

**Resolution CM/ResDip(2008)1
on the revised regulations for the European Diploma for Protected Areas**

*(Adopted by the Committee of Ministers on 20 February 2008
at the 1018th meeting of the Ministers' Deputies)¹*

Appendix 5: Model plan for annual reports

Annual report for the year 2025

Annual reports should describe the changes that have taken place since the previous year in dynamic terms of management and function and not be limited to basic data. Any new text or map introducing a change in the situation of the area should be attached to the annual report.

State: *ESTONIA*

Name of the area: *MATSALU NATIONAL PARK*

Central authority concerned:

Name: *Ministry of Climate*

Suur-Ameerika 1, 10122 Tallinn

+372 626 2802

info@kliimaministeerium.ee

<https://kliimaministeerium.ee/en>

Authority responsible for its management:

Name: *Republic of Estonia Environmental Board*

Address: *Roheline 69, 80010, PÄRNU*

Tel: *+327 662 599*

Fax: *-*

e-mail: info@keskkonnaamet.ee, kaja.lotman@keskkonnaamet.ee

www: <https://keskkonnaamet.ee/en>, <https://kaitsealad.ee/en/protected-areas/matsalu-national-park>

¹ As amended by Resolution CM/ResDip(2014)2 on 2 July 2014 at the 1204th meeting of the Ministers' Deputies.
Internet : <http://www.coe.int/cm>

1. Conditions: List here all conditions which were attached to the award or the renewal of the European Diploma. Explain either how the conditions have been totally complied with or detail the progress in complying with the conditions. Please also indicate any unresolved difficulties that you have encountered.

1. ensure that the management plan for 2015 to 2024 is implemented and appropriately funded, and revised before the end of the plan's period in 2024;

Regulation by the Minister of Environment ([Kaitsekorralduskava koostamise ja kinnitamise kord ning kaitsekorralduskava kinnitaja määramine–Riigi Teataja](#)) from 2022 that prolongs validity of the existing management plans until annulled. Matsalu management plan therefore has been automatically prolonged. Revision of the protection regulation 2023 confirmed validity of the protection goals. The same year a pilot evaluation of management effectiveness did not reveal shortcomings. In addition, activities in the national park are planned based on national habitat and species action plans.

2. Recommendations: List here all recommendations which were attached to the award or the renewal of the European Diploma. Explain either how the recommendations have been totally complied with or detail the progress in complying with the recommendations. Please also indicate any unresolved difficulties that you have encountered.

1. continue the co-operation with the local farmers and other stakeholders to improve the management and well-being of the grassland communities of the national park. Liaise with both farmers and others in relation to the use of the cut hay.

There are 95 farmers or small entrepreneurs involved in meadow management and 7570 ha of meadows were managed by grazing and hay cutting in 2025 but due to the wet weather conditions some of the areas were too wet for management.

Additional consultation service for landowners was continued from the LIFE IP ForEst and Farmland in order to involve more landowners in meadow management and nature friendly farming in general.

18 ha of coastal meadow were cleared up from bushes and reed and grazing was organized there, also some spawning ponds for amphibians were made.

More information about Matsalu NP and meadows:

https://loodusrikaseesti.ee/en/otsing?search_keys=Matsalu

2. envisage the setting-up of a scientific advisory group in order to achieve the full potential of the national park for scientific research and education. The group would provide strategic advice and, upon request, review the quality of research proposals and scientific results, and provide other scientific advice;

The cooperation with scientists is ongoing. Research on gull populations was continued on island Kakrarahu.

Tartu University Maritime Institute of Estonia monitored the coastal fish stocks.

Tartu University Institute of Ecology continued research on “Managing coastal grasslands for endangered wader species” in the frame of IP LIFE ForEst and Farmland

New International Scientific project about feeding and survival rate of Lapwings started in this year with coordination of the University of South Bohemia (Czech Republic)

The results of the investigations of visitors 2023 was published on the website of VistPärnu . The study shows that visitors are satisfied with the infrastructure nature and silence and peace in the park <https://visitparnu.com/sise-ja-valisturistide-klienditeekonna-uuring-matsalu-rahvusparki-ja-haademeeste-piirkonnas/>

3. despite the hunting restrictions within the national park, strengthen co-operation with hunters for the management and control of some invasive species;

In cooperation with hunters' invasive predators' control has been organised on 4 islands before the arriving of birds on 2025. 28 racoon dogs, 19 red foxes were culled on the nesting aeras of coastal islands. The investigation showed positive influence of it to the breeding success of the birds.

4. Set up a warning system to detect, at an early stage, and enable appropriate action to be taken against alien, invasive species which could threaten the biodiversity of the national park;

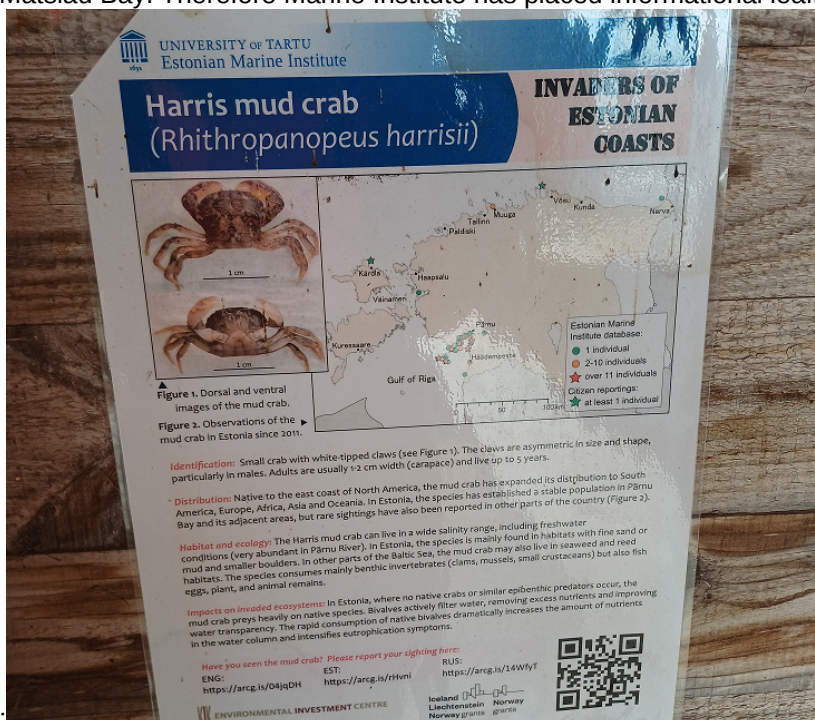
There are still some web-cameras in the nature to monitor the predators.

There is a state monitoring scheme for mammals' footprints in the park in two areas (square 1kmX1kmX1km monitoring time in February) which helps recognize alien mammals as well.

*The works for eradication of giant hogweed *Heracleum sosnowskyi* took place in five areas in National Park in 2025. The eradication was correct and new colonies were not found. There is open system to inform Environmental Board about the new places of this species: [Alien species of hogweed and their management | Keskkonnaamet](#)*

National geo-information system for invasive snails has been created that will help in tracking these also in Matsalu if needed (no cases in the national park this far): <https://survey123.arcgis.com/share/f50da40017564ae28439e93aefc44159>

In the frames of regular fish-stock monitoring invasive alien species Harris mud crab was discovered in the Matsalu Bay. Therefore Marine Institute has placed informational leaflets in the marine harbours of the bay:



4. prepare a climate change adaptation plan for the national park by 2024;''

Project Horizon Blue4all is analysing the climate change mitigation possibilities on western coastal areas.

The draft version of Climate Adaptation Plan for Matsalu National Park has been prepared for 2024 and the communication phase with specialists was in 2025. The Plan will be ready for the process of acceptance in 2026.

5. ensure that printed guides to the hiking trails and routes in Estonian and translations into the major European languages are available for national and international visitors and assess the opportunity and feasibility of an increase in the number of trails.

The signs on the Puise-Kiideva hiking trail were renewed by the Haasaplu town administration on the northern coast of the bay.

The website was refreshed for visitors <https://visitmatsalu.ee/en/> and

*The website of State Forest Management Centre Matsalu National Park was refreshed-
[Penijõe campfire site » Matsalu National Park » State Forest Management Centre](#) , [Suitsu rest stop » Matsalu National Park » State Forest Management Centre](#), [Keemu observation tower » Matsalu National Park » State Forest Management Centre](#), [Kloostri observation tower » Matsalu National Park » State Forest Management Centre](#), [Nurga rest stop » Matsalu National Park » State Forest Management Centre](#)*

The Matsalu National Park website was refreshed

<https://kaitsealad.ee/en/protected-areas/matsalu-national-park>

The State Tourism Board website was refreshed

[Explore & Discover | Visit Estonia](#)

Local Tourism organizer group Terra Maritima website

[Visitmatsalu – Visit Matsalu](#)

6. **Site Management:** List here any changes to the European Diploma holding site management, in relation to both terrestrial and aquatic environments (as appropriate), and in relation to staff and finances, since the last annual report was submitted to the Council of Europe. Please also indicate any unresolved difficulties that you have encountered.

Due to changed assessment methods for marine habitats Matsalu Bay as a habitat estuary was classified as in unfavourable status. This does not reflect the actual deterioration of site conditions but a more rigorous analysis of the situation. While most of the problems (eutrophication, heavy metals, alien marine invertebrates) are beyond control by the site management they will be taken into account as much as possible.

Matsalu National Park has also been made into a separate Natura 2000 site (it was part of Väinameri Natura 2000 before but now is bordering to the latter).

7. **Boundaries:** Give details of any changes to the boundaries of the European Diploma holding site since the last annual report was submitted to the Council of Europe. If there are any changes, please attach an appropriate map to this report. Please also indicate any unresolved difficulties that you have encountered.

The has been no changes

8. **Other information:** List here any other information about the European Diploma holding site which you consider should be provided to the Council of Europe.

Minister of Climate and the Minister of Culture visited Matsalu NP in framework of Matsalu International Nature Film Festival. [Films 2025 :: Matsalu Loodusfilmide Festival. MAFF 2026](#)

Matsalu National Park renewed the commitment to sustainable tourism

. <https://www.europarc.org/sustainable-tourism/awards/ecst-awards-ceremony-2025/>

The following sections of the form should only be filled in if your area is in the year before a renewal of its European Diploma for Protected Areas, i.e. year 4 after the award of the European Diploma or year 9 after its renewal.

6. Natural heritage (general abiotic description: geomorphology, geology and hydrogeology, habitats, flora, fauna, landscape) – State of conservation

- 6.1. Environment: changes or deterioration in the environment, of natural or anthropic origin, accidental or permanent, actual or anticipated
- 6.2. Flora and vegetation: changes in the plant population and in the vegetational cover; presumed causes
- 6.3. Fauna: changes in the sedentary or migratory populations; congregating, egg-laying and breeding grounds

7. Cultural heritage and socio-economic context

- 7.1. Cultural heritage
 - 7.1.1. Changes concerning cultural heritage
- 7.2. Socio-economic context
 - 7.2.1. Changes concerning the socio-economic context

8. Education and scientific interest

- 8.1. Visitors – Information policy
 - 8.1.1. Arrangements for receiving and informing the public (building, booklets, maps, cards, etc.)
 - 8.1.2. Frequentation by visitors and behavior (number, distribution in time and space)
 - 8.1.3. Special visits (distinguished persons, groups, etc.)
- 8.2. Scientific research
 - 8.2.1. Current or completed research (observation, experimentation, etc.; identification or inventory of the species listed in the appendices to the Bern Convention, etc.)
 - 8.2.2. Scientific publications

9. Site description (vulnerability, protection status, ownership, documentation)

- 9.1. Changes in legislation or regulations
- 9.2. Changes in ownership title (conversion to public property, rentals, etc.)
- 9.3. Extension or transfer, new uses (for example, conversion into total reserve)

10. Site management (management plans, budget and personnel)

- 10.1. Improvements made
 - 10.1.1. Ecological action affecting the flora and biotopes; controls of fauna
 - 10.1.2. Protection against the elements (fire, water regime)
 - 10.1.3. Approaches and thoroughfares (paths, roads, car parks, signposting, fencing, etc.)
 - 10.1.4. Field equipment (hides and study facilities)
 - 10.1.5. Waste management
 - 10.1.6. Use of renewable energy systems
- 10.2. Management
 - 10.2.1. Administrative department: changes made
 - 10.2.2. Wardens' department: changes made
 - 10.2.3. Internal policing measures
 - 10.2.4. Infringement of regulations and damage; legal action

11. Influence of the award of the European Diploma for Protected Areas

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