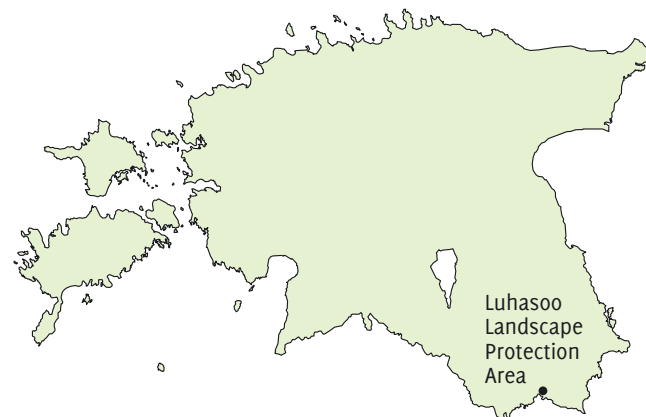


When you see damage done to the nature or visiting objects, inform the Environmental Inspectorate by phone 1313.



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ENVIRONMENTAL INVESTMENT
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be found.

A **TRANSITION MIRE** is formed when the peat layer of a fen thickens. This type of wetland has plants characteristic of both the fen (where plants grow between hummocks) and the raised bog (where plants grow on the hummocks). The prevailing species of trees are the downy birch and the pine. The **Luhasoo transition mire is characterized by the reed of a man's height, which designates the border between the transition mire and the raised bog.**

A **RAISED BOG**, the last stage of the wetland development, has arisen when the peat layer of the transition mire thickened. The **flora of the Luhasoo Bog is represented by all the typical bog plants**, such as the crowberry, cloudberry, cranberry, cotton grass, labrador tea, marsh Andromeda, heatherleaf, etc. Also some small insectivorous plants, such as the sundews, can be found there. The bog environment is special for its clean water and air. Luhasoo is a habitat of the protected crane.

LAKES – GEMS OF LUHASOO

The three bog lakes at Luhasoo are relicts of the former great ice lake. The largest of them is **Lake Mustjärv (Black Lake)** with the area of 6.9 hectares and the depth of 6–8 metres. The lake was named by its dark water caused by the big humus content. The **water of a bog lake is potable** as because of its acidity it does not contain disease-causing bacteria but, due to the scantiness



Photo: Bog arum, D. Pungar



Photo: Cranberries, D. Pungar

of minerals, it does not extinguish thirst. The lake has a steep peaty shore but it does not contain any plants or fish because of the very acid water.

Lakes **Tiksijärv** and **Püksijärv** are also located in Luhasoo. The surface area of Lake Tiksijärv is 1.3 hectares, but it is much shallower than Lake Mustjärv. This makes white and yellow water lilies grow there. To the east of Lake Tiksijärv, the 0.3-hectare-large Lake Kellamäe Väikejärv, or Lake Püksijärv, is situated.

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 need the landowner's permission.
- Drive your motor vehicle only on the provided roads and park it only in the car park. Cycle only on the roads and provided trails.
- You can put up a tent and make a fire only in the prepared and marked places. At the time of wildfire hazard, it is forbidden to make an open fire, even on special grounds.
- You can use only non-power driven watercraft on the bodies of water.
- Fishing is allowed with one simple hand line on all public water bodies or water bodies designated for public use. For fishing with other fishing gear, you should buy the recreational fishing rights.
- Keep your dog on the leash while moving about in the nature.
- You can pick berries, mushrooms and other forest goods in the protected area.



LUHASOO
Landscape
Protection Area



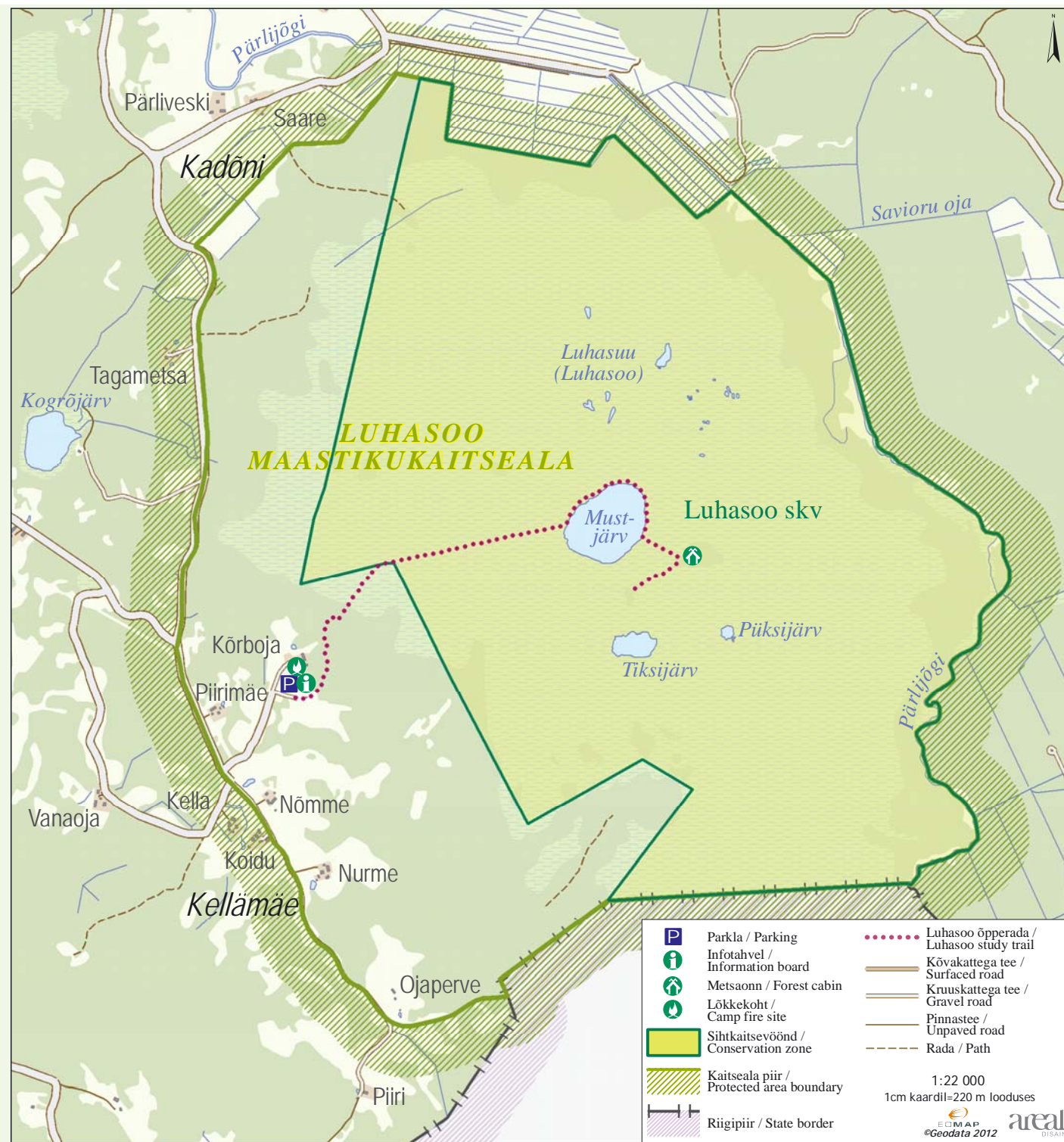
Photo: Luhasoo Study Trail, D. Pungar

LUHASOO LANDSCAPE PROTECTION AREA

The **Luhasoo Landscape Protection Area** with its surface of **916 hectares** is located in the flooded area of the Pärlijõgi (Pearl River) in Rõuge Rural Municipality on the border between Estonia and Latvia. The protection area was founded in 1981 to protect the wetlands of lake origin, characteristic of this region. **Luhasoo is South-Estonia's largest and only almost intact wetland.** It came into being when a flown-through lake overgrew after the Ice Age. Once the Pärlijõgi River flowed into the lake but, by now, the expanded raised bog has pressed the river into the eastern edge of Luhasoo. Estonia has not very many wetlands of this kind of origin. Luhasoo is also known as the Kellamäe Bog, which actually denotes the westernmost part of the wetland.

LUHASOO STUDY TRAIL (5 km)

A sign at the Võru-Rõuge-Krabi Road will lead you to the beginning of the study trail. When approaching the bog from here, do not let the sign of private land embarrass you. Moving along the road, you will get to the car park with an information board and a prepared campfire place in the vicinity. The trail is provided with direction signs and information boards on different wetland communities, the local fauna and history. The trail first passes through a forest and then goes along a boardwalk through different wetland communities. When you pass the picturesque Lake **Mustjärv** (Black Lake), you will get additional excitement and feast for the eyes. After that, the boardwalk will turn towards the largest island of mineral land, or the bog island, which is called **Meisaar** (Our Island). There you can find



a forest cabin with a fireplace, an open fire ground, and a dry toilet. If you wish to stop longer and make a campfire on the island, you should take the wood with you from the firewood shelter at the beginning of the boardwalk. From Meisaar, the boardwalk will take you on to the next bog island, where you can have a view of Lake Tiksijärv. After that, however, you should walk back along the same trail.

LUHASOO BOG ISLANDS

Bog islands are historically interesting places, which have been used as sanctuaries at difficult times, for example by “forest brothers” during World War II. In Luhasoo, there are **15 bog islands**, which are the relicts of former hills. Common forest plants, such as bilberries, cowberries and bog whortleberries, as well as different species of mosses and lichens grow on bog islands.

WHY GO TO LUHASOO?

South-Estonia's unique hilly landscape does not comprise any large raised bog expanses but, however, all the stages of paludification – the fen, the transition mire, and the raised bog – are represented in the small area of Luhasoo.

A **FEN**, the initial stage of the development of wetland, is watery and rich in species. The peat layer is not thick yet and the plant roots reach the mineral-rich groundwater. A typical tree is the downy birch. **The local conditions are favourable for orchids.** In Luhasoo, the early marsh orchid, common spotted orchid, Russian marsh orchid, and the marsh helleborine can



Photo: Forest cabin, D. Pungar