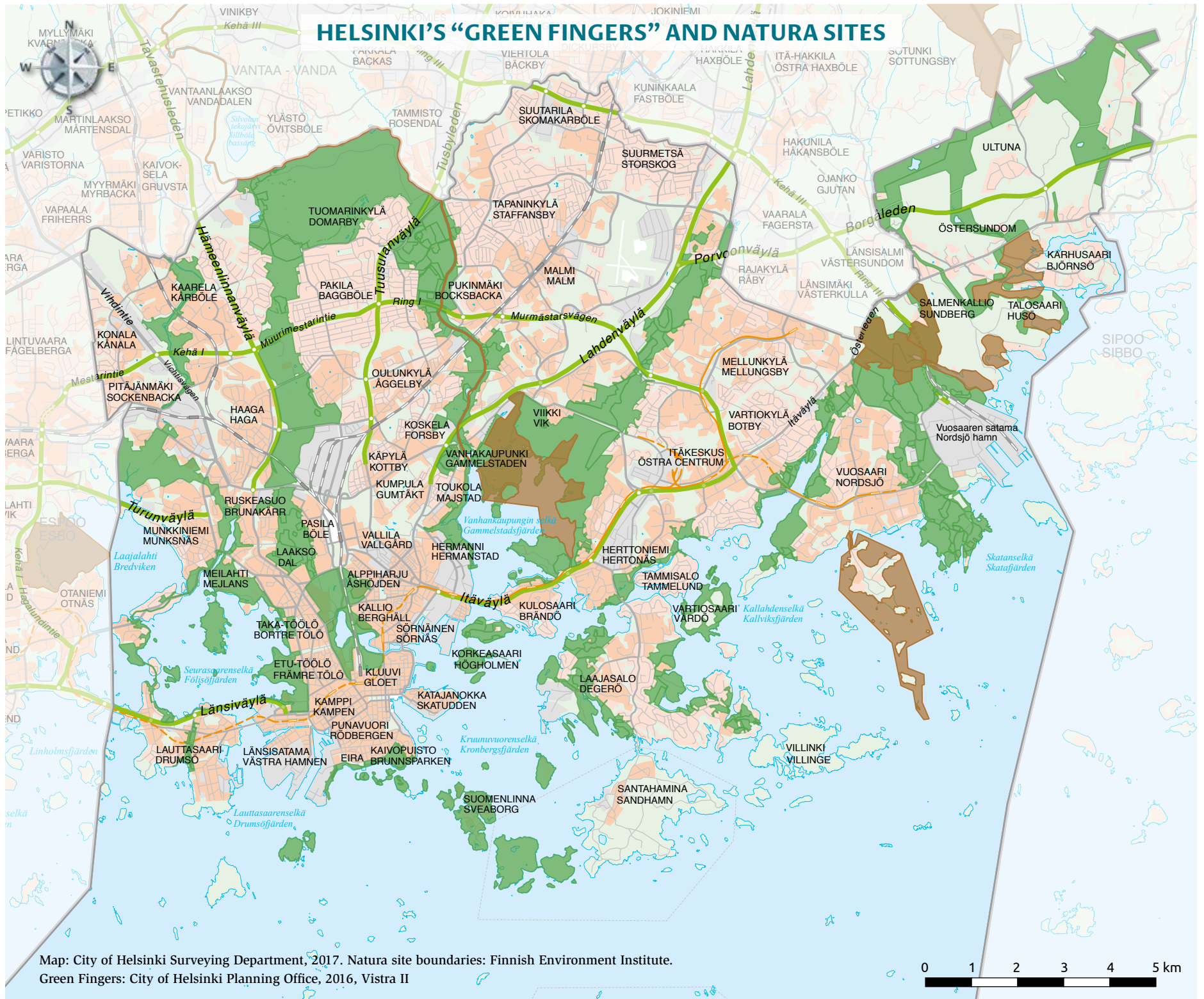


Key to maps



Nature reserve/ Protected biotope	
Natural monument	
Site proposed for protection	
Other valuable natural area	
Other valuable natural attraction	
Viewpoint	

HELSINKI'S "GREEN FINGERS" AND NATURA SITES



Map: City of Helsinki Surveying Department, 2017. Natura site boundaries: Finnish Environment Institute.
Green Fingers: City of Helsinki Planning Office, 2016, Vistra II

0 1 2 3 4 5 km

Helsinki's green treasures **200 natural attractions**



Would you like to see a colony of nesting herons? Or discover ancient glacial potholes known as “devil’s churns”? This book describes 200 fascinating natural sites that can be seen in Helsinki. The featured areas include well-known attractions like the internationally valuable wetlands of Vanhankaupunginlahti Bay, the extensive forests of Helsinki’s own Central Park, the wooded island of Seurasaari with its open-air museum, and the historic islands of Suomenlinna. But the book also spotlights many less widely-known natural areas that are well worth discovering. Most of the featured sites are very easy to visit.

Helsinki is blessed with varied natural features from rocky shores to grassy meadows, wetlands, leafy woodlands, ancient forests and moody marshes. Many areas have splendid scenery and a rich variety of flora and fauna. This book aims to help readers discover the great diversity of Helsinki’s easily accessible urban nature. Natural treasures large and small can be found even within a stone’s throw of the city centre.

The sites highlighted in the book include almost all of Helsinki’s existing or proposed nature reserves, listed natural monuments, sites of geological interest, parks and other attractive green areas.



Enjoy experiencing Helsinki’s
rich natural treasures!

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