



Important coastal Ramsar Site for Estonia

15 November 2011

Estonia

Estonia has designated its 13th Wetland of International Importance, called Luitemaa ("land of dunes"), a mosaic wetland complex located on the southwestern coast (11,240 hectares, 58°10'N 024°35'E) that is a Nature Reserve, BirdLife IBA, and Natura 2000 site. As summarized by Kati Wenzel, Assistant Advisor for Europe, the site features with a diversity of coastal and inland habitats including shallow sea, capes and islands, coastal meadows and reed-beds. Dunes, mires, dry and wet forest stands are characteristic of the site and many of its habitat types are listed under the EU Habitats Directive.

The site supports a diverse number of internationally and nationally threatened species of birds as well as a number of threatened mammals, amphibians, reptiles and plants. Luitemaa is also a refuge for animals with large habitat requirements and as such is important as a breeding site for Wolf *Canis lupus* and Lynx *Lynx lynx*, as well as a hibernation site for Brown Bear *Ursus arctos*. It regularly supports more than 20,000 waterbirds, including Barnacle Geese *Branta leucopsis* (>15000), Eurasian Wigeon *Anas penelope* (>10000) and Eurasian Teal *Anas crecca* (>10000). The site is furthermore an important spawning ground for internationally threatened fish species like Sea Trout *Salmo trutta* and River Lamprey *Lampetra fluviatilis*.

Peat excavation was stopped at the site; however, the abandoned area is in need of restoration. The Nature Reserve is important for ecotourism, especially for bird-watching. A management plan is in preparation.

Photos by Mati Kose









Source URL: <https://www.ramsar.org/news/important-coastal-ramsar-site-for-estonia#comment-0>