

Water in Estonian landscapes

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MINISTRY OF THE ENVIRONMENT

Estonia – a diverse landscape with water-bodies, sea shores and marine habitats

Length of coastline – 3,780 km

2,222 islands: 318 islands are >1 hectare





>2,300 lakes: 4.8% of territory

Lakes Peipsi and Võrtsjärv

>7,000 rivers: 10 rivers >100 km

Springs, carstic lakes, rivers: flooding



Protection, management and planning instruments

- **Water Act**

Water Management Plans: action plan for management, use and protection of water and water-bodies in a catchment area.

- **Nature Conservation Act**

Protection rules and Management Plans of protected areas.

- **Planning Act**

National spatial plan, county-wide spatial plan, comprehensive plan, detailed spatial plan.

General rules for use of water-bodies

Public use is allowed:

- water abstraction, bathing, water sports, moving on water or ice and fishing;

A shore or bank path:

- a strip for public use and access, for moving along the shore or bank;

Permit for special use, eg.:

- construction, liquidation, dredging, damming of water-bodies;
- use for hydro-electric energy;
- change of characteristics of water or the biological properties of a water-body.

Protection of water-bodies, shores and banks

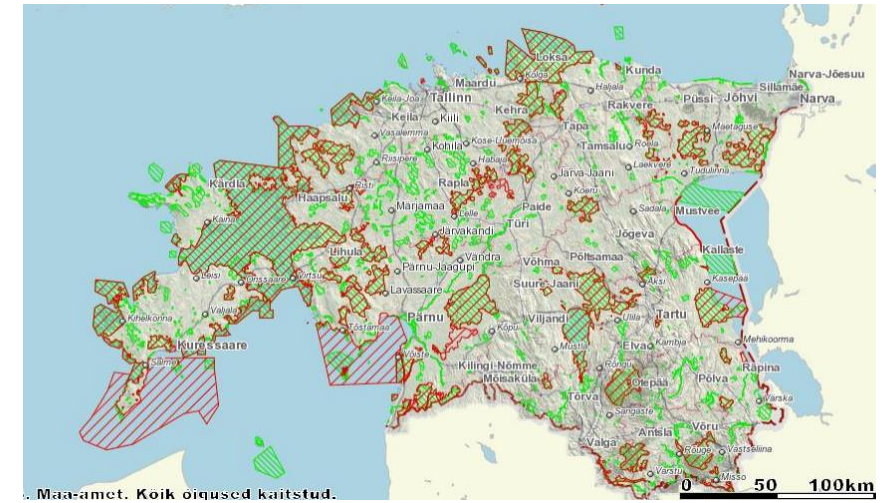
27% of territorial sea designated as protected area;

protection of rivers, brooks, lakes, springs;

protection of terrestrial habitats on shores and banks;

preservation of traditional coastal landscapes;

protection of cultural heritage.



Protected areas



Aksu island, N-Estonia

Management of coastal meadows and grasslands



Breeding habitats of amphibians



Abandoned sand-quarry area in N-W Estonia.
Breeding ponds of Natterjack Toad (*Bufo calamita*)

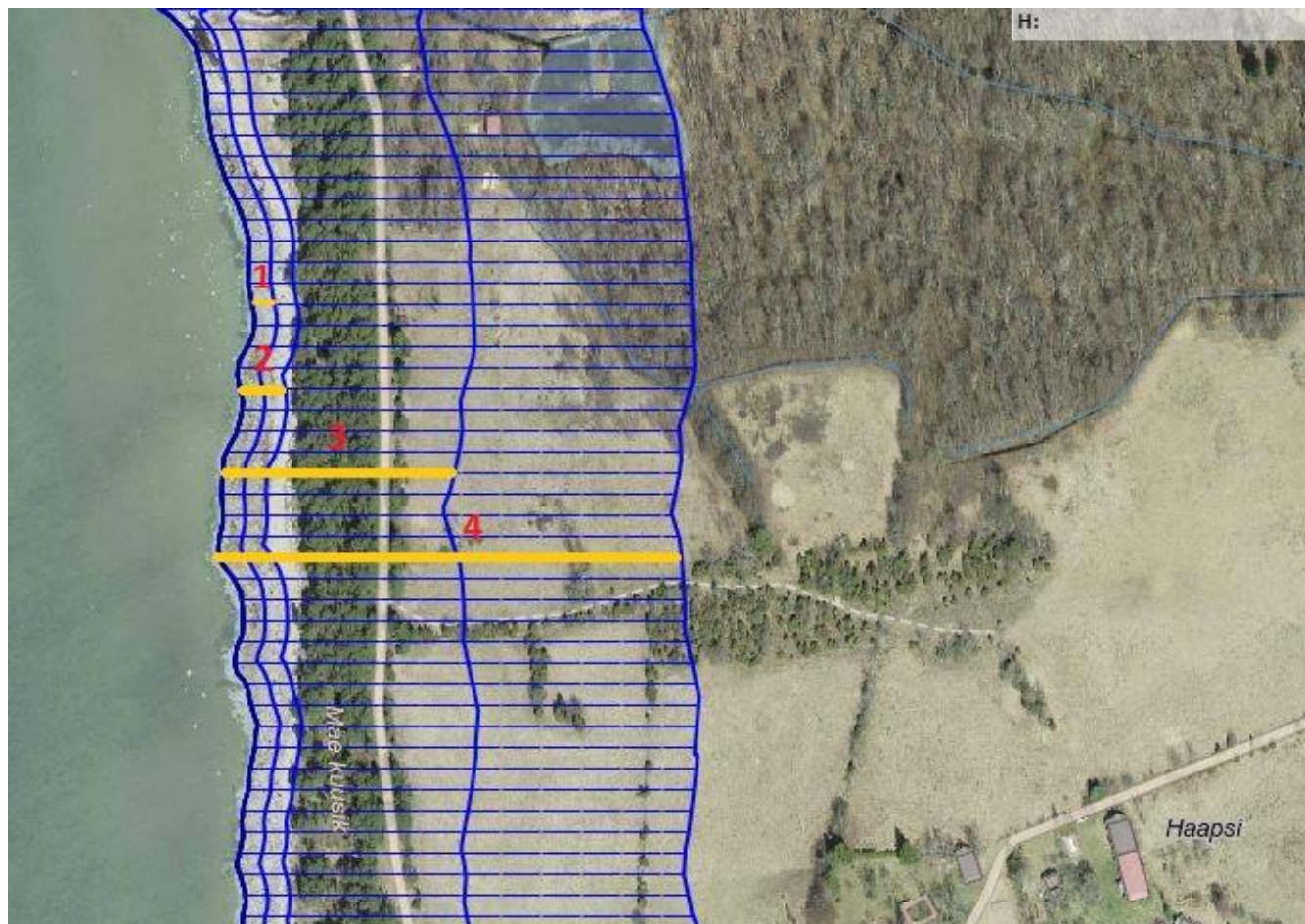
Nature Conservation Act

§ 34. Objective of protection of shores and banks

The objective of protection of shores and banks is:

- to preserve the natural biotic communities present on the shores and banks;
- to curb the harmful impacts of human activity;
- to promote human settlement systems which consider the specific character of the shores and banks;
- to ensure unrestricted movement within, and unrestricted access to, the territories thereof.

Protection zones on shores and banks



All shores and banks have:

- 1 - shore or bank path - *4m-10m*
- 2 - water protection zone - *10m-20m*
- 3 - building exclusion zone -
25/50/100/200m
- 4 - limited management zone -
50/100/200m

Protection zones on shores and banks

Water protection zone to protect water against diffuse pollution and erosion;

Prohibited actions - extraction of resources; cutting of forest; use of fertilisers and plant protection chemicals; economic activities, except for mowing and grazing in semi-natural grasslands, reed-cutting.

Building exclusion zone – construction of new buildings is prohibited.

Limited management zone

Prohibited actions – clearings on shores, establishment of burial sites, waste processing or storage, extraction of resources, driving vehicles outside designated roads.

Wind parks in the sea

Renewable energy, marine habitats and important areas for migratory birds

Views, seascapes and landscapes



Dams on rivers

Restoration of natural river conditions in Kiidjärve, South-Estonia



