

Flying Squirrel LIFE



Excursion Report Estonia 23.-24.5.2023

Project Action F2

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Photo: Tõnu Laasi



Aim of the Excursion

- Flying squirrel (*Pteromys volans*) lives only in Finland and in Estonia in the European Union
- Excursion was targeted to project personnel. It is a good way to
 - Exchange knowledge between 14 Finnish and 4 Estonian project partners
 - See habitats of flying squirrels in North-East Estonia (Ida-Virumaa)
 - See examples of project activities
- On year 2023 there will be together four excursions and workshops arranged



Photo: Arto Griinari Vastavalo.fi



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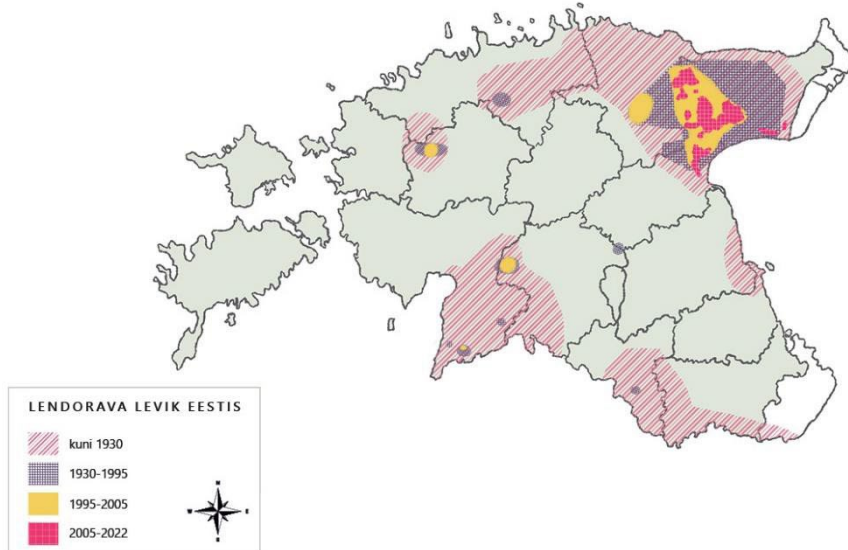
KESKKONNAAMET



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Excursion program



Map: Flying squirrel range in Estonia, EEB

Two days 23.-24.5.2023 in North East Estonia (Ida-Virumaa):

Forest day 1: Heinassaare old growth forest and Selisoo, Alutaguse NP

Forest day 2: Mäetaguse oak forest, Permisküla, Vasknarva, Riisisna, Alajõe, Uusküla, Alutaguse Visitor Centre in Kauksi

The event was warmly and effectively hosted by Estonian Environmental Board (Keskkonnaamet)

Flying Squirrel LIFE Excursion to E...












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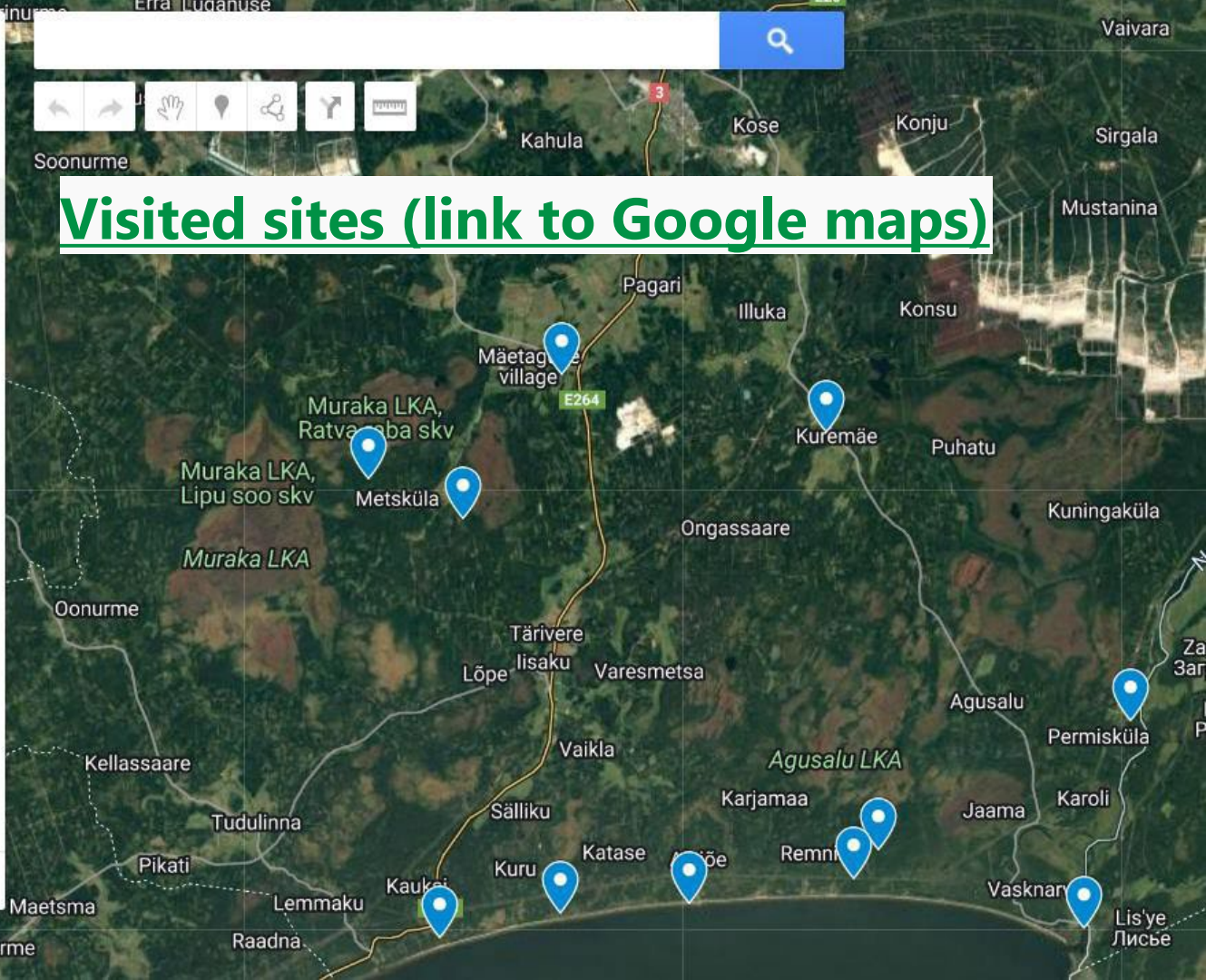
☒ Visited sites

Individual styles

-  Heinassaare
-  Selisoo
-  Mäetaguse oak forest
-  Kuremäe convent
-  Permisküla island
-  Vasknarva
-  Riisisna
-  High voltage line and future c...
-  Alajõe beach
-  Uusküla
-  RMK Kauksi nature centre

 Base map

Visited sites (link to Google maps)



22 representatives from 9 different organizations participated in the event



LIFE Program supports the Natura 2000 network for nature protection in the European Union. Photo: Tõnu Laasi



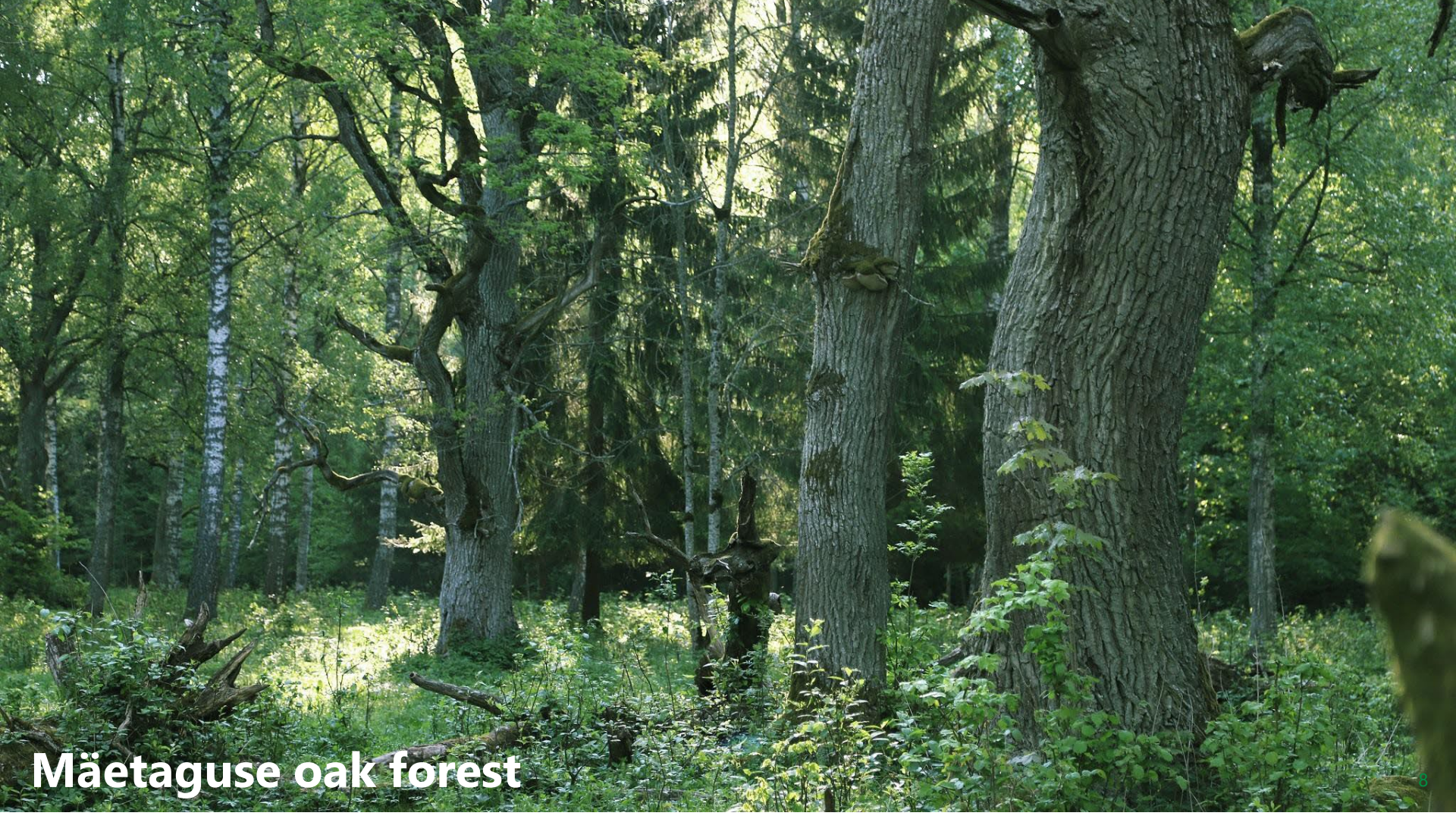
In Estonia, flying squirrel is critically endangered

- Main reason for this unfavourable situation is loss and fragmentarion of suitable habitats
- Flying squirrel is listed in the EU's Habitats Directive II and IV(a)
 - Each breeding site and resting place is strictly protected: they must not be deteriorated or destructed
 - All known flying squirrel locations are inventoried annually
 - During the Flying Squirrel LIFE project, also potential forests have been inventoried and new occupied forests are found



Forest day 1: Heinassaare old growth forest and Selisoo

- Heinassaare as one of the most valuable old-growth forests in Estonia
- Under nature protection since 1959
- Very high biodiversity, also flying squirrels are present
- Selisoo: former commercial forest, which, thanks to its protection, has become a very good habitat for flying squirrels



Mäetaguse oak forest



Forest day 2: FS habitats by Narva river and lake Peipus

- **Permisküla island:** FS habitat on the border between Estonia and Russia. How were the flying squirrels able to cross the 80 meter wide river and from which side did they come to the island?
- **Riisisna:** A FS habitat located on the edge of Alutaguse NP, which we discovered during the first year of the project's fieldwork. In strong isolation, bordered by swamps on one side and commercial forests on the other.
- **Remniku village test site** (on the photo): challenges in creating habitat connection corridors under high voltage power lines. RMK cooperation with the power line company.
- **Uusküla:** The most recently found habitat of the FS. The second site besides Iisaku, which is located in a village, close to human settlement.



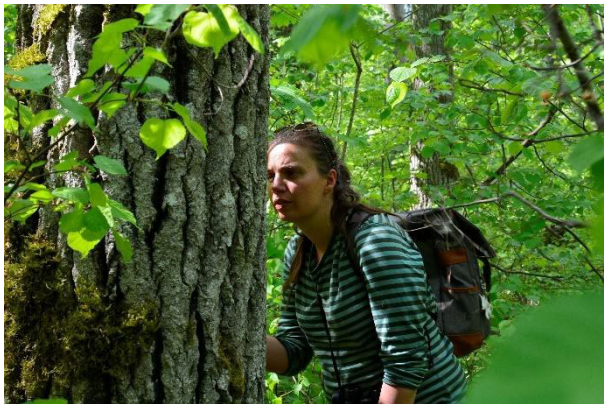
Alutaguse Visitor Centre

- RMK has renewed the exhibition that gives an overview of the nature and human history of Alutaguse National Park
- The exhibition and the film summoned up excellently the field sites we had visited during the excursion



Some of the topics discussed over the two days:

- Is the continuity of aspen trees (and flying squirrel habitats) ensured in protected areas?
- How to increase the motivation of forest owners in keeping rare species? Would higher compensations be the solution? How should the state communicate the imposition of strict restrictions?
- The principles of taking the flying squirrel's habitats under protection and setting the protection regime.
- Management options in protected areas.
- Monitoring and inventories of FS habitats.



Feedback from the excursion

According to the feedback, the excursion was 100 % satisfying and useful (8 answers).

It is essential to be able to discuss with people from different backgrounds to open up thinking and increase understanding. After getting to know each other, it is easier to cooperate and engage in discussions about even more difficult issues related to nature protection.

Experiencing the field sites by oneself, guided by a local experts, significantly increases knowledge and understanding.



Vastausprosentti	50 %
Lähetetty	16
Vastanneet	8

Kommentit

- Oli tosi valaisevaan nähdä Viron käytäntöjä ja upeita metsiä.
- Sites we visited were interesting and there were new information and learning during the event. The accommodation was good, and spa was refressign. :) Our driver could have paid a bit more attention to the road ahead and steadiness of the ride. There were a couple of quite exiting moments during our travels in the minibus.
- Intresting field sites and acommodation was nice and it was nice to go to spa after a long day. Also it was nice to visit the visitor centre of Alutaguse National Park. Overall very well planned two field days. Thank you!
- It was really interesting two days with plenty of new information. The trip was well organized and we had many changes to change knowledge and also to get to know each other better. Thank you very much!
- An experience-sharing and informative event



- Project's main website in Metsähallitus, Finland (Finnish, English, Swedish and Estonian): <https://www.metsa.fi/en/project/flying-squirrel-life/>
- Flying squirrel expert Uudo Timm interviewed in Estonian TV with rare videos of gliding flying squirrels (17.5.2022): <https://etv.err.ee/1608600508/lendoravate-pulmad>
- European Union's LIFE Programme: https://cinea.ec.europa.eu/programmes/life_en

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