

RESOLUTION ResDip (2008) 1

ON THE REGULATIONS FOR THE EUROPEAN DIPLOMA OF PROTECTED AREAS

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

APPENDIX 5

MODEL PLAN FOR ANNUAL REPORTS

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. They should not, without justification, exceed six pages. The report of the year preceding the one in which the validity of the European Diploma of Protected Areas is to be renewed should be more detailed. 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:

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Authority responsible for its management:

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I. General information

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

- 1.1. Environment: changes or deterioration in the environment, of natural or anthropic origin, accidental or permanent, actual or anticipated
 - *No changes*
- 1.2. Flora and vegetation: changes in the plant population and in the vegetational cover; presumed causes
 - *101,2 ha of valuable semi-natural meadows were restored.*
- 1.3. Fauna: changes in the sedentary or migratory populations; congregating, egg-laying and breeding grounds
 - *The 3 year cycle of bird monitoring on the islets of Väinamere and Matsalu bay begun this year. The breeding amount on islands has changed formidably comparing to previous monitoring cycle (2004-2006). The number of breeding birds on islets has decreased about 1900 pairs. The main reason for the decline is that the cormorants no longer breed on islets of Matsalu bay. Also the predation is still substantial reason for decreasing of population size of breeding birds on small islands.*

2. Cultural heritage and socio-economic context

2.1. Cultural heritage

2.1.1. Changes concerning cultural heritage

- *The study about cultural heritage and population structure of Matsalu national park is still ongoing. So far the study has described the structure of 39 villages, analyzed 496 homesteads with buildings and found 344 destroyed homesteads.*
- *Also the project of creating a web solution for traditions of Matsalu national park is afoot. The project's aim is to create a web-based map, which links the traditions, customs, fairytales etc to the places with which they are associated. Thus far 800 places have been found.*

2.2. Socio-economic context

2.2.1. Changes concerning the socio-economic context

- *The preparation of Matsalu national park management plan is still in progress. The preparation process involved several meetings. Eight meetings were organized for general public engagement (two meetings in every parish in Matsalu national park). In addition two meetings were organized for special groups (The State Forestry Center, semi-natural habitat managers, commercial fishermen, hunters, local authorities, tourism entrepreneurs and local societies).*
- *The Junior Rangers course was held in Matsalu national park in June. The 15 participants learned about Estonian environmental organizations, birds, mammals, insects and marine life. They also learned to build stone fences and how to survive in the wilderness.*

- *Non-profit association Terra Maritima arranged a study trip to Setomaa for entrepreneurs of Matsalu region. Setomaa is a historical region in South-East Estonia with its own dialect and culture.*
- *Study tour and a meeting were arranged for the stakeholders of Matsalu national park and other Estonian national park board representatives.*

3. Education and scientific interest

3.1. Visitors — Information policy

3.1.1. Arrangements for receiving and informing the public (building, booklets, maps, cards, etc.)

- *A new map of Matsalu national park was made. The map is provided to the visitors of Matsalu national park visiting centre for free.*
- *Two information boards at Kloostri manor and Puise cape were renewed.*
- *The preparation of Matsalu interactive guide was initiated. This is a website which in the future will introduce the nature and cultural heritage of Matsalu national park.*
- *A roll-stand about the heritage of Matsalu national park was made.*
- *Training for restoring old cellars was conducted.*

3.1.2. Frequentation by visitors and behaviour (number, distribution in time and space)

- *The State Forestry Centre recorded 20722 visits to Matsalu national park. The most popular visiting sites were Keemu and Suitsu resting places.*
- *The State Forestry Centre conducted 103 learning programs for 2060 people and 12 nature learning programs for 563 people.*
- *Environmental Board conducted 6 learning programs for 126 people.*
- *The year 2013 is stated as world's wetlands year, therefore the Environmental Board in cooperation with the State Forestry Centre conducted a Wetland's day on 18th of April.*
- *11th Matsalu Nature Film Festival with 280 films from 60 countries around the world was held in September for 6000 visitors. The countries like Malta, Costa-Rica, Nicaragua, Algeria and Singapore were represented for the first time. The Grand Prix of the festival was awarded to German director Oliver Goetzl for his documentary about the Sloth Bears of India – "Jungle Book Bear".*

3.1.3. Special visits (distinguished persons, groups, etc.)

- *Study tour for Environmental Investments Centre was held in 22nd to 23rd of May.*
- *The Minister of Environment visited Matsalu national park in frames of Matsalu Nature Film Festival in September.*

3.2. Scientific research

3.2.1. Current or completed research (observation, experimentation, etc.; identification or inventory of the species listed in the appendices to the Bern Convention, etc.)

- *As mentioned above the 3 year cycle of bird monitoring on the islets of Väinamere and Matsalu bay begun this year.*
- *All known eagle's breeding places in Matsalu national park were monitored. In two of them the breeding was successful.*
- *Cormorants were monitored on islets of Matsalu bay. Monitoring showed that the cormorants have not bred on the islets of Matsalu bay for two years in a row.*

3.2.2. Scientific publications

- *Rohtla, M., Vetemaa, M., Urtson, K., Soesoo, A. (2012). Early life migration patterns of Baltic Sea pike *Esox lucius*. *Journal of Fish Biology*, 80 (4), 886-893;*

- *Rohtla, M., Vetemaa, M., Taal, I., Svirgsden, R., Urtson, K., Saks, L., Verliin, A., Kesler, M., Saat, T. (2013). Life history of anadromous burbot (Lota lota, Linnaeus) in the brackish Baltic Sea inferred from otolith microchemistry. Ecology of Freshwater (not published yet).*

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

4.1. Changes in legislation or regulations

- *The possible changes in the legislation are still prepared and discussed.*
- *The preparation of management plan for Matsalu national park is still in process.*

4.2. Changes in ownership title (conversion to public property, rentals, etc.)

- *8469 ha of state-owned land was rented for meadow management by State Forestry Centre.*
- *205,6 ha of unreformed land was formalized to state-owned land.*

4.3. Extension or transfer, new uses (for example, conversion into total reserve)

- *No changes*

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

5.1. Improvements made

5.1.1. Ecological action affecting the flora and biotopes; controls of fauna

- *All the individuals of Frog Orchid (Coeloglossum viride) on the Keemu coastal meadow were counted. The condition of the Frog Orchid on the Keemu meadow is good. The habitat is protected with an electric fence and is grazed by horses and cattle.*
- *1,2 ha of Baltic Dunlin key area on Põgari coastal meadow was restored (bushes removed).*
- *1,77 ha of Natterjack toad habitat on the island of Kumari was restored and mowed.*
- *All the areas infected with Sosnowski's Hogweed (Heracleum sosnowsky) (ca 0,9 ha) were managed.*

5.1.2. Protection against the elements (fire, water regime)

- *The water regime on the skirt of Salmi coastal meadow was restored by closing trenches in the area. This will moisten the soil on approximately 10 ha of the meadow.*

5.1.3. Approaches and thoroughfares (paths, roads, car parks, signposting, fencing, etc.)

- *774 m of fences were built for grazing cattle on valuable meadows.*
- *In addition 2 roads to alluvial meadows were restored, 2 old drains were replaced and 14 new ones constructed, also 2 existing exits to alluvial meadows were widened and 2 new exits constructed. These structures are necessary for improving access to alluvial meadows for tractors.*

5.1.4. Field equipment (hides and study facilities)

- *The renewing of Matsalu visiting centre study class was finished.*
- *A building near the Matsalu national park visiting centre was restored and transformed into species rehabilitation centre. Approximately 1000 juvenile Natterjack toads were raised there this year and inhabited to the Saastna peninsula.*

5.1.5. Waste management

- *No changes*

5.1.6. Use of renewable energy systems

- *No changes*

5.2. Management

5.2.1. Administrative department: changes made

- *No changes*

5.2.2. Wardens' department: changes made

- *No changes*

5.2.3. Internal policing measures

- *The State Forestry Centre has endorsed the visitor management plan of Matsalu national park.*

5.2.4. Infringement of regulations and damage; legal action

- *There have been four cases of illegal fishing. In addition there have been two cases of vehicles driving off roads and two cases of boats driving in conservation zones, these actions are forbidden without the consent of the administrator.*

II. Influence of the award of the European Diploma of Protected Areas

- *Influence of the award has been positive*

III. Conditions and/or recommendations for award or renewal

- *The land reform has not influenced the biodiversity of the area*
- *Fishing is still well controlled*
- *The regulation of alien species is going on*
- *Substantial part of semi-natural meadows is grazed and mowed continuously and many areas are restored every year*
- *Efforts are made to restore the water regime of key areas*

Progress with measures taken in order to meet the conditions and/or recommendations defined during the award or renewal of the European Diploma of Protected Areas.