



Photo: Viljandi Castle of Teutonic Order, L. Michelson

(*Jynx torquilla*) have their habitats. The Castle Park is also a favoured habitat for bats – nine species of bats have been identified here, the most common of whom are the northern bat (*Eptesicus nilssonii*) and the brown long-eared bat (*Plecotus auritus*).

VILJANDI CASTLE PARK AND CASTLE OF TEUTONIC ORDER

The protection area encompasses the ruins of the Castle of the Teutonic Order and the adjacent Castle Park, which are the best-known tourist attractions of Viljandi. The ruins cover eight hectares of the 18.5-hectare-large park. The park itself has a varied relief due to its location on the ancient fortress systems. The Castle Hills were named by the Teutonic Order's Commander's castle, which was constructed here in 1224 but was seriously damaged in the Livonian War and completely destroyed in the Great Northern War. The ruins of the castle, rampart moats and a 50-metre-long suspension bridge are located in the park. The Castle Park is **the most species-rich park in Viljandi**. On the edge of the park, a 6.1-metre-high and 21.3-metre-long bank of reddish-brown sandstone, dating back to the Aruküla Layer of the Central Devonian period is denuded, forming the protected **outcrop of the Castle Hills**.



Photo: Otters (*Lutra lutra*), I. Muusikus

DOS AND DON'TS FOR VISITORS

- You can move about on private land from sunrise to sunset unless you do damage to the landowner. In case the private land is fenced or marked, you will need the landowner's permission for passing.
- Drive your motor vehicle and cycle your bike only on the provided roads and park it only in the car park.
- Put up your tent and make a fire only in the prepared and marked places.
- At the time of fire risk it is forbidden to make an open fire, even on special grounds.
- You can pick berries, mushrooms and other forest goods in the protected area.
- The use of watercraft is allowed. The use of motorised watercraft is allowed in accordance with the procedures established by the county governor.
- Keep your dog on the leash while moving about in the nature.
- Try to act without leaving traces in the nature.

When you see damage done to the nature or visiting objects, inform the Environmental Inspectorate by phone 1313.



ADMINISTRATIVE AUTHORITY

Environmental Board
Pärnu-Viljandi Region
Phone +372 435 5610
viljandi@keskkonnaamet.ee
www.keskkonnaamet.ee

ARRANGEMENT OF VISITS

Viljandi City Government
Phone +372 435 4710
viljandi@viljandi.ee
www.viljandi.ee

Compiled by: H. Lapp,
M. Suurkask, R. Vaiksalu
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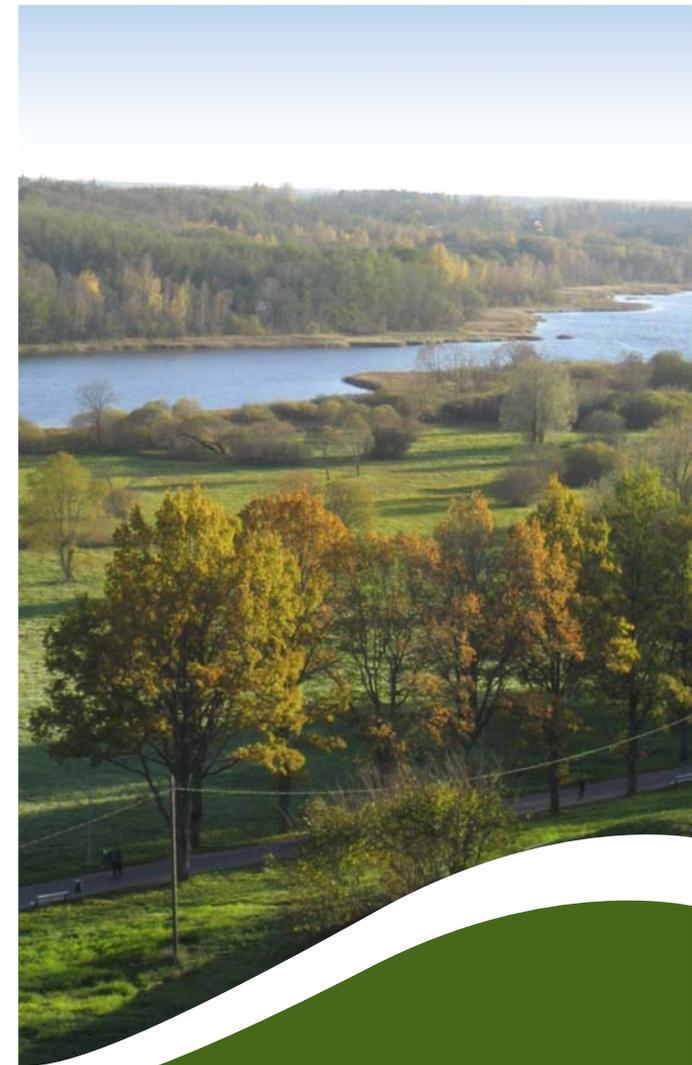
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VILJANDI Landscape Protection Area

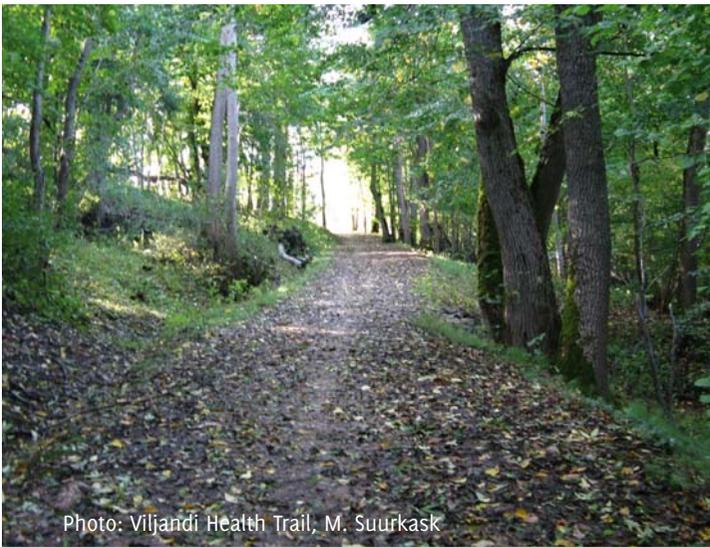


Photo: Viljandi Health Trail, M. Suurkask

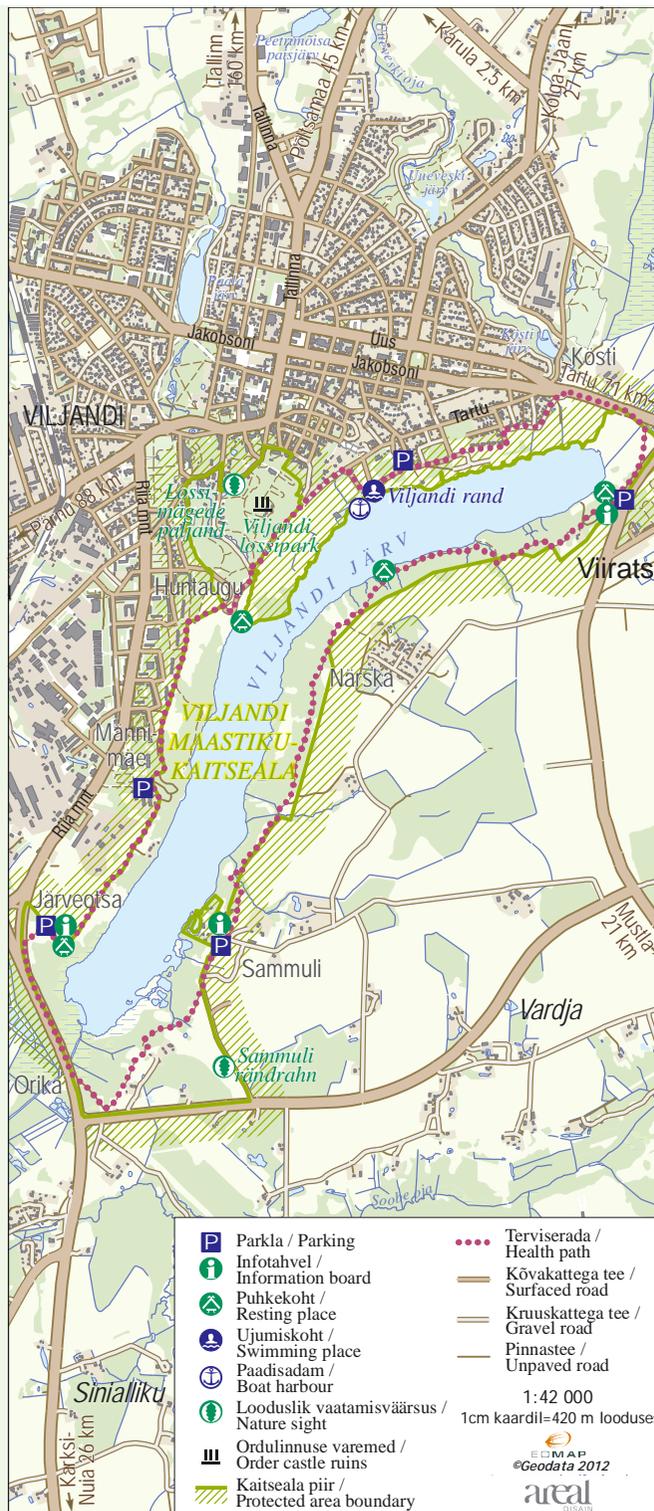
VILJANDI LANDSCAPE PROTECTION AREA

The Viljandi Landscape Protection Area lies on the slopes of the S-shaped range of Tānassilma-Viljandi-Raudna Valleys in the central part of the Sakala Upland. The area of the Viljandi Landscape Protection Area is **365 hectares**, out of which **155.7 hectares are covered by Lake Viljandi**. The landscape protection area was formed in order to protect the varied landscape, the habitats of rare species and the ecological system of Lake Viljandi. The protection area boasts the **Castle Park** and two nature monuments: the **Sammuli Erratic Boulder** with its girth of 19.6 metres and the height of about 2 metres, and the **denudation of the Castle Hills**.

Lake Viljandi and its surroundings **provide different recreation and sporting facilities**. There is a stadium, several sports grounds, a rowing base, and a rental of rowing and pedal boats on the beach. A snow tubing park has been established on the slope of Huntauk. A **12.4-kilometre-long health trail** around the lake was completed in 2007.

LANDSCAPE

The Viljandi and Raudna Ancient Valleys are, by their geological origin, the oldest in the Sakala Upland. The average width of the Viljandi Ancient Valley is one kilometre and its slopes reach as high as 30 metres. The greatest valley debouching into the above-mentioned ancient valley is Valuoja. The slopes of the protected valley are covered with a mixed forest. On the southern slopes there are numerous springs which have, at places, given rise to spring fens.



LAKE VILJANDI

The core of the protection area is formed by Lake Viljandi with its **length of 4.6 kilometres** and **greatest depth of 11 metres**. There is a beach and the Castle Park on the northern shore of the lake while the southern shores are in their natural conditions. In the **fish fauna**, the roach (*Rutilus rutilus*) and bream (*Abramis brama*) dominate. The brooks of Kõsti, or Uueveski, and Valuoja debouch into the long and narrow valley lake. The lake has plentiful bottom and shore springs. The Raudna River flows out from the south-west of the lake. A part of the lake, known as **Kitsaskael (Narrow Neck)**, is just 200 metres wide. The **rare species** connected with Lake Viljandi are the alga called Japanese moss ball (*Cladophora aegagropila*), the fish called the mud loach (*Misgurnus fossilis*) and, as to the mammals, the otter (*Lutra lutra*).

WILDLIFE

The varied landscape of the protection area has given rise to the big number of species of flora and fauna. The local types of habitats are represented by both grasslands on mineral soils and flooded grasslands, by nearly 100-year-old deciduous woodlands as well as by low-lying fens. **Ten protected species of plants** occur in the Viljandi Landscape Protection Area, among them the **Alpine wolfsbane (*Aconitum lasiostomum*)** with its only known habitat in Estonia.

The **avifauna** of the protection area is also rich, with 102 recorded species. The little gull (*Larus minutus*), lapwing (*Vanellus vanellus*) and crane (*Grus grus*) have been feeding here. There are 18 protected species of birds in the area, the most typical of them being the Eurasian sparrowhawk (*Accipiter nisus*), black tern (*Chlidonias niger*), Western marsh harrier (*Circus aeruginosus*), middle spotted woodpecker (*Dendrocopos medius*), grey-headed woodpecker (*Picus canus*), and common tern (*Sterna hirundo*). In the older wooded part of the Viljandi Castle Park, the tawny owl (*Strix aluco*) and wryneck



Photo: Hepatica (*Hepatica nobilis*), A.-L. Feršel