

(*Myotis dasycneme*), the brown long-eared bat (*Plecotus auritus*) and Nathusius' pipistrelle (*Pipistrellus nathusii*) – have found their homes in the hollows and cracks of the old trees.

ÕISU HIKING TRAIL (2.6 km)

At the manor house, signs show you the way to the 2.6-kilometre-long walk along the Õisu River Valley. The river valley is 1.2 kilometres long, 300-400 metres wide; the relative height of its slopes is up to 20 metres. The scenic valley is famous for the sandstone outcrops on its steep slopes; its feet, however, are swampy and rich in springs. The outcrops of red sandstone are, on average, 8-14 metres high, the largest of them being 14.6 metres high and 34.4 metres long. Fossils of armoured fish can be found inside the outcrops. The relief "Virgin carrying water", engraved into an outcrop in the 1930s by Elsa Põld, a student of the Tartu Higher Art School Pallas, is an original sight. The wall relief, damaged by times, has been partially restored, giving the idea of the extraordinary artwork. Some rare species of mosses, such as the Dichodontium moss (*Dichodontium pellucidum* Hedw.), fox-tail feather-moss (*Thamnobryum alopecurum* Hedw.), and Fontinalis moss (*Fontinalis hypnoides* Hartm.), grow on the outcrops and in the spring mires.

A part of the hiking trail with views of the Vidva Brook runs on a slope of the ancient valley. You will have the rest of the walk on the flatter and woodier opposite bank of the brook, where you can admire the powerful outcrop walls in the observation places. **The Õisu River Valley is also called the Taevaskoda of Mulgimaa.**



Photo: Colonial green algae (*Cladophora aegagropila*), A. Ader

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 only on the provided roads and park it only in the car park.
- Use only non-power watercraft on the bodies of water.
- Put up your tent and make a fire in the prepared and marked places.
- At the time of fire risk it is forbidden to make an open fire, even on special grounds.
- 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.
- 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.



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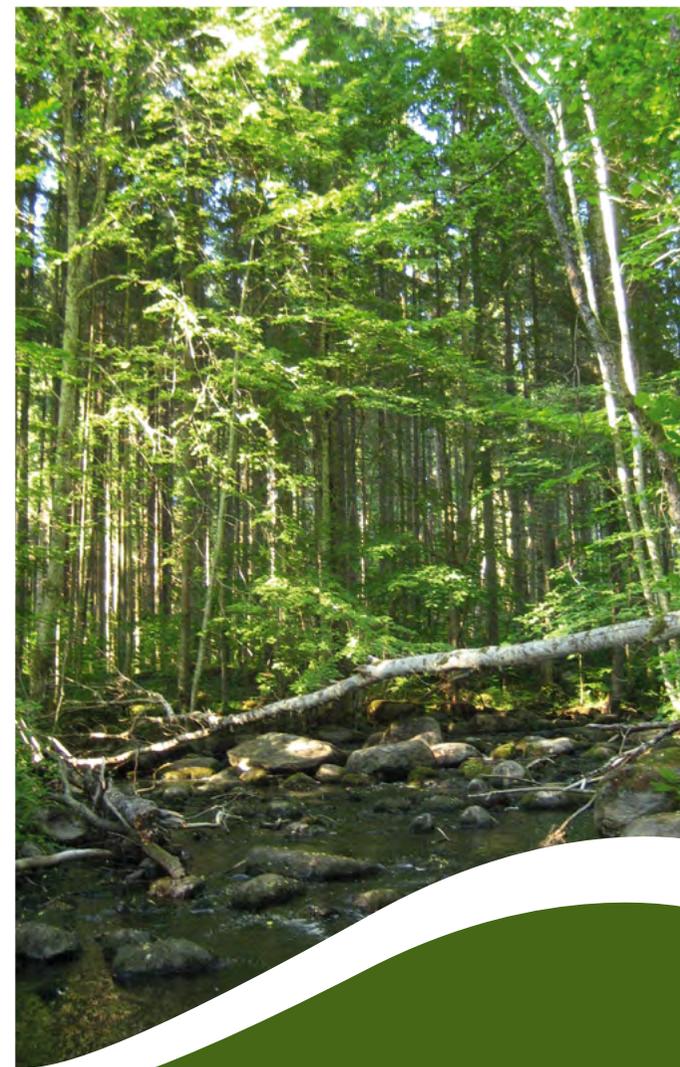


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ÕISU
Landscape
Protection Area



Photo: Õisu Lake, E. Riig

ÕISU LANDSCAPE PROTECTION AREA

The Õisu Landscape Protection Area (592.4 hectares) is located in the Rimmu Ancient Valley in the Sakala Upland, Halliste Rural Municipality in the heart of Mulgimaa (*Mulklane*). The protected area with its present borders was founded in 1998, when several closely situated protected objects were taken under one umbrella. The objective of the protection area is to guarantee the conservation of the landscape as well as the habitats of the species of plants and animals, and to maintain the developed style of the Õisu Manor Park. The landscape protection area consists of Õisu Lake, the Õisu Manor and Manor Park, the Õisu Ancient Valley with the sandstone outcrops on its banks, and the Ariva Forest.

ARIVA FOREST

The forest is distinctive for its tree groups where oaks, ashes and fluttering elms prevail. On the protected area, 13 protected species of plants grow, the most remarkable of which being the Siberian ligularia (*Ligularia sibirica*) and lady's-slipper orchid (*Cypripedium calceolus*).

ÕISU LAKE

Õisu Lake in the Rimmu Ancient Valley is a remnant of a former body of water, a part of which has become a 1,454-hectare-large mire to the north-west of the lake. The area of the lake itself is 193.7 hectares, its average depth is 2.8 metres, the maximum depth is 4.3 metres, and the length of its shoreline is 6,985 metres. The shores are mostly low and swampy. The lake is one of the three largest (more than 100 hectares) lakes in Viljandi County.

About 12 species of fish live in Õisu Lake. The roach (*Rutilus rutilus*), silver bream (*Blicca bjoerkna*) and bleak (*Alburnus alburnus*) are predominant, while the common bream (*Abramis brama*) and perch (*Perca fluviatilis*) are also



numerous. The protected European weatherfish (*Misgurnus fossilis*) have also been found.

The lake and its surroundings are favourable nesting, feeding and stopover sites for migratory birds. 105 species of birds have been registered, including 67 species of locally nesting birds. Some protected birds, such as the lesser spotted eagle (*Aquila pomarina*) and the whitetailed eagle (*Haliaeetus albicilla*), have been noticed to prey here. An eight-metre-high bird-watching tower has been built on the lake shore. As for rare plants, colonial green algae (*Cladophora aegagropila*) can be found in the water near the shore.

Õisu Mill Lake or, alternatively, Õisu Dam Lake or Veskejärve (3.02 hectares) has been built on the Vidva Brook.

ÕISU MANOR HOUSE AND PARK

The Õisu Manor House is an early-classicistic building, the main part of which was constructed in the 18th-19th centuries, after the manor was donated to Admiral Peter von Siver's widow by Jelizaveta Petrovna, the Empress of Russia, in 1744. The entrance to the mansion and its front square are framed by an arc-shaped granary and a stable/coach house. During the times, the building has housed a dairy school and a food factory. Since 2008, the mansion has been privatised and under restoration.

Behind the manor house, the Õisu Manor Park (11.4 hectares), in the form of terraces, descends towards the lake. The park was designed as an English garden by the architect Georg Kuphaldt. The park is rich in species of trees and bushes (approximately 85 different species). The terraced park is decorated with a group of sculptures "Youth", a fountain and three ponds. Four species of bats - Daubenton's bat (*Myotis daubentonii*), the pond bat



Photo: Õisu Manor House, A. Rõigas