



# PARKS & BENEFITS

Baltic protected areas and tourism

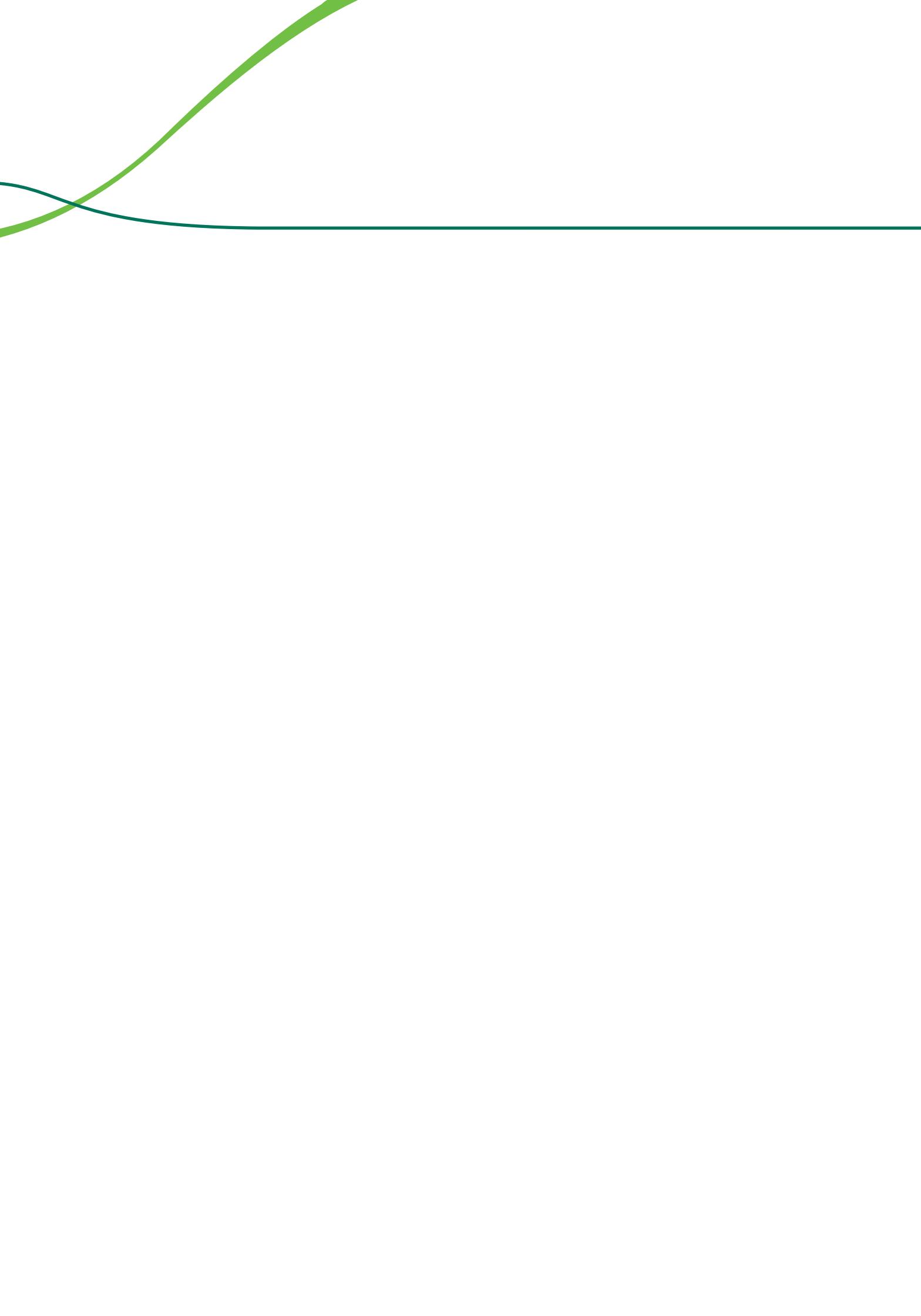
**Natural heritage in the Baltic Sea Region**

Challenges and solutions for sustainable transport to and within protected areas



**Baltic Sea Region**  
Programme 2007–2013







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# PARKS & BENEFITS

## Baltic protected areas and tourism

### Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region

3 | Parks & Benefits

“The Baltic Sea Region is a highly heterogeneous area in economic, environmental and cultural terms, yet the countries concerned share many common resources and demonstrate considerable interdependence. This means that actions in one area can very quickly have consequences for other areas, or the whole of the region. In these circumstances, the area could be a model of regional co-operation where new ideas and approaches can be tested and developed over time as best practice examples. [...] Many challenges require action at the level of the Baltic Sea Region: responses at national or local level might be inadequate.”

*Source: Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions concerning the European Union Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region, Brussels, 10.6.2009, COM(2009) 248 final.*

Map of the Parks & Benefits Project



*Indicated distances are important not only for bikers. Here in Biosphere Reserve Southeast Rügen.*



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Transregional relations, trade and tourism have a long tradition in the Baltic Sea. With 29% of the EU-population (147 million people) and 29.3% of the gross domestic product in the EU (see HWWI future Baltic Sea Region: Potentials and Challenges, April 2011) there is a big potential for development and innovation. Urban areas in the region are in a high dynamic transformation and modernization. On the other hand rural areas have a lot of problems: low population rates, high unemployment and loss of inhabitants. The dynamic development in urban areas requires protected areas for nature conservation as well as for the development of sustainable tourism to ensure recreation and leisure for the inhabitants.

To implement the above mentioned strategy for the Baltic Sea Region, the European Commission divided the activities into four pillars, which referring to a wide range of political activities. The 3rd pillar – **An accessible and attractive region** – covers such priority issues as:

1. improvement of internal and external transport links
2. maintenance and reinforcement of attractiveness of the Baltic Sea Region, in particular, through education, tourism and health.

Those topics bring also Nature or National Parks and Biosphere Reserve in focus. The link between protected areas and sustainable mobility gains more and more public awareness as the solution of transport problems is directly connected to climate and demographic changes, visitor management, carrying capacity and accessibility for all. Best practices for sustainable mobility are also an important economic factor for protected areas and their surroundings. But up to now, it is neither sufficiently presented in the planning process of park administrations, regional and national administrations nor in the focus of surrounding tourism stakeholders. It is necessary to define what the possibilities and limitations of ecological destinations are, to preserve and not to destroy what visitors come to see. The carrying capacity of each destination needs to be respected in ecological, social and cultural terms.

As strategic partners of the “PARKS & BENEFITS” project the VCD Nordost (Association for Sustainable Mobility) and the University of Roskilde have analyzed the sustainable mobility and barrier-free accessibility of protected areas involved in the project.

At first an analysis of international standards and best practices in protected areas has been carried out incl. analyses of public transport systems, a problem analysis in terms of carrying capacity and visitor hotspots, information material and barrier-free infrastructure.

Furthermore, individual in-depth interviews, using a structured questionnaire, were conducted with representatives of each National Park to find out at which level the problem of sustainable mobility is dealt with in each protected area. Field research in the parks and their surroundings also allowed to get an overview and

to compare the current situation. All these results were included in the analysis of sustainable mobility and were discussed in working groups at the partner meetings. The overall SWOT-analysis generated as a result was used to influence the Charter implementation processes of each park in terms of mobility and accessibility requirements. Some general description of the regional conditions for the development of sustainable tourism in and around the protected areas are added with emphasis on population and employment trends and their relation to land cover/land use in up to 50 km from the protected areas.

More or less we found in all Nature Parks of the project conflicts between nature protection and tourism development. Especially in Southeast Rügen Biosphere Reserve and in Kemerri National Park there is a high pressure with tourism related traffic. In Matsalu National Park and Maribosoerne Nature Park conflicts with private landowners related to the maintenance of tourism infrastructure like walking trails have to be solved.

Based on the experience of the Association for Sustainable Mobility two guidelines

1. "For sustainable mobility" and
2. "For barrier-free tourism"

have been developed for the Parks & Benefits project.

Suitable practical solutions could reach both: making the region more attractive for visitors and saving nature and cultural values. During the project it was possible to influence some investments in infrastructure, visitor information and public events promoting the use of public transport, e.g. the Nature-invites-you Day in Kemerri National Park. Other best practice examples concerning the aim of accessibility for all were evolved in Denmark, Lithuania and Norway.

Generally one can say that a common strategy for protected areas in the Baltic Sea Region would also be a great benefit. However, the involved parks were too far away from each other and too different to realize this highly ambitious task. A follow-up project could ensure further knowledge transfer and cooperation. Topics of a follow up project were already formulated by project partners in the evaluation report 2011. The Kemerri National Park pointed out, that more concentration on quality tourism, visitor monitoring and mobility would be useful. Maribosoerne Nature Park, facing new challenges due to the upcoming Fehmarnbelt Bridge, will need closer cooperation about sustainable mobility with Northern Germany. Especially the neighbors Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania could coordinate transregional infrastructure and marketing projects.

*Promoting public transport:  
Signs indicated the extra  
installed bus stops on the  
Nature-Invites-You-Day  
in Kemerri National Park.*

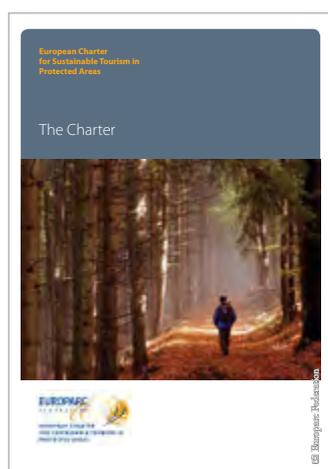


*People using the extra installed  
bus on Nature-Invites-You-Day  
in Kemerri National Park*



## General recommendations for better sustainable access Frameworks

### Europarc Federation: European Charter for Sustainable Tourism in Protected Areas, 2010



Various international organizations have elaborated recommendations on sustainable tourism. Within these binding legal frameworks different standards for sustainable mobility have been proposed as well. In the final report of the World Ecotourism Summit, held 2002 in Québec (Canada), a series of recommendations to governments, the private sector, non-governmental organizations, community-based associations, academic and research institutions, intergovernmental organizations, international financial institutions, development assistance agencies and indigenous and local communities are included:

*“The use of transport to, and within, the destination was a key concern of the preparatory conference in Austria. Where possible, ecotourism should be based on forms of mobility which have low environmental impact. Discussion at the Summit widened the debate on access, with a call for more attention to be paid to facilitating access to rural and natural areas, including mountains, for example through networks of hiking trails.”*

In Chapter A “To national, regional and local governments – addressing transport and other access issues” the report supports:

*“...the further implementation of the international principles, guidelines and codes of ethics for sustainable tourism (e.g. such as those proposed by UNEP, WTO, the Convention on Biological Diversity, the UN Commission on Sustainable Development and the International Labor Organization) for the enhancement of international and national legal frameworks, policies and master plans to implement the concept of sustainable development into tourism” (point 15)*

and demands to:

*“...incorporate sustainable transportation principles in the planning and design of access and transportation systems, and encourage tour operators and the travelling public to make soft mobility choices.” (point 19).*

The European Charter for Sustainable Tourism in Protected Areas promotes the:

*“... use of public transport, cycling and walking as an alternative to private cars:*

*Promotional activities will be carried out to encourage the use of public transport both for access to the protected area and within its boundaries. The reduction of traffic by private vehicles, as well as the promotion of cycling and walking will be a priority.”*

*(Chapter 10)*

A Part of the Action Plans in the Charter Process should be traffic control:

*“Traffic control: Travel to and within the protected area should, wherever possible, be by means of public transport, walking or cycling. The company will therefore provide its customers with information on getting to the sites by public transport. It will also endeavour to arrange assembly points at stations or public transport termini. Moreover, all motorised vehicles used for leisure purposes (e.g. 4 x 4 vehicles, etc.) will be excluded from all tourist facilities.”*



## Elements of the Tourism-Matrix

Access	Activities	Accommodation	Space management	Promotion
airplane private car railway bus bicycle hiking boat/ ferry	culture discovery sport adventure wellness Health-tourism Eco-tourism shopping religion	hotel pension bed&breakfast camping shell friends datcha	Maintenance and protection of cultural and natural heritage in cities, villages and in the landscape	Travel agency Tour-operator Tourism-Info Travel-guide Education maps Internet
<b>Tourism product</b>				
Tourism destination				

The Association of Sustainable Mobility (VCD Nordost), region northeast elaborated practical guidelines such as a “transportation mission” on sustainable mobility and accessibility for all 8 “Parks & Benefits” parks.

### *Support*

The further implementation of the international principles, guidelines and codes of ethics for sustainable tourism in the international, national and regional legal frameworks, policies and master plans.

To implement the concept of sustainable development into mobility and barrier-free standards.

### *Incorporate*

Sustainable transportation principles in the planning and design of access and transportation systems, and encourage tour operators and the travelling public to make soft mobility choices.

Preserve and protect resources while providing safe and enjoyable access within the national parks by using sustainable, appropriate, integrated transportation systems.

### *Challenge*

In many areas access and user demands are exceeding the systems carrying capacity. High visitation levels, at both large and small sites, are causing problems because of the growing volumes of traffic and demands for visitor parking.

In areas of **high density of networks** the problems are rather, that there are too many motor vehicles and too many visitations concentrated in certain time periods than too many users in total. In areas with **low density of networks** is the challenge already from the beginning, not to generate private transport with motor vehicles.

### *Key*

Innovative solutions will be required. A key role to facilitate tourism is a safe, efficient and convenient transportation system allowing easy access and mobility to the visitor to enjoy nature. It provides opportunities for recreational travel and tourism, protects and enhances resources and provides sustained economic development in rural and urban areas.

### *Alternative Transportation Systems*

Explore new innovative, sustainable and appropriate transportation solutions to handle growing traffic demands and reduce resource impacts from the private car. Public transport should be transport for all.

### *Multimodal Travel*

The best guarantee of lasting independent and flexible mobility is having the access to use to several modes of transport. The different modules together form an integrated marketing and communication approach. The reduction of traffic by private vehicles as well as the promotion of cycling and walking will be a priority.

### *Strategy I – Understanding*

Fostering an understanding of the complex relationships among tourism and recreational travel; natural, cultural, and historic resource preservation.

### *Strategy II – Communication*

Transportation as well as tourism-related interests need to be communicated to gain a better understanding of each others perspective. There also need to be a balance between transportation agencies, stakeholders, protected areas and inhabitants to consider environmental, safety and capacity, social and economic effects as well as market effects.

### *Strategy III – Master plan*

Identification of alternative techniques, new technologies and implementation methods for serving transportation demands, Identification of the characteristics of travel and travellers Evaluation of prospective multimodal systems in an master plan.

The nature parks play an important role in the regional economy by providing the access to nature experience and recreation. Although most of these services cannot be traded at the market, their economic value should not be ignored. The attraction value of the nature parks lead to benefits for tourists and via tourism services to economic opportunities for the local population as well. Access to the parks, however, is also of direct value to the local population. They provide not only tourist attraction, but also residential attraction.

The importance of the park as tourist attraction varies between the P&B nature parks. The share of the annual supply of bed-nights occupied by park visitors provides a rough indication of the importance of the park as a tourist attraction. The ratio of beds for overnight stay of tourists to the local population provides a rough indication of the importance of tourist visits to the local economy.

Table 1. P&B parks importance as regional tourist attraction.

		Ratio of overnight stays to bed-night supply <5km	
		<10 %	>10 %
Beds per 1.000 locals <25 km	<10	Kemeri, Maribosørerne	Matsalu, Müritz
	>10	SE-Rügen, Dovrefjell	

Annual bed-night supply is defined as 365 times the number of beds (*accommodation spaces*).

Source: Own calculations based on the P&B survey and EUROSTAT data.

According to **Table 1**, the regions where the number of beds in connection with the park is highest are Rügen and Dovrefjell. Measured in this way, the tourism related to Rügen, in particular, plays an important role to the regional economy.

In these two regions, however, the bed-night demand of the park visitors is less than 10 % of the bed-night supply within 5 km from the park. These figures do not indicate, that the accommodation and related services in the area depend primarily on the nature park.

Matsalu and Müritz are different. The visitors in these parks occupy a fraction higher than 10 % of the local bed-night supply. The number of beds in connection to the parks per 1.000 inhabitants, however, is less than 10 in these regions. It should, however, be noted that the role of the category of second home residents/ tourists is not specified in these figures.

In Kermeri and Maribosørerne, the park visitors demand bed-nights less than 10 % of the local supply and the number of beds per 1.000 inhabitants is less than 10.

*Singnpost in Müritz National Park indicating distances to the Project Partners.*



The parks, however, are not only local assets as *tourist* attractions, but also *resident* attractions. Local residents enjoy in all parks (except Müritz) *more* visits than tourists do.

This shows that the easy accessibility – that is, without overnight stay – of nature parks are as important as the tourism generated by the parks to the regions in which the parks are located.

Some remote regions, that otherwise have difficulties attracting skilled labour, even use such easy access to nature as a “selling point”. Rauma municipality at Dovrefjell in Norway pursues the vision of becoming the world best municipality for nature lovers. This is considered an important quality for attracting specialised labour to the municipality.

The attractiveness of the easy access to nature can, however, hardly be sufficient in itself to generate a net-immigration to a region. But if the local jobs are created, it can be a “selling point”.

The nature parks that can be reached for day visits from larger cities also play an important role of offering breathing space for the urban populations, thus balancing the lack of nature in urban agglomerations. In this way, the parks have a positive impact on the quality of life for citizens in the metropolitan areas of the region.

*Outdoor experience always can attract local and international visitors. Here in Dovrefjell National Park.*



Table 2. Data on visitors and populations in connection to the P&amp;B parks.

Dovrejfjell-Sunddalsfjella National Park Norway	Nature Park Maribosøerne Denmark	Müritzt National Park Germany	Biosphere Reserve South-East-Rügen Germany	Zemaitija National Park Lithuania	Matsalu National Park Estonia	Kemeri National Park Latvia	Kurtuvėnai Regional Park Lithuania	
1.706	47	327	228	209	501	385	189	Size of the Park (in km <sup>2</sup> )
917.734	585.990	143.772	68.126	171.132	160.470	389.293	341.687	Population in the NUTS-3-level-regions, in which the park is situated, persons.
917.734	585.990	727.177	392.854	547.681	300.144	1.095.706	512.819	Population in the NUTS-3-level regions covering the park and areas situated less than 25 km from the park, persons.
15	8	35	500	80	15	45	120	Estimated number of day tourists per year (in 1.000)
5	7	340	390	40	5	15	13	Estimated number of overnight tourists (guest-arrivals) per year (in 1.000)
20	15	375	900	120	20	60	133	Estimated number of visitors per year (in 1.000)
-	997	15	19.600	1.000	62	900	1.105	Number of accommodation spaces within the park
11.430	1.471	100	34.000	1.000	112	1.830	1.400	Number of accommodation spaces within 5 km from the park (including the park)
17	34	1.626	2.142	48	10	135	15	Number of guest overnight stays per year (in 1.000)
3,4	4,9	4,8	5,5	1,2	2,0	9,0	1,2	Average number of overnight stays per overnight tourists
1.5	13.0	14.139.1	4.0	-	57.5	49.5	-	Overnight stays per year per bed
0,4%	1,9%	40,5%	0,1%	-	26,8%	1,7%	-	Ratio of over-night stays to bed-night supply <5km
12	3	1	499	0	1	5	0	Beds <5 km per 1.000 locals in park NUTS-3-level
12	3	0	87	0	0	2	0	Beds <5 km per 1.000 locals <25 km
76%	50%	9%	56%	50%	75%	75%	-	Share of day visits in total visits
21	9	48	1.273	91	50	41	0	Day visits per 1.000 locals <25 km
1,9	0,1	0,4	0,7	0,4	1,7	0,4	0,4	Park area per inhabitant (km <sup>2</sup> /1.000 locals <25 km)

Source: The delineation of the parks made for the calculation of their size have been made by Roskilde University based on various map information from the parks. Population figures are based on distribution of population from EUROSTAT according to the CORINE land cover classification (CORINE = Coordinated Information on the European Environment). NUTS-3-level: Nomenclature of Territorial Units for Statistics, NUTS 3 = Districts. For Dovrefjell, the population is estimated based on information from Statistics Norway.

The estimations of visitors and overnight stay capacity was taken from the following park authorities or local experts:

Klaas van Ommeren, Dovrefjell Sunndalsfjella National Park; Vita Caune, Kemeri National Park; Stefan Woidig, Biosphere Reserve Southeast-Rügen; Jurgita Bartkuvienė, Kurtuvėnai Regional Park; Uffe Nielsen, Nature Park Maribosøerne; Nele Söber, Estonian Environmental Board; Martin Kaiser, Müritzt National Park and Ausra Brazdeikyte, Zemaitija National Park.

The key point for an environmental friendly mobility system inside protected areas is the possibility to use public transport even before entering the protected areas. Thus, the improvement or development of attractive public transport and modal split is absolutely necessary. Leaving the polluting car at home becomes more attractive, when there are other easy ways to get into nature. Especially for international guests it opens up a wide range of mobility options besides renting a car. Transfer points with allocating functions like airports, ferry ports and train stations take a major role in this context. Also an important potential for tourism can be seen in improved connection to international biking and hiking routes. Mainly parks, which are very far away from densely populated areas, need 'responsible tourism' corridors connecting different parks and tourism highlights. This could be especially interesting for protected areas in Estland and Lithuania. A good example is the Danish Hiking Network North West, which connect different tourist destination for nature lovers, locals as well as tourists. As a network of paths, routes and camp sites fitted out with three or four night shelters for hikers - useable for large groups, families or alone. The sites are distributed through the region with a distance of 10 to 15 kilometres between each.

*To hike along a net of camp sites fitted out with three or four night shelters is an good transport alternative in Denmark.*

[www.shelternet.dk](http://www.shelternet.dk)  
[www.visitdenmark.dk](http://www.visitdenmark.dk)



Aviation is an important part of interaction within the Baltic Sea Region and a vital link also to protected areas. Intensified competition, not least in form of low-cost aviation, has pushed prices downwards, resulting in increasing travel: the cheaper the flight connection, the more people travel. Low-cost aviation is indeed a very important factor influencing the contemporary patterns of mobility, also influencing local and regional tourism development. A rapid increase in weekend tourism to cities like Riga and Tallinn has been recorded in the past years, mainly from other Nordic countries, but also from Great Britain and Germany. Estonia became more and more integrated into the Nordic systems during the 1990's while Latvia, Lithuania developed their connections to Western Europe. During the first decade of this century, air traffic increased at an exceptional rate, on average 14.9% a year, compared to the average growth rate of global aviation, 5% a year between 1998 and 2008 (Trafikanalys, 2009).

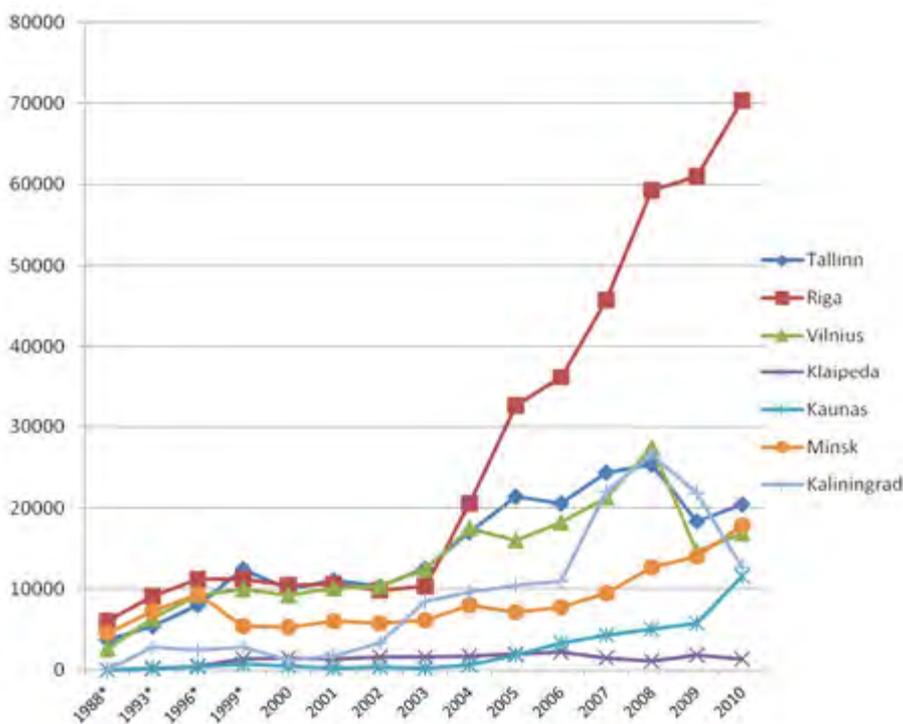


Figure 1: Available Seat Capacity per week 1988–2010, from the examined airports.

Source: Jan Henrik Nilsson, Dept. of Service Management, Lund University, Sweden: Aeromobility and regional tourism dynamics. Paper presented at the 4th Nordic Geographers Meeting, Roskilde 2011.

The grown importance of the aviation sector is a challenge for the existing and future railroad networks. This results from problems with competitiveness of the railway routes in comparison with other transport options. Anyway, protected areas with their own airport are ridiculous. We need valuable land connection within Northern Europe and to its eastern and southern parts as well as a functional multimodal transport network at local level. But international passenger trains are not yet able to compete with airplanes, if we focus only on price issues and lead times. If we talk about sustainable mobility and access into protected areas, then we need to provide safe and enjoyable access within the national parks by using sustainable, appropriate, integrated transportation systems. Decision makers in political and administrative bodies have to face the planning and design of access and transportation systems. At the same time tour operators and the travelling public should be encouraged to make soft mobility choices. Here it could be very useful, to connect the within the P&B-project developed “Guidelines for sustainable mobility” with the framework of the European transport policy.

The main objectives concerning the European Unions transport policy are described in “White Papers”. In a 2001 published White Paper “European transport policy for 2010: time to decide” the common aim was specified as following:

1. multidirectional realisation of a common transport policy
2. elimination of disproportions among modes of transport that lead to congestion
3. improvement of services provision with a growth of demand for transport in the extended European Union
4. integration of transport in sustainable development
5. comprehensive strategy extending beyond the transport policy.

*(Transport White Paper COM(2001) 370, September 2001)*

More recently it is expected, that the size of the transport volume in the next decades will be so large that all the types of transport must cooperate to meet the demand. Following this, the EU should further support the use of balanced means of transport, but not at any cost. In order to use the mobility resources in an optimal and sustainable way, they should be “interoperable”, which means the effective use of different means of transport, single-handedly or in combination with others. *(Keep Europe moving. Sustainable mobility for our continent. Mid-term review of the European Commissions 2001 Transport White Paper, COM(2006) 314 final, Brussels, 22.6.2006.)*

*Tackling the problems of public transport on european scale: Political campaign promoting the Rail Baltica in Tallinn.*



The Ten-T Projects in the Rail Baltica Growth Corridor (RBGC) with the corridor of Rail Baltica and a part of the Scandria-Corridor from Stockholm/ Oslo to Copenhagen. The Scandria follows then over Fehmarnbelt-Bridge via Rostock to Berlin, and in prolongation via Sonora-Project till Italy.

Source: City of Helsinki, 2009. Layout Tovia Design OY.



*Rail Baltica and Rail Baltica Growth Corridor (RBGC): Towards multimodal transport network*

[www.rail-baltica.com](http://www.rail-baltica.com)  
[www.rbgc.eu](http://www.rbgc.eu)

*Cover Rail Baltica VCD, 2008*



*Landscape in Dovrefjell National Park*

One backbone of this policy is the TEN-T program (Trans-European Transport Network) which aims to eliminate bottlenecks in transport infrastructure and to connect national transport networks in the European network. Different modes of transport acceptable for sustainable development should be flexibly connecting. The Trans-European Networks program includes all modes of transport and its objective is to stimulate infrastructural investments in order to build an integrated transport network connecting all member states of the Community.

If we take into account the versatile transport logistics environment of the Baltic Sea Region from the viewpoint of the P&B-Project, we can see that transportation characteristics and demands differ from country to country. Germany and Denmark (like neighboring Poland) have excellent land transport connections with Central Europe, whereas the Baltic States are dependent on sea traffic and the Via Baltica road connection. Here is no place to discuss the significant differences in accessibility even between the Nordic countries, but one can say, that Nature Parks of P&B-project should cooperate with each other as good as with touristic and transport partners in neighboring countries (and big markets) as Poland, Russia, Finland, Sweden and Belarus. In the framework of two major Programs – Rail Baltica and Scandria – should be seen the development of sustainable mobility and tourism in National Parks of the P&B-Project. The connections of some individual countries in the Central and Eastern Europe TEN-T network is shown in the table 3 below:

Table 3.

Country	in the TEN-T network
Poland	Almost all major national transport axes of north–south and east–west are included in the network. The next high-speed railways are also included in the projects.
Lithuania	The main axes of north–south routes: Riga–Kaunas–Mariampol–Warsaw, and east–west Klaipeda–Kaunas–Vilnius–Belarusian border, including Rail Baltica.
Latvia	The main axes of the core network, including connections from Riga to Tallinn and Riga to Kaunas along Rail Baltica, as well as connections between Ventspils and the borders of Russia and Belarus.
Estonia	The road and rail connection from Tallinn to Riga and also to the Russian border (Tallinn–Tartu border), Rail Baltica connection.

Source: Poland, Lithuania, Latvia and Estonia in the TEN-T network, table. adapted from "Private transport market stakeholders in the area of Rail Baltica", A study commissioned by the City of Warsaw and carried out by EU-Consult, December 2011, p. 18

The railway-corridor connecting the Baltic States with Central and Western Europe is called Rail Baltica, which is one of the priority projects of the European Union Trans-European Transport Networks (TEN-T). The project is supposed to link Finland, the Baltic States and Poland and also improve the connection between Central and Eastern Europe and Germany. It envisages a continuous rail link from Tallinn (Estonia), to Warsaw (Poland), going via Riga, (Latvia) and Kaunas, (Lithuania). The linkage between Berlin and Warsaw already exists, while the further connection to Tallinn is emerging. A major problem for environmental friendly transport between the Baltic States is anyhow the train system. Since several years there is no direct train connection between the three capital cities available. Even the new connection between Riga and Minsk leaves out Lithuania, which would be the rather direct way. It should be taken into account, that it would be necessary to implement a cooperation with Russia as one of the key states in the eastern Baltic region.

The wider concept of infrastructural Rail Baltica is also linked with the Rail Baltica Growth Corridor (RBGC), that aims to improve the competitiveness and accessibility of cities and regions in the Eastern Baltic Sea Region through increased interaction and cooperation. RBGC creates a cooperation and transport service platform that observes the needs of both transport sector and customers in line with the green growth corridor principles. RBGC brings benefits for cities and regions, transport sectors and citizens by improving the competitiveness and economic potential of the Region. A very recent study from 2011 commissioned by the City of Warsaw explores the private sector perspectives towards the development of a transport network in the Baltic Sea Region. With a special focus on Rail Baltica was drawn a balance sheet about weak and strong points to improve the conditions for a multimodal transport network in the Baltic Sea Region (*Report: "Private transport market stakeholders in the area of Rail Baltica", A study commissioned by the City of Warsaw and carried out by EU-Consult, December 2011*).



*Night train between Riga and St. Petersburg connect Latvia and Russia.*

The counterpart of Rail Baltica for individual traffic is the Via Baltica, also known as European Route E 67. The Via Baltica is a highway running from Prague in Czech Republic to Helsinki in Finland through Poland, Lithuania, Latvia and Estonia. It is a significant road connection between the Baltic States. The final stretch between Tallinn and Helsinki is provided by ferry (Scandlines) with about 10 car ferry departures each direction per day. There are plans to convert the roadway into a motorway or expressway.

Rail Baltica could be a sustainable alternative to the planned Via Baltica motorway which has proved to be controversial on environmental grounds. In contrast to Via Baltica, the implementation of the Rail Baltica project could become a good practical example of sustainable and efficient utilisation of the Cohesion and Structural Funds, bringing social and economical benefits, as well as environmental and climatic improvements.

*International Busline  
in Riga Main Bus Station.*



*Road through Norway  
between Oslo and Opdaal.*



Within Scandria, solutions for the revitalization of the railway transportation between Berlin and Oresund region and the rail-ferry connection between Berlin and the Baltic Sea were developed.

Regarding the transportation between Germany and Scandinavia the railway has lost about 80% of its costumers due to unattractive schedules and fares, today having a market share of less than 2%. The implementation of an ICE-connection Berlin-Copenhagen has been able to revitalize rail traffic. Nevertheless, the time of travel has so far remained unattractive due to the detour via Hamburg. Travel time could be saved by the electrification, extension and modernization of certain connections. Moreover, the ferry connections in the Baltic Sea could gain in importance for railway passengers. This can be concluded from the experiences of the transportation to the North Sea Islands and to UK. Precondition is the close cooperation of railway and shipping companies that worsened since they were privatized. Scandria was able to reunite the respective actors.

*Scandria - Improving Rail Transport from Berlin to Scandinavia in the Scandinavian-Adriatic Corridor for Innovation and Growth*

[www.scandriaproject.eu](http://www.scandriaproject.eu)



*Ferry boat between Riga and Helsinki leaving the port of Riga.*

## Improved public transport and modal split

Car-free tourism gets more attractive by tourist information providing train stations. Next to this station a bus stop and a bike rental facility enable modal split.



The National Park as brand is a useful basis for the cooperation with public transport companies. Train with advertisement for the Mueritz National Park



Müritze National Park cooperates with local Public Transport/ Public Bus capable to transport bicycles (kommt auf den Schwerpunkt an). A special National Park Ticket can be used.



In many places it becomes difficult for day trippers or overnight guests to find an alternative to travelling by car. Especially in rural areas is the less developed or missing local public transport a source of problems. At the same time are the existing public transport connections in these areas threatened by cut-downs. While in this way getting less attractive for customers without own car, local stakeholders have it hard to attract this clientele. Besides that touristic starting points like train and bus stations do quite often lack a functional network with touristic stakeholders.

In the future the role of public transport might be increasing due to demographical reasons. The ageing of societies means a major challenge, but also a chance for public transport systems. Extra effort at information provision and thoughtful outreach are powerful tools in attracting and maintaining older users of public transport. Further arguments for an increasing role of public transport are the rising oil prices – which makes self-owned cars less attractive – and environmental concerns as well as comfort reasons like stress-free travelling.

Improving public transport basically and essentially for touristic concern means in particular to increase its frequency at weekends and public holidays as well as in the summer season and in the evening and night hours. Inoperative train stations and routes should be at least to some extent be reactivated. Bus stops and train stations should be in general better marked and, if available, ticket vending machines should be self-explanatory. A potential way to promote public transport in the minds of touristic stakeholders is the posting of timetables to them. Local tourist information centers should increase their cooperation with the regional public transport providers, to support visitors willing to travel by public transport. In certain cases may reform the price structure and the use of smaller, more flexible vehicles also a reasonable improvement.

*Modern trains from Oslo to Trondheim passing direct Dovrefjell National Park.*



**Railway**

*Opening up ways into nature should be an aim of public transport. Railway in Dovrefjell.*



*Animates to leave the car outside the park: historical Railway in Biosphere Reserve South-East Rügen.*



**General demands for public transport:**

- ✦ Preservation of the existing train connections to ensure the basic structure of rural areas
- ✦ Maintenance of train stations and associated buildings as well as improvement of their attractiveness for visitors in case of waiting times
- ✦ Joint Action Groups for reutilization of inoperative train station buildings for touristic usage
- ✦ Cross-linking of existing popular train and bus routes with flexible operating solutions like on-demand bus concepts
- ✦ Improving the interconnection between different modes of transport. Especially connections from international airports into rural areas
- ✦ Demand orientated adjustments of train frequencies and harmonization with bus timetables
- ✦ Consideration of new transport concepts such as busses with enviromental friendly engines, civil society based „Bürgerbusse“, public transport at no charge or shuttle-services. Close collaboration with regional taxi companies or bundle offers including train usage are of special interest
- ✦ Target group orientation focusing bicycle and barrier-free tourism

*special event busses oder special busses*

*Public transport must adapt to most common leisure activities in National Parks. busses in Norway are capable to transport skis.*



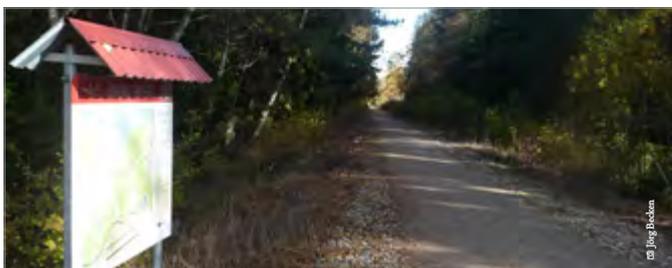
*Matching the needs of tourists as an aim for Public Transport: busses on Rügen are capable to transport bicycles during the season.*



To support sustainable tourism in and around nature parks the establishment and extension of international hiking and biking routes is of utmost importance. Such routes are primarily established as an alternative international network linking major conurbations, although often with extensive detours through eventful lines. Existing nature parks might be located either close to such conurbations or related to the hiking and biking routes between these, but often this will not be the case due to the often marginal location of the valuable nature resources which is why the nature parks has been established. In these cases, park-related hiking and biking routes should be established to link the parks with nearby frequently used railway- and/or bus-junctions, and integrated efficiently in an infrastructure permitting an alternative modal-split-based access to the park.

Interviews with visitors of the nature parks of Parks & Benefits shows that non-regional visitors and especially visitors from abroad are more prone to use public transport and biking and hiking facilities than local and regional visitors. Non-regional users are also contributing much more to the local economy than regional visitors due to their higher spending on accommodation and catering. A development of biking routes connecting nearby protected areas could be a stimulating opportunity for nature tourists that would offer mutual benefits for the involved parks and related tourist services. So, among the parks of Parks & Benefits a biking route connecting Kemeru National Park in Latvia with Zemaitija National Park and Kurtuvenei Regional Park in Lithuania could be an attractive opportunity for nature tourist that could be interested in a varied round tour to the parks, covering a whole week.

*Formerly railway transformed into biking-route near the city of Haapsalu and Matsalu National Park. Soft touristic corridors like this may connect different cities, parks, stakeholders and touristic highlights.*



*Interesting for bicycle tourists are indicated distances, e.g. in Maribo Nature Park.*



*Improved possibilities for hiring bikes*

*Rent-a-Bike system in Riga promotes use in Jurmala (located nearby Kemeru National Park). Promoting Bicycle tourism in the National Park might be possible, too.*



*Attractive for bicycle tourists are shelters to lock up their bikes secure from weather, e.g. in Müritz National Park*



*Sign for bicycle shelter in Müritz National Park. The number indicates the connection to the apartments for bicycle tourists.*



1. Embedding the concept of barrier free access in the management plan of the protected area.
2. Developing a self-commitment to realize at least one attraction for disabled visitors.
3. A variety of programs, exhibits and informational opportunities for all visitors should be provided.
4. Whenever possible protected areas have to provide the same opportunities for visitors with disabilities – though in many cases the opportunities are designed specifically for disabled visitors based often on the type of disability.
5. They should inform visitors about trails that have been made more accessible to visitors with disabilities.

People with special needs have different needs. These needs are not that special at all, if one look closer at barrier free solutions for everyday problems. Protected areas are anyway no exception and should regard that fact. Since the treaty of Amsterdam in 1997 the issue of Disability Mainstreaming is an essential part of policy in the European Union. „Access for all“ and an “Europe free of discrimination of disabled people” became the goal. This matters of course for protected areas as parts of political institutions and should be regarded in their management. On an international scale one can find inspiring role models in the U.S.A and Australia. The National Parks of both countries are considering disabilities in their management plans since decades and provide therefore a big variety of barrier free Best Practices. The term barrier free refers to every concept that fits not only the needs of disabled people, but as well those of e.g. elderly people or families with small children. This concerns especially moving disabilities. Places some are not suitable for wheelchairs or the like, won't be accessible for people who can hardly walk or parents with a baby buggy at all. It is taken for granted that in a protected area not every way or sight could be made accessible for these groups of visitors. Anyhow there should be at least one offer for them. So to say: for 10% of the potential tourists it is indispensable, for at least 30% helpful, but the effects are for all 100% of them comfortable. Nevertheless has to be taken into account, that there is not only this one kind of disability: Blindness, deafness and learning disabilities are summed up in the term barrier free as well. People affected by those disabilities demand of course other offers while exploring and discovering nature. Therefore are their needs different, but not special. Adapted offers for that kind of visitors could although are attractive for people which are not directly affected. Feeling nature and not just seeing it is for everybody interesting as well as getting information about the surrounding in an easy understandable language. For that reason got the following guidelines recommended for every protected area within the Parks & Benefits Project.

These guidelines resulted in the implementation of innovative methods of barrier free visitor management systems in the participating protected areas Kurtuvenai Regional Park (LT), Zemaitija National Park (LT), Municipalities of Lolland and Guldborgsund and Nature Park Maribosoerne (DK) and Dovrefjell National Park (NO). Orientation was given by the detailed information on accessibility criteria of facilities provided on the Danish Accessibility Associations website [www.godadgang.dk](http://www.godadgang.dk), which distinguish seven different disability categories:

- ✦ Wheelchair users
- ✦ People with reduced mobility, arm and hand impairments
- ✦ People with visual impairments
- ✦ People with hearing impairments
- ✦ People with asthma or allergy
- ✦ People with learning disabilities
- ✦ People with reading difficulties

The criteria are already well established in an Accessibility Label which is granted to 304 restaurants, 184 conference, exhibition and meeting venues as well as 211 museums and indoor attractions across Denmark. The Parks & Benefits partners decided to apply these criteria to improve their infrastructure, outdoor furniture, attractions and facilities.

With a new focus set on needs of disabled and elderly people future oriented investments were made during the Parks & Benefits Project, that can act as model solutions for protected areas. All solutions will be jointly evaluated and compiled in a master guide on innovative visitor management solutions within protected areas, describing the quality demands, solutions and its technical description, transferred to the Nordic Baltic Section partners, the Europarc Federation members and to partners national bodies to lobby its future implementation.

*Best practise example:  
Juodle lake path in the  
Kurtuvenai Regional Park  
was adapted for travelling  
with wheelchairs and buggies.*



*Kurtuvenai Regional Park,  
Lithuania: special offers for  
mental and physical handicapped*



*In the Horse Riding Centre we admit disabled people, mostly children, for riding; and it is problem to heave up them on horse back. From the ramp they can sit on a horse themselves, with minimum of help.*



*Zemaitija National Park, Lithuania:  
nature experience with all senses*

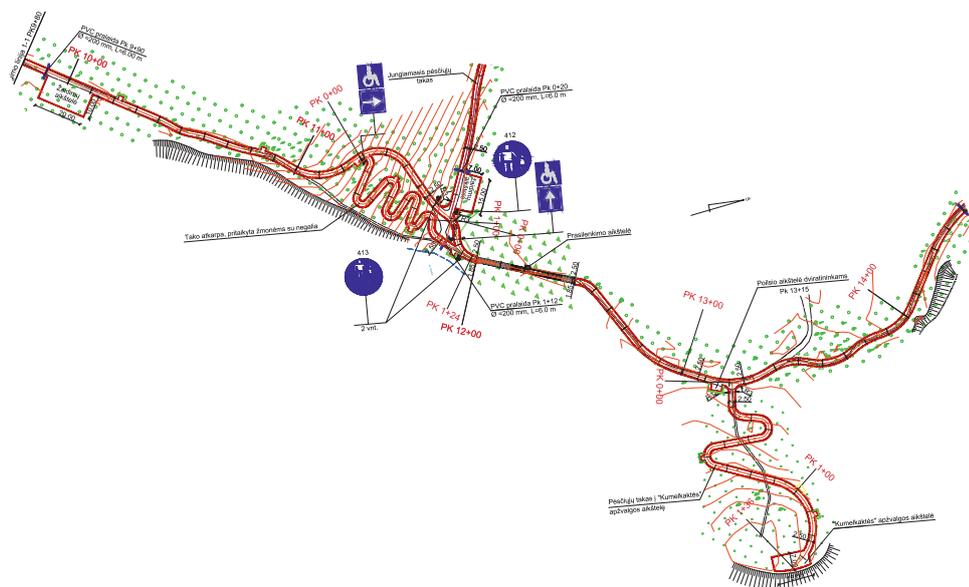
The Kurtuvenai Regional Park in Lithuania invested in improved barrier free accessibility for three touristical attractions: the Girnikai Hill, Juodle Lake Path and the Regional Parks Horse Riding Center. Due to missing national guidelines for equipment for disabled in nature, these initiatives could serve as models for other protected areas in Lithuania.

At Girnikai Hill – the highest hill in the Kurtuvenai Regional Park and the whole Siauliai district – the ascent has been made easier for families with children and elderly people by new stairs and benches. The new stairs make it easier for walking people to get up the hill, while benches in near distances give possibilities for a rest for the elderly. It was hard for them to manage the footpaths to the top of the hill before, because of the steepness and a lack of resting places.

Another investment was made into the Juodle lake path, which becomes the first path in the Regional Park adapted for travelling with wheelchairs and buggies. A wooden path to the swamp makes a comfortable surface for moving by wheelchair. A rivulet, the former gap in the way to the swamp, will be bridged for the barrier free path. Seats for resting – with space for a wheelchair – makes it attractive for disabled in company to have a break together.

An already existing offer for mentally disabled has been the Horse Riding Centre in Kurtuvenai. Now it will be adapted also for people with walking troubles. A ramp makes it easier for them to get on the horse back, so they can enjoy the experience of riding, which was almost impossible before.

Another example of barrier free tourism from Lithuania will be in future a cognitive path in the Seire nature of Zemaitija National Park. Inspired by a nature path in the Bavarian Forest National Park it will become the first touristical offer for disabled people in Zemaitija National Park. It is planned to be accessible for people with walking troubles and will provide different possibilities for all visitors to experience nature with all senses. So there will be even possibilities for seeing and hearing disabled people to get an impression of the surrounding nature of the National Park.



A touristical solution for guests with physical or mental disabilities as well as hearing or visual impairment provides from now on the Maribo Lakes Nature Park in Denmark. At Røgbølle sø, the southernmost lake in the nature park Maribosøerne, an inside Denmark stand alone barrier free sight was implemented. It includes a disabled friendly parking ground, toilet, footpath and platform, which make it possible for disabled to come close to the lake and the surrounding nature. The parking ground was made suitable for small handicap buses. The now armed foot-path guides to the lake and the platform, which is railed for safety reasons. Special information for people with hearing and visually impairment is provided along the path. A special handicap toilet that can be used without water and electricity is also in place. More comfortable for visitors with wheelchairs is from now also the learning location "Naturskolen". Here have been facilities for disabled installed like an information board, a barbecue area, a viewpoint and toilets. All installments follow the guidelines and regulations of the Danish disabled rights organization Foreningen Tilgængelighed for Alle.

During the Parks & Benefits Project was another Best Practice example of a barrier free path realized in the Norwegian Dovrefjell-Sunndalsfjella National Park: A paved path of 1.600 meters, usable for all user groups, leading from an old mining area to the observation post at Tverrfjellet. Accessibility has in this case been successful embedded into a new tourist product. The marketing of the Path and the visitor centre with its view on Mt. Snøhetta informs also about their accessibility. The path was positive tested for both electric indoor and outdoor wheelchairs to come up to the observation post. People with crutches complained about a lack of benches, but managed the path well. This historical interesting sight is explained by slate stones aside the path with inscripted carved capital characters, to make it easier to read for people with visually impairment.

*Maribo Lakes Nature Park, Denmark: following the guidelines of Danish disabled rights organization*

[www.godadgang.dk](http://www.godadgang.dk)

*Access-for-all means also including all on leisure activities: Barbecue area suitable for wheelchairs in Maribo Lakes Nature Park*



*Dovrefjell-Sunndalsfjella National Park, Norway: Accessibility for all as a part of the product. Investments for indoor and outdoor wheel chairs and people on crutches.*



*Benefits for other parks*

*Access-for-all toilets are indicated at this hotel in Müritz National Park*



The implementation of these innovative methods for barrier free accessibility is not only a benefit for the visitors of the particular parks. They function as a base documentation for lobbying towards decision-makers by providing facts and knowledge on how to realize such investments and as guideline how to develop protected areas for disabled. It demonstrates the feasibility of creating access for all outdoors and work as best practices for protected area managers. The built paths demonstrate the added value for all visitors, including elderly people and families with children, because of the improved resting places and information systems.

*Easing the movement for young and old: Accessible resting Place in Müritz National Park on planks.*



*Bird Observation Cabin accessible for Wheelchairs in Hofsee, Müritz National Park.*



*Environmental education appealing to the senses is accessible for all. Flatterbus in Mueritz National Park*



*This hotel in Müritz National Park fits accessible-for-all standards and therefore attracts a huge variety of visitors.*



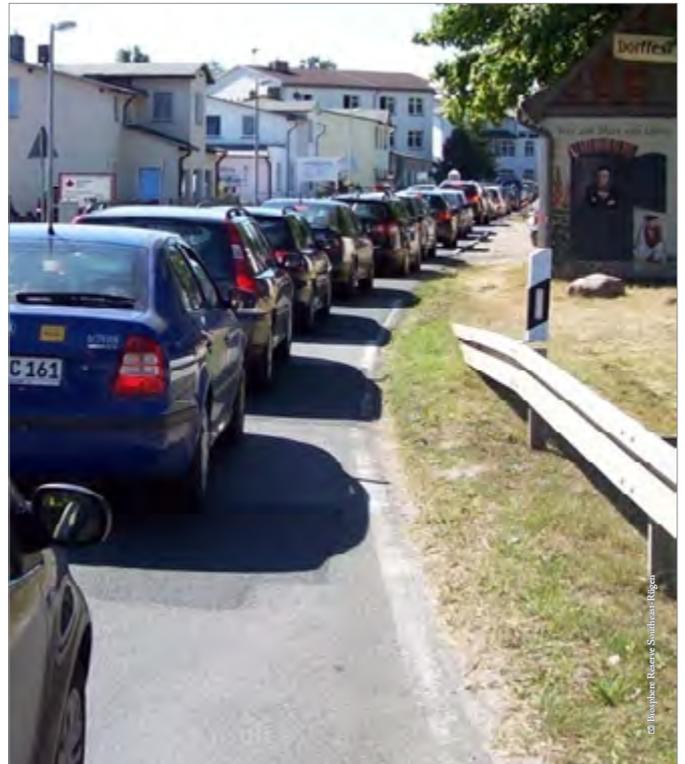




The pressure from the local population, tourism and regional visitors differs enormously among the parks (see Table 4). It is estimated that the human pressure on the protected areas varies from 10 overnight stays per square km land and year in Dovrefjell National Park in Norway to almost 2.000 times as much in South East Rügen Biosphere Reserve giving these parks a character of useful extreme cases for the study of tourist carrying capacity.

Often the regional visitors not using the accommodation facilities in the park vicinity are difficult to estimate, but it is an interesting fact that if potentially just 1% of the population living in a distance up to 50 km from the park at the same time visits the protected area, this might contribute up to a human pressure of the same order as from the local population.

Visitor related problems for wildlife exists in all the protected areas, certainly also in the extensively used Dovrefjell National Park. At the same time, in all the parks the vast majority of the vulnerable nature resources are well protected against visitor related threats, even in the intensely used South East Rügen Biosphere Reserve. Thus there are no direct relation between the general visitor pressure and the threat against the regional/local nature resources as well as the threat against the visitor experience of these resources.



*Traffic provoke a real „hot spot“ situation in Biosphere Reserve Southeast-Rügen. At 120 days a year, in the main season, is absolute chaos on the roads!*

Ideally, protection goals and related indicators for each nature resource 'hot spot' of the park has to be set up and related to a regularly monitoring of the amount of visitors and related information on their movements, behavior and attitudes. In this adaption of visitor pressure to the carrying capacity of the nature resources, a very concrete assessment of different types of accessibility (e.g. physical, legal or social) of each locality is of utmost importance. This can e.g. give opportunities to differentiate the accessibility to different vulnerable habitat types, thus at the same time furthering the possibility of observing the nature types (and thereby stimulating the public interests) and at the same time ensuring the protection through more restricted access to other occurrences of the nature type.

*Restrictions for car traffic encourages the use of other modes of transport and conserves nature. Toll station in Dovrefjell National Park*



One basic result of the project is, that the parks needed to be divided into two types of recommendation depending on the "density" of networks to draw comparisons. "High density" – parks are located close to big cities and metropolitan areas, mostly easy accessible by international and regional train connections or even an airport is located close by. These protected areas require a policy of intelligent mobility to reduce problems of individual traffic by introducing restrictions and/or by supporting cooperation among all stakeholders defined in a master plan. On the other hand parks with low density networks are usually located in remote areas with low infrastructure and low share of public transport. Here small investments in responsible tourism are recommended to avoid growing private transport already at the beginning.

Parks & Benefits Public Transport Matrix	DK Maribo	EST Matsalu	GER Müritz	GER Southeast Rügen	LV Kemerī	LT Kurttuvėnai	LT Zemaitija	NOR Dovrefjell
<b>Eurocharta Process</b>	x		x	x	x	x	x	x
<b>Location</b>								
...in conurbation...near big city	x		x	x	x			
...in longer distance		x				x	x	x
<b>Accessibility</b>								
...by train	x		x	x	x			x
...by bus	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
...by bike	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
<b>Barrierfree possibilities</b>								
...wheelchair	x		x	x	x	x	x	x
...blindness			x				x	
...hardness of hearing							x	
...mental handicap						x	x	
...improvement inspired by P&B-project	x					x	x	x
<b>Bicycle long distance trail</b>	x		x					
<b>Bicycle local trail</b>	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
<b>Green Certification concerning public transport</b> (Via bono, green certificate)								
...international					x	x	x	
...national			x		x			
<b>Special Info-Material for public transport</b>	x		x	x	x			x

*Bicycle trail beside the Dovrefjell Park in the Trollheim Region with low density.*







# PARKS & BENEFITS

## Baltic protected areas and tourism

### REGIONAL AND LOCAL SETTINGS FOR 8 PROTECTED AREAS IN THE BALTIC SEA REGION

37 | Parks & Benefits

The following descriptions of the regional settings of the protected areas are mainly based on Eurostat statistics from about 2008-09 at NUTS-3-level (Nomenclature of Territorial Units for Statistics, NUTS 3 = Districts) combined with CORINE Land Cover data (CORINE = Coordinated Information on the European Environment). Population figures are given as '*Land cover population*', meaning a local population figure, based on a geographical distribution of regional population figures according to the populations supposed connection to the land cover. This figure might not correspond to local population statistics, but can nevertheless give an important expression of the human relation to the land, e.g. in a recreational area, where widespread settlement can indicate intensive use, even if the 'land cover population' only partly has a permanent affiliation to the area. The relation between land cover and population varies however regionally, so that such estimations must be interpreted with caution. Urban population is defined different in different European countries, and this influences also the way land cover is locally related to population.

Based on this analysis and the in-depth-interviews with National Park representatives, we summed up results in geographical maps and with the technique of SWOT-Analysis. SWOT covers the Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats of each National Parks in the P&B project. To complete the above described framework of European Transport Policy, short practical recommendations for each park are given at the end.

## Regional and local map legend

## general

- accommodation
- bus

## railway, tracktype

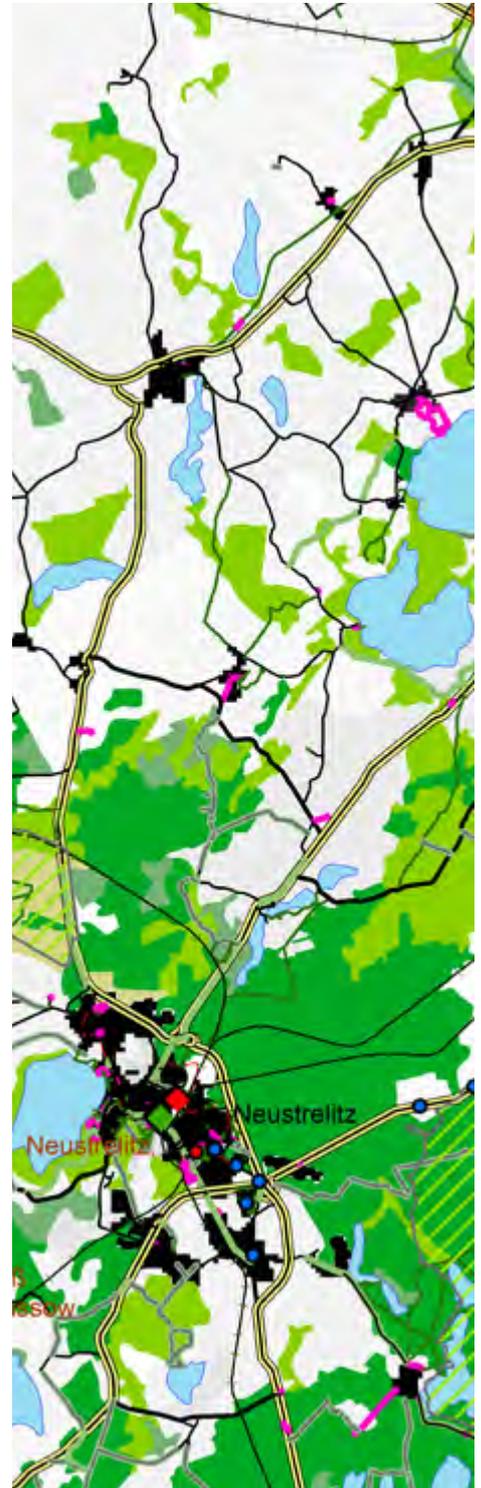
-  station
-  station / bus
-  station / hotel
-  station / hotel / bus
-  rails

## roads

-  unclassified roads
-  service roads
-  motorway
-  primary roads
-  secondary roads
-  residential roads
-  tertiary roads
-  trunk
-  cycleway
-  footpath; trail

## landuse

-  Parks
-  Broad-leaved forest
-  Coniferous forest
-  Mixed forest
-  Natural grasslands
-  Moors and heathland
-  Sclerophyllous vegetation
-  Transitional woodland-shrub
-  Water courses/bodies
-  Other areas, mainly agricultural land, but also urbanised areas.  
The darkness of the grey-tone indicates the estimated population density.  
Urban areas are expressed by a dark/black greytone.



## Kurtuvenai Regional Park

www.kurtuva.lt

Kurtuvenai Regional Park is situated in an agricultural area of the western-central part of Lithuania having an average population density of 43 inhabitants pr. sq.km. and with a declining natural population. Additionally there is a high net migration from the area, due to a high unemployment (>12%).

There are however a regional market for the recreational services of the park of almost ½ million people, of whom 1/5 lives in Siauliai, the fourth largest town in Lithuania located 10km NE from the park and with good access to the main entrance.

In addition to Siauliai, there are only a handful of small towns between 1–5.000 inhabitants each within 50 km. from the park. The largest of these, Telsiai, 40 km from Kurtuvenai, is at the same time located only 10 km from the neighbouring Zemaitija National Park.

	Total Land Cover Population	Urban Land Cover Population
Within Kurtuvėnai Regional Park	2.819	0
Within 10 km from the park	40.032	6.136
Within 25 km from the park	229.866	103.616
Within 50 km from the park	455.533	110.806

With a regional market of almost 500.000 inhabitants, Kurtuvenai Regional Park has a good opportunity to serve this market, especially due to the location of the regional center Siauliai near the main park entrance.

There is a distance of 60 km between Kurtuvenai Regional Park and the neighbouring Zemaitijos National Park. This gives an extensive upland of 100.000 inhabitants in the overlapping 50 buffer zone between the two parks, having fine access to the recreational services of both parks.



*Kurtuvenai Regional Park*

### Strengths

- › Riga – 140 km
- › Klaipėda – 150 km
- › Šiauliai – 15 km
- › Road (A12)
- › Kelme – 25 km
- › Bicycle route Joniskės
- › Hill of Crosses (30km) – Šiauliai (10km) – Kurtuvėnai (25km)

### Opportunities

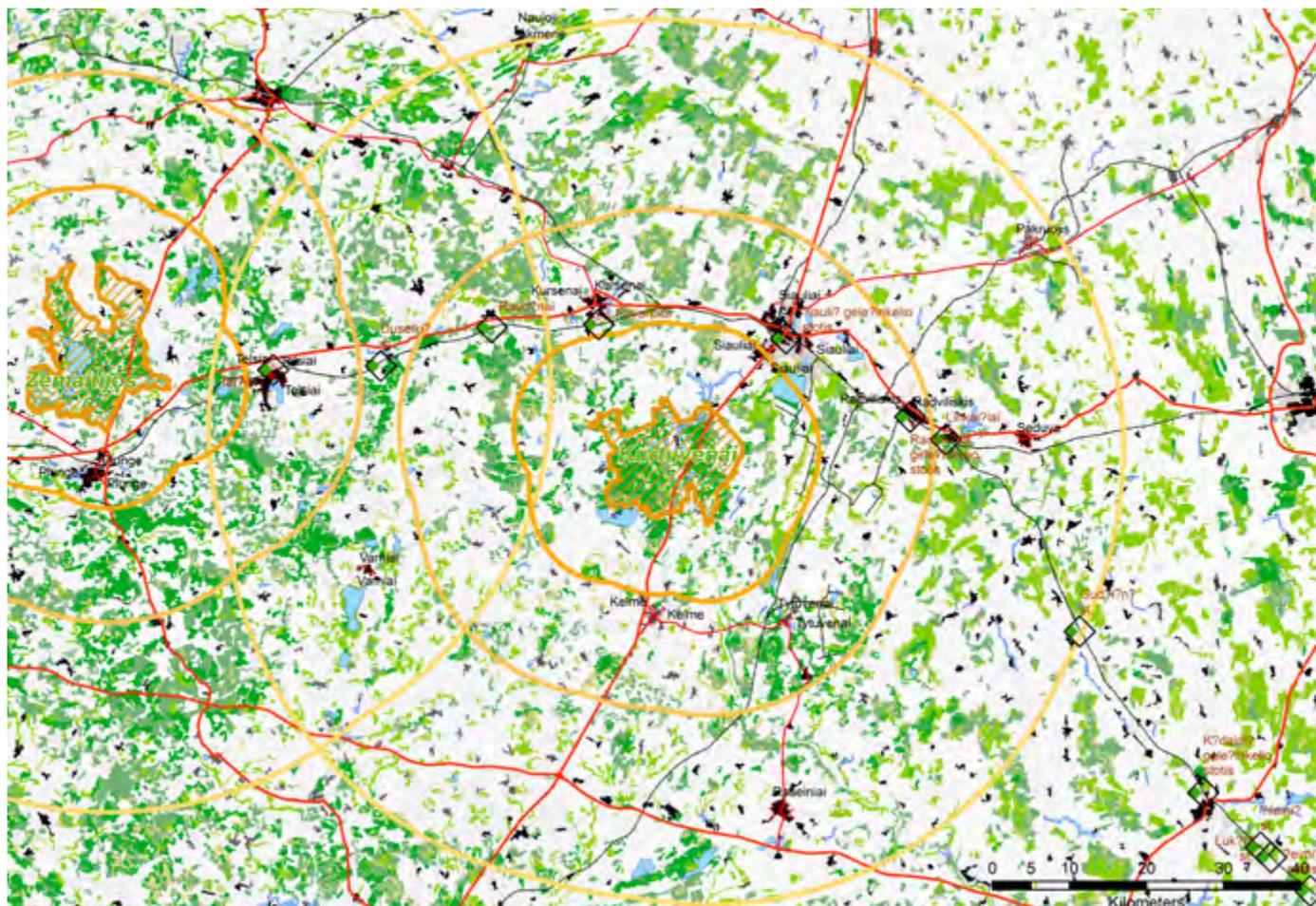
- › Pilgrim route Hill of crosses: Kurtuvėnai – Kelmi – Tytuvėnai – Siluva
- › long term: stepping stone for žemaitija [connection through long distance (bicycle) trail with accommodation/ shelters]

### Weaknesses

- › Not-developed public transport
- › only one train from Riga to Šiauliai
- › bad connection to bigger cities

### Threats

- › none



### Strengths

- › Manor house in Kurtuvenai
- › Campside
- › Horseriding
- › Educational Programms
- › Bicycle Path Siauliai – Kurtuveinai

### Opportunities

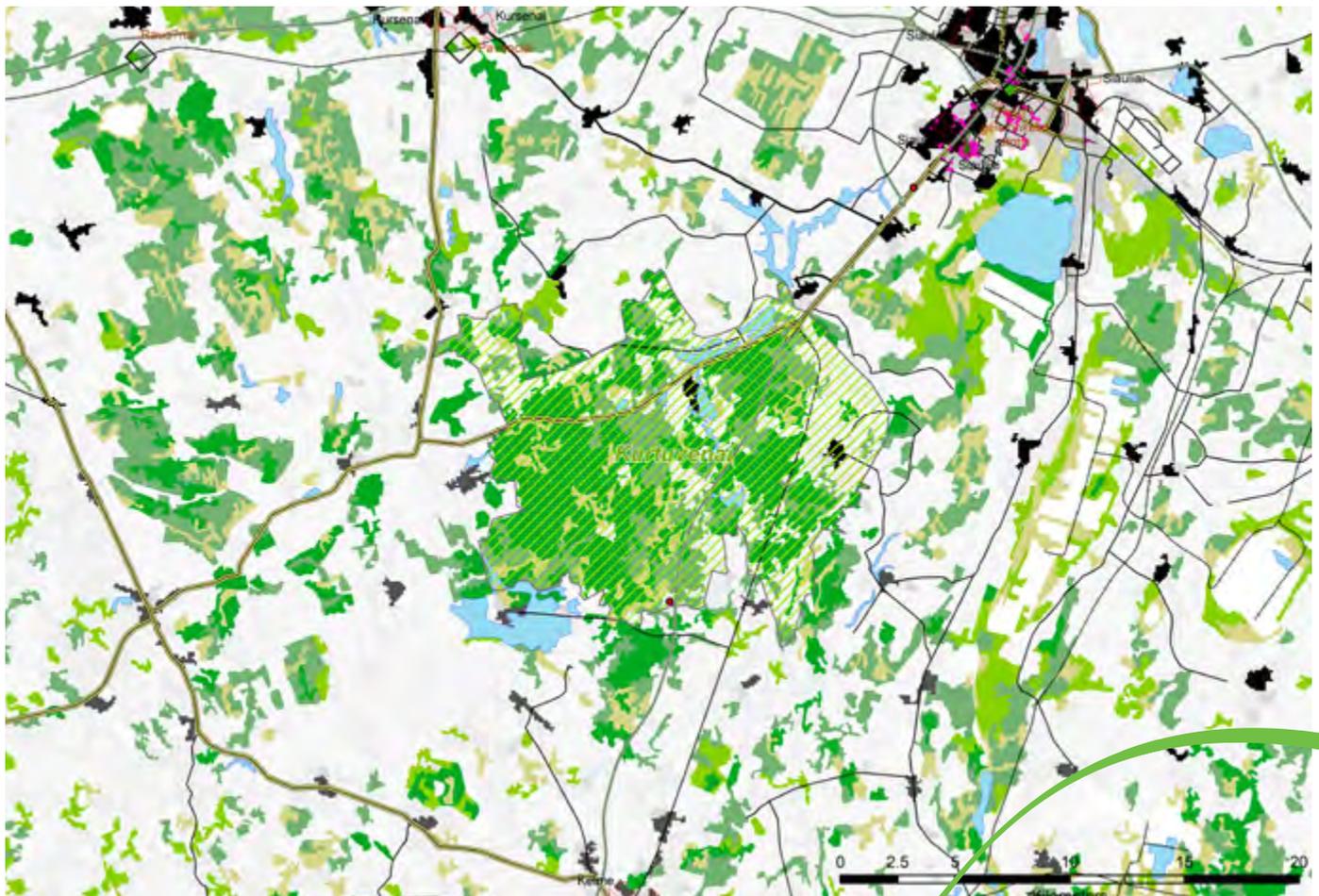
- › Riding Hall in Kurtuvenai
- › Developing infrastructure for elderly people

### Weaknesses

- › less demand for public transport by locals
- › no modal split
- › lack of accommodation in Kurtuvenai

### Threats

- › none



*Manor House in  
Kurtuvenai National Park*

Siauliai has connection with Rail Baltica Project. So it could be in the future useful to adapt marketing-initiatives to this framework.

Connection with hiking and biking trails to Lithuania, to Zemaitija National Park and to coast line would be useful (Euro Velo 13-Iron curtain bicycle trail, [www.ironcurtaintrail.eu/en](http://www.ironcurtaintrail.eu/en)), European Bicycle Route R1/ Lithuanian Seaside Cycle Route, [www.euroroute-r1.de/EN](http://www.euroroute-r1.de/EN)). With a small budget investment could be installed a shelter-system like in Denmark.



# Žemaitija National Park

www.zemaitijosnp.lt

Zemaitija National Park is located in western Lithuania in an agricultural area with an average population density of 45 inhabitants pr. sq. km. The population is declining, mainly due to a considerable net migration, related to a high regional unemployment. Almost 500.000 people live within a distance of 50 km from the park, mostly in dispersed small settlement. Only 3 minor towns (Plunge, Telsiai and Skuodas) have a distance of less than 25 km from the park. However, by the west coast of Lithuania 45–50 km from the park a number of towns are situated, of which Klaipeda and Palanga are the most important.

	Total Land Cover Population	Urban Land Cover Population
Within Zemaitija National Park	5.971	0
Within 10 km from the park	44.394	2.769
Within 25 km from the park	142.577	8.831
Within 50 km from the park	484.310	69.282

Although a considerable regional upland is available for the park, there is a limited urban population in the vicinity of the park (probably underestimated in the methods used). The many towns gives however a certain foundation for one-day regional visitors to the park. For foreign overnight visitors the access from the international ship connections to Klaipeda as well as to the international airport of Palanga is of importance.



*Žemaitija National Park*

### Strengths

- › Regional railway connection (Plunge)
- › well-developed bike-rental system
- › professional planning documents
- › attractive tourism objects, e.g. military base

### Opportunities

- › Bus-Service for special events
- › new bicycle routes between protected areas
- › bicycle rental points in Plunge
- › Transport by water

### Weaknesses

- › Not well-developed
- › lack of marketing
- › public transport
- › Missing barrier free opportunities
- › mostly car traffic
- › one day tourism

### Threats

- › none



### Strengths

- › soft tourism
- › undistourbness

### Opportunities

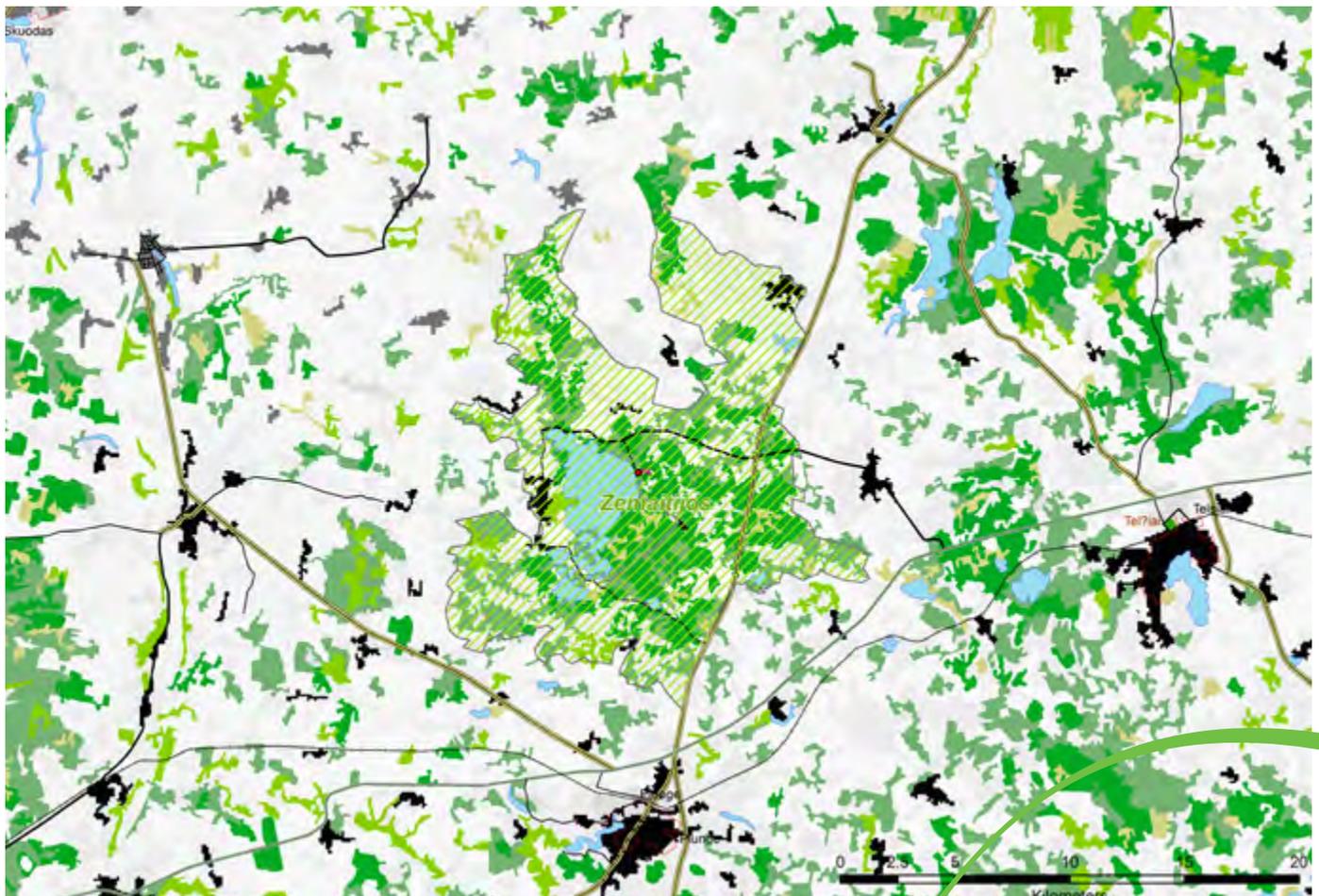
- › Busservice for Events (procession in Zemaiciu Kalvarija at the begin of July)
- › Create better bicycle road systems
- › long term: stepping stone for Kurtuvenai [connection through long distance (bicycle) trail with accomodation/ shelters]

### Weaknesses

- › No infrastructure for disabled people

### Threats

- › none



*Landscape in  
Zemaitija National Park*

The Park is situated in an area of low population density, so only by special events is there a problem with private traffic. With special offers like Nature days or guided bus tours more tourists could easily be attracted without causing private traffic. Connections with hiking and biking trails to Lithuania, to Kurtuvėnai National Park and to coast line are recommended (Euro Velo 13-Iron curtain bicycle trail, [www.ironcurtaintrail.eu/en](http://www.ironcurtaintrail.eu/en), European Bicycle Route R1/ Lithuanian Seaside Cycle Route, [www.euroroute-r1.de/EN](http://www.euroroute-r1.de/EN)). With a small budget investment a shelter-system like in Denmark could be installed.



Kemeri National Park is located in an urbanized area with only 30 km from the park to the centre of Riga, the capital of Latvia, with 700.000 inhabitants. Despite a small decline in the natural population (birth minus deaths), the population is in rapid increase in the area due to a large immigration. This happens despite the unemployment in the areas of more than 12%.

Even within the park the number of inhabitants are estimated to more than 7.000, of which half of them lives in the town of Kemeri, with railway connection to Riga. A number of towns are located within 25 km from the park: Tukums, Dobele, Olaine, Jelgava and Jurmala, the last amalgamated with Riga entirely located within 50 km from the park.

	Total Land Cover Population	Urban Land Cover Population
Within Kemeri National Park	7.237	3.284
Within 10 km from the park	64.310	38.953
Within 25 km from the park	275.826	180.354
Within 50 km from the park	1.141.840	896.030

Kemeri National Park is characterized by its location in an area with a dense urban population in the vicinity of the capital of Riga. The recreational service for the regional population of more than 1 mill people having good connection to the park represents obviously a strong obligation for the park. The good railway connections to the park as well as the location of the International Airport of Riga 20 km from the park gives additionally potential possibilities for the inclusion of a national and international nature tourist industry.



*Winter time in the swamp-area of Kemeri National Park*

### Strengths

- › conurban Riga, Jurmala (coastline)
- › Located at three railway stations
- › Connection from Riga by bus and mini-bus

### Opportunities

- › international guests; day-trips from Riga
- › announcements inside busses and trains
- › cooperation with “liferiga”

### Weaknesses

- › lack of information at the railway stations (only at one) and near the bus stop

### Threats

- › less frequently trains on the connection Riga-Turkums



### Strengths

- › modal split (train, bus, bike)
- › cultural heritage (sanatory, historical railway)
- › almost every guest house has a bicycle rent for their own guest
- › information about biking tracks is available in the internet
- › its possible to get from Riga to the park by bike
- › baltic bike system (Air Baltic) is used by guests
- › 8<sup>th</sup> of may 2011 potential route of national park bus (nature invites you) was tried -> just lack of marketing, bus-line was actually good and functioning
- › events are planned according to the train schedule; public transport is promoted for special events

### Opportunities

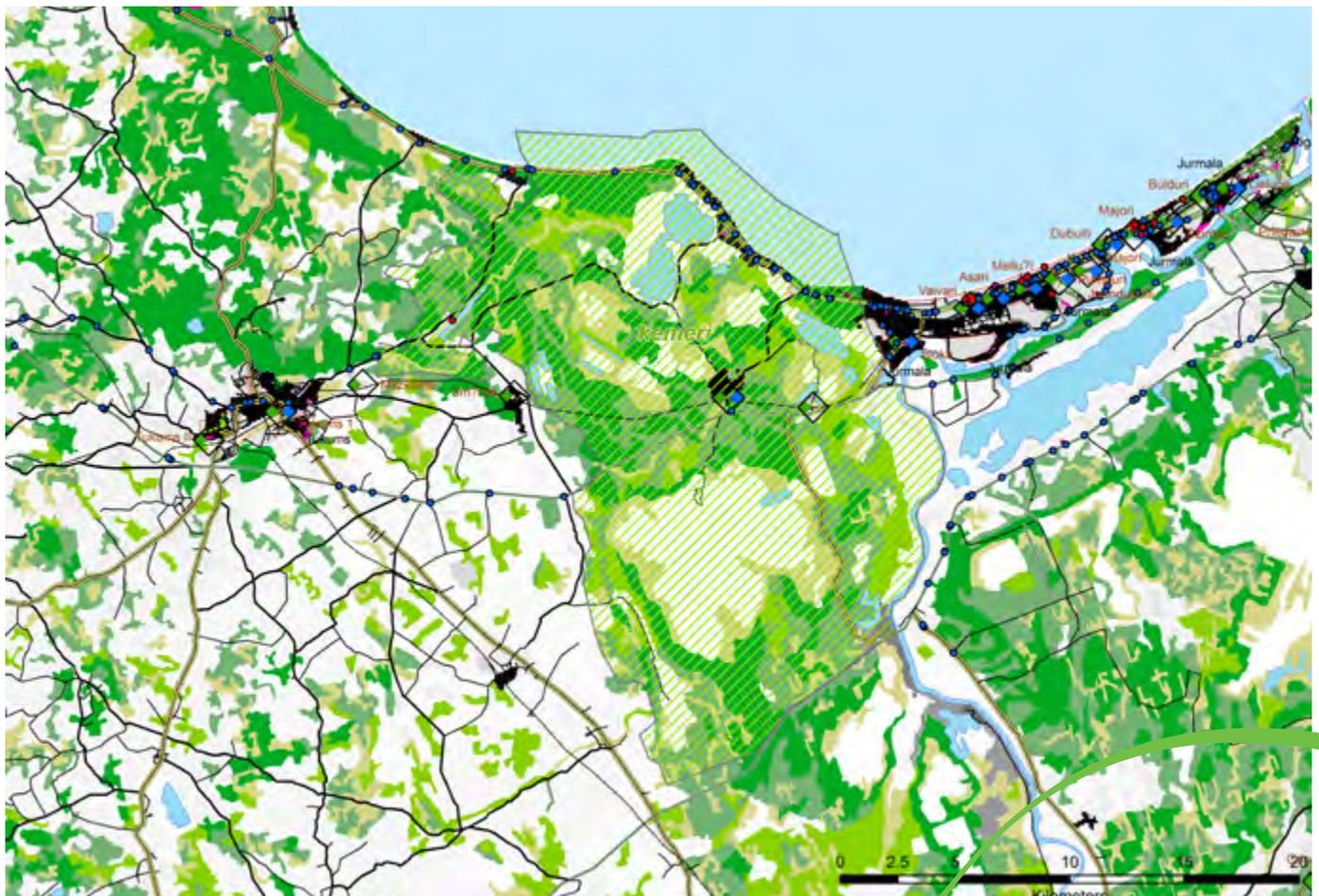
- › Marketing
- › Nationalpark Ticket
- › more bicycle lanes
- › Watertourism on Lielupe River
- › other modes of transport – more curious (e-cars)

### Weaknesses

- › no barrierefree trails
- › complicate to take bicycle in train and busses
- › not all parts of the park are reachable by bike – most remote attraction only by car (dunduru-meadows)
- › no bus is circulating inside the park – between municipalities you have to change

### Threats

- › three highways; extension of car traffic in Summertime/ Autumn



With Riga and the touristic coast line Kemerī is during the season an area of high density with high pressure on landscape. Visitor hotspots exist especially by the need of more and more parking places at the beach zone and mushroom seekers in the forests. A more strict regulation is recommended. To avoid individual traffic, the public transport and alternative forms of mobility like bicycle and hiking should be strengthened. This could attract more special target groups in health tourism. Kemerī could be a part of tourism marketing in Riga, like it is already the case with the day-long event “Nature Invites you”, which include arrival by public transport or special busses. A cooperation with railroad company from Riga to Kemerī should be intensified for instance with special information material and special nature tickets. It should be possible to take bikes in the train or special busses.

A connection with hiking and biking trails to Estonia and Lithuania and along the coast line is recommended, especially with European Bicycle Route R1, [www.euroroute-r1.de/EN](http://www.euroroute-r1.de/EN)).

*Landscape in  
Kemerī National Park*



## Matsalu National Park

www.matsalu.ee

Compared to the other parks (with Dovrefjell as a marked exception), Matsalu National Park is situated in an area of very low population density of up to 13 inhabitants per sq.km. within 50km. from the park. Despite the marked decrease in the rather old natural population, the population is stable due to a certain net immigration to the area, although there is an unemployment of 9–12 %.

Within 50 km from the park there is a population of 100.000 inhabitants, of which 40 % lives in towns. Haapsalu is 10 km north of the park, 30 km east of the park there are two small town (Märjamaa and Pärnu-Jaagupi) serving as dormitoning towns for the regional center of Pärnu, partly situated within 50 km from the park.

	Total Land Cover Population	Urban Land Cover Population
Within Matsalu National Park	779	0
Within 10 km from the park	6.909	363
Within 25 km from the park	35.904	9.408
Within 50 km from the park	105.660	39.831

As a regional recreational destination for day-visitors Matsalu National Park is mainly serving the regional centre and spa of Pärnu with well-established tourist facilities for domestic and international tourism.



*The coastal meadows  
in the Matsalu Bay.*

### Strengths

- › international known birding migration area
- › international acknowledgement (European Council diploma, Ramsar site, Nature 2000 network)
- › regional international event (Matsalu Nature Film Festival)

### Opportunities

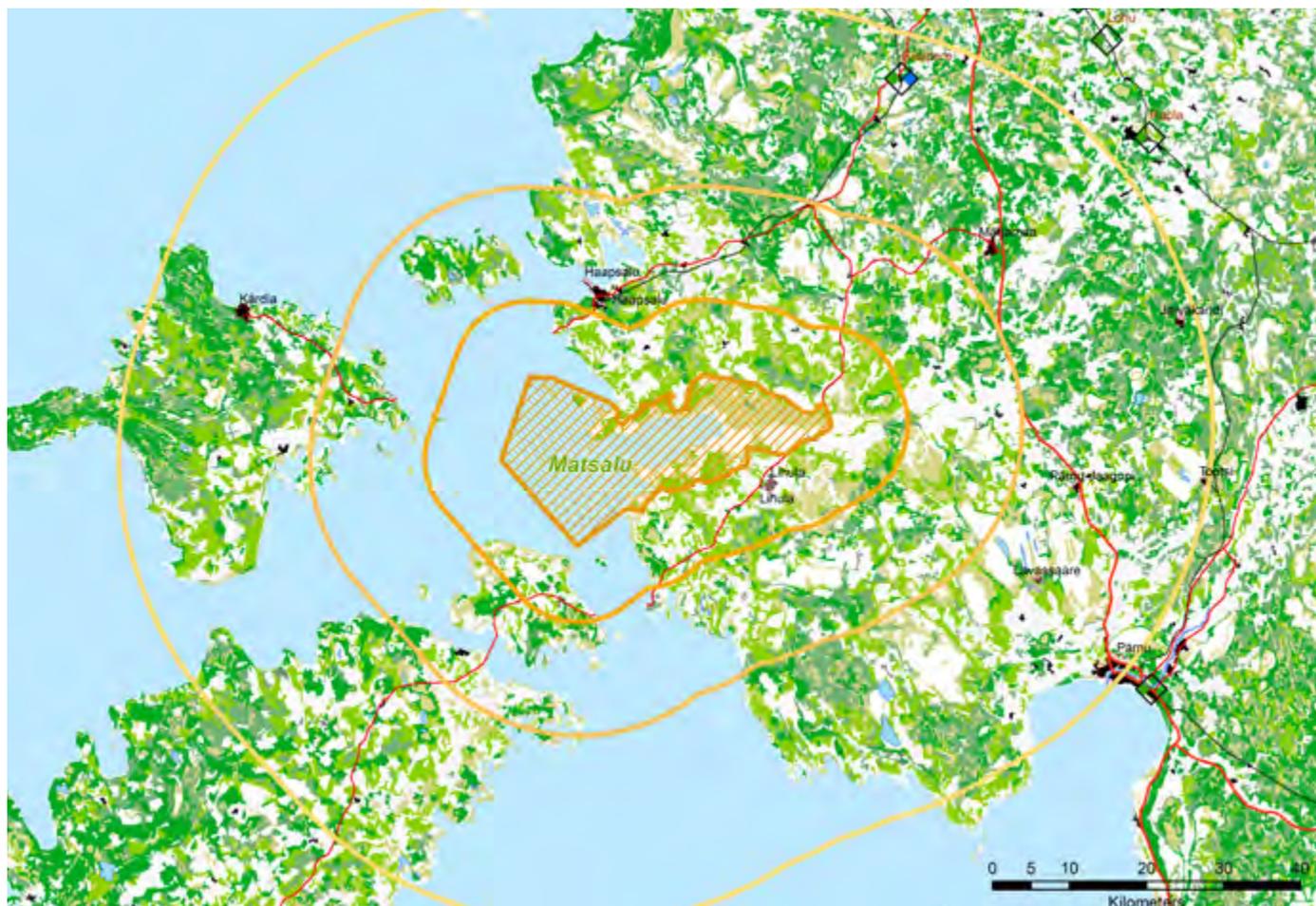
- › create possibility to bring bike by long distance bus and advertising it
- › developing chain products around Matsalu bay and in cooperation with other national parks in Estonia (visiting certain sites one can take along piece of the chain) united product, which can be put together if one has visited all the parts of the chain)
- › making collaboration more effective with Matsalu Nature Film Festival during preparation stage

### Weaknesses

- › no opportunity to take own bike in public-transport (long distance bus)

### Threats

- › none



### Strengths

- › remote area
- › bicycle route network
- › traditional landscape has been preserved
- › community's traditional lifestyle has been maintained in a certain extent
- › cooperation between tourism entrepreneurs (network)
- › tourism development plan for Matsalu NP area (50km)

### Opportunities

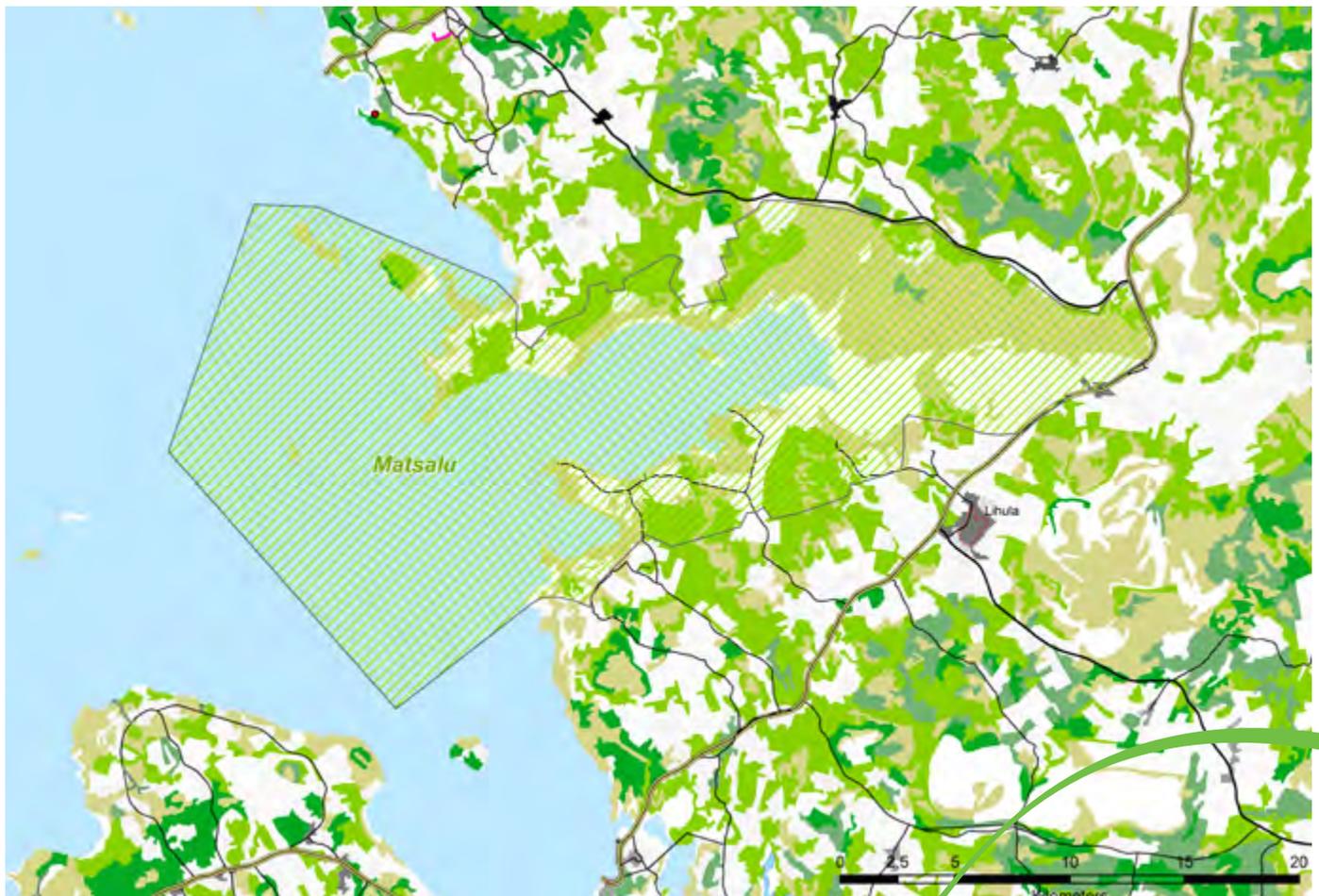
- › rent-a-bike system
- › Promoting bike-tourism
- › better management of the NP webpage
- › creating new tourism attractions and services (riching boating excursion in the reedbeds – better boats, information boards into the boat, going to the shore, observation platform in the reedbed, besides birds introduce wider wetland life, creating contemporary exhibition, animation about earth rising, hiking trails on wetlands, passing flooded plain with attractive vehicles from haymaking time, etc)
- › strengthening network through trainings and active marketing
- › creating tourism products for villages
- › introducing cultural and natural values to landowners and introducing preservation of these values (in cooperation with different organizations)
- › enlivening cooperation with universities and popularizing collected scientific data
- › better introduction of local traditions (introduce building thatched roofs, skiffs, local food from local materials)
- › creating health products

### Weaknesses

- › less demand for public transport by locals
- › landowners less interest in nature protection activities
- › soviet time agriculture imprint on a landscape (buildings falling apart, field massive with big ditches)
- › old valuable meadows (wooded, coastal) are being destroyed by agricultural businesses to intensify agriculture
- › less interest to develop nature tourism at local level
- › no accommodation places in Lihula (small town at the border of Matsalu NP)
- › less funds for developing nature tourism
- › less attractive infrastructure for introducing nature
- › nature protection is fragmented between too many different state institutions

### Threats

- › lack of good developers
- › restrictions are too rigid and locals do not have the advantage in using resources
- › the tasks of the national park administrations have been divided between many state institutions
- › renewal of the national parks protection management plan takes too much time



*Landscape in  
Matsalu National Park*

There is no real problem with public traffic in that area. Matsalu could be better connected with regional and international bicycle trails by soft corridors. It could be interesting to take the own bike in public-transport (long distance bus). Health tourism could attract more tourists.



## Maribo Lakes Nature Park

[www.naturparkmaribo.dk](http://www.naturparkmaribo.dk)

Maribo Lakes Nature Park is situated in the most intensively used agricultural area in Denmark, characterized by a declining population both due to natural composition of the population change (with the number of deaths exceeding the number of births) and due to a net migration from the area. There is an unemployment of app. 5% in the area.

However, the planned construction of the **Fehmarn Belt** connection to Germany is expected to influence the regional development on the Lolland island in the future. The regional potential of one-day visitors to Maribo Lakes Nature Park is less than 200.000, of whom only 1/6 is urban population with the rest distributed in residential neighborhoods, small towns, villages and dispersed rural settlement. The town of Maribo is neighboring the park, with close access to a part of the hot spots. This gives a comparatively rather high population density within the park (54 person pr. sq.km). The population density of the surroundings of the park is the same, representing the average of the parks, but grows in some distance due to the location of the regional centers of Nakskov and Nykøbing Falster with a distance of 20–25 km to the parc. Only one additional minor town, Vordingborg at Zealand, is located within 50 kms from the park, however with Næstved with only a minor part inside the border. Both Næstved and Vordingborg can be seen as new residential areas of Greater Copenhagen showing trends of population growth. Nykøbing Falster might be an upcoming satellite, too. The rest of the region shows trends of declining population, with the exception of Maribo, probably due to the attractive location by the parc.

	Total Land Cover Population	Urban Land Cover Population
Within Maribo Lakes Nature Park	1.950	458
Within 10 km from the park	30.258	3.402
Within 25 km from the park	101.233	23.593
Within 50 km from the park	190.770	33.011

The regional distribution of population around Maribo Lakes Nature Park shows on the one side the importance of the park and its attractions for settlement, local recreation and one-day tourism. On the other side the importance of ensuring a variety of accommodation and tourist service possibilities for overnight tourists, if the potentials of the park as a tourist destination shall be fulfilled.

### Strengths

- › Existing trainsystem
- › Existing Bus (Copenhagen – Berlin; Nyköbing – Odense)
- › Existing Bicycle Routes (international; Berlin – Copenhagen; Munkevejen Hamburg – Roskilde)

### Opportunities

- › Fehmarnbelt-Connection (New Station Holeby; New Motorway Facility/ Gateway)
- › E-Bus
- › New Bus Routes by Movia (Danish Transit Agency)

### Weaknesses

- › Trainline is not a main route
- › International Train does not carry bikes
- › Train/Bus Expensive/ Regular Intervals

### Threats

- › Fehmarnbelt-Connection ( maybe no Station; High Speed Trains)
- › Closing hutlines



### Strengths

- › Tourboat “Anemonen”
- › Bicycle Tracks
- › Bike Rental
- › Riding Routes
- › Easy Access from Train Station
- › Historical Railway (Maribo – Bandholm)

### Opportunities

- › Develop Walking and Bicycle Routes/ Tracks
- › Folder/ Information about Tracks
- › New Canoeing opportunities; Operator
- › New Route for “Anemonen”, e.g. to Søholt
- › Establish Welcome Center with Parking lots
- › New Bus Routes by Movia (Danish Transit Agency)

### Weaknesses

- › No Bus in NP (except school busses)
- › Infrastructure for Cars in NP

### Threats

- › Withdrawal of the service of Tourboat Anemonen



Given the common problems of rural areas in Europe, the Maribo Lakes Nature Park might lose the comforts of a good functioning and dense working public transport due to a lack of population. At the same time the remaining and maybe increasing attractiveness for recreational and leisure activities might be restrained, if car traffic comes along with the tourists. The installment of a demand oriented bus service is therefore necessary for the future. The closeness of the Nature Park to the Maribo train Station offers the potential for sustainable arrival and departure as well as mobility in combination with a functioning bus network, especially for day trippers. If Maribo becomes included in the planning for the upcoming new traffic situation on Falster due to the Fehmarnbelt connection, the Nature Park will have a high potential generating higher visitor numbers, both from the urban Copenhagen area and Germany. That might also vitalize the region financially, if tourism stakeholders are supported and incorporated.

*Landscape in  
Maribo Lakes Nature Park*



## Müritz National Park

[www.muertitz-nationalpark.de](http://www.muertitz-nationalpark.de)

Müritz National Park is situated in a hilly forested agricultural area 100 km north of Berlin. The region is characterized by marked population decrease both due to a considerable natural population decrease and a high net migration from the areas. This situation is closely related to the high unemployment of more than 12%.

Nevertheless almost 700.000 people are living within a distance of 50 km from Müritz National Park, thus forming a considerable market for one day visitors. In addition the capital of Berlin with a population of more than 5 million is situation within a distance of 100 km. Only 1/6 of the regional population is urban, mostly located in small and minor towns (Neubrandenburg, Güstrow, Neuruppin, Neustrelitz, Pasewalk, Prenzlau and Pritzwalk).

	Total Land Cover Population	Urban Land Cover Population
Within Müritz National Park	1.882	0
Within 10 km from the park	88.876	16.407
Within 25 km from the park	278.516	54.194
Within 50 km from the park	676.340	112.718

Although the amount and distribution of the regional population around the park gives rise to a potentially rather strong regional market for using the services of the park, the potential users from Berlin coming for shorter overnight visits to the area is much greater, and represents fine possibilities for building up capacities that can be used for tourist purposes in general.



*Priesterbäker See,  
near Boeker Forst,  
Müritz National Park*

### Strengths

- › Good reachability from Berlin
- › promotion on public train transport (with “Fahrziel Natur” – Project)
- › Bicycle route Berlin – Copenhagen

### Opportunities

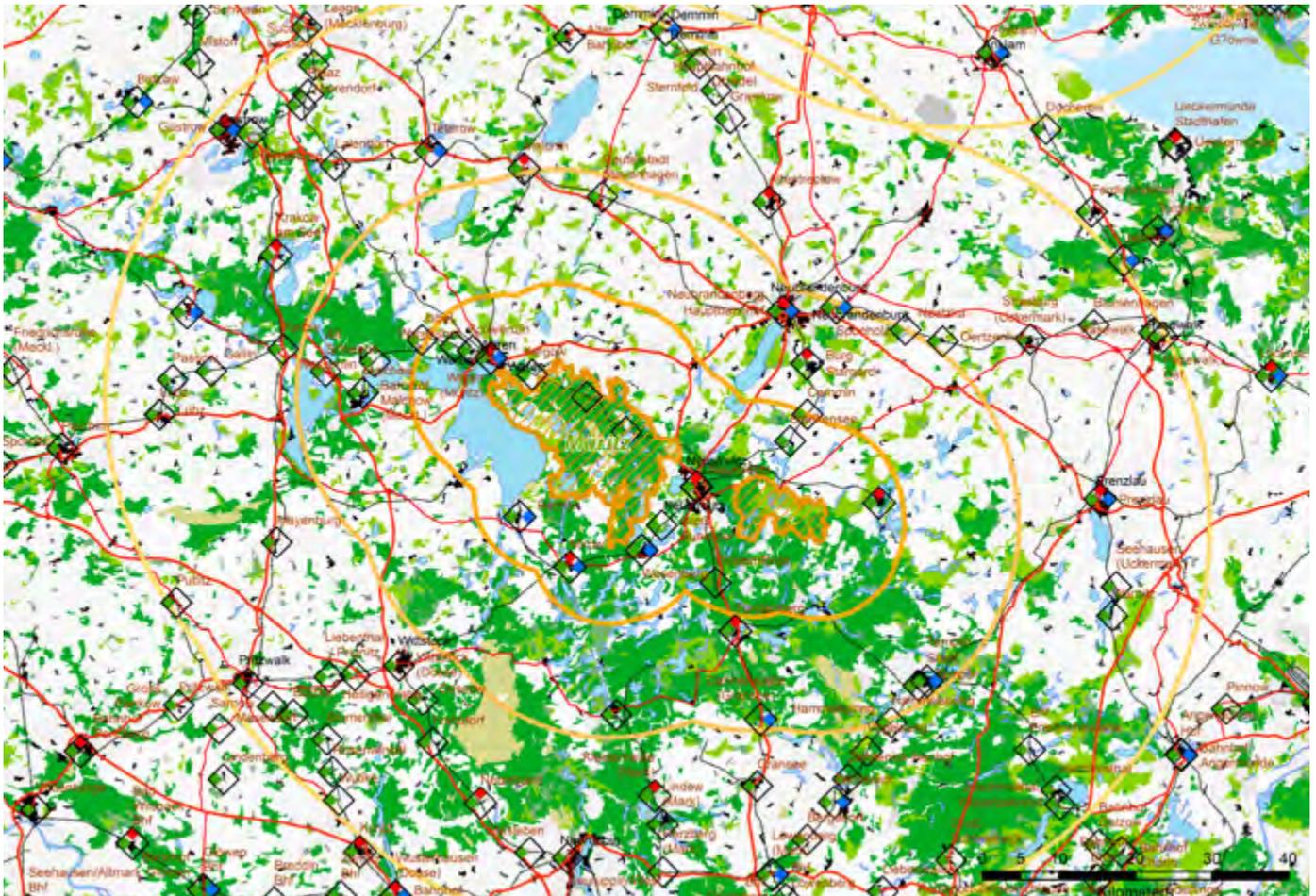
- › Faster connection by railroad (after construction about 18 min.)
- › more higher quality trains serving longer distances

### Weaknesses

- › No bicycle transport in ICE-Trains
- › bad reachability from Hamburg

### Threats

- › Closure of railroad for several months due to construction work





*“Fabrtziel Natur” –  
Project Brochure Cover*



*Wooden bridge over Pagelsee,  
located in Müritz National Park*



The well-developed touristic infrastructure inside Müritz National Park is supported by its good functioning public transport. Special touristical offers like the Nationalpark Ticket, a special ticket for visitors, make the use of public transport very attractive for day trippers. More advertisement for it and better visitor information on the stops would even increase its attractiveness. On-demand busses might also be an option for times with less visitor flow like during week days. The landscape of the National Park offers possibilities for several modes of sustainable transport like canoeing and biking. They do not require arrivals by car, due to good connections by train from Berlin with bicycle carrying option and bike and canoe rental stations inside the National Park. Nevertheless the connection to Hamburg could be improved. It might be attractive for tourists interested in cycling, if they could carry their own bikes in the german high speed trains ICE to the destination Müritz National Park. For longer visits would be luggage pick-up services offered by the tourism stakeholders useful.

## Biosphere Reserve Southeast-Rügen

[www.biosphaerenreservat-suedostruegen.de](http://www.biosphaerenreservat-suedostruegen.de)

Biosphere Reserve Southeast-Rügen is situated at the Island Rügen on the North Coast of Germany in the Baltic Region. Despite the renewal of a long touristic tradition on the Island during the later years, the area is still characterized by a marked population decline both in form of a high natural population decline and a marked net migration from the area. This is certainly related to the high unemployment rate of more than 12%.

400.000 inhabitants live within a distance of less than 50 km from the Biosphere Reserve South East Rügen. Although this is not an especially high number compared to the other parks, it represents a very high population density due to the high share of sea around the park giving in general a population density of more than 100 inhabitants per sq. km – even within the park and even outside the season. This shows how extreme the pressure on the area must be during the tourist season. The urban population in the vicinity of the park is limited, with the town of Bergen and Sassnitz within 10 kms from park, and less than 25 km to the historical Hanse-towns of Stralsund and Greifswald (although the last as well as the town of Anklam has only access to the park via Stralsund).

	Total Land Cover Population	Urban Land Cover Population
<b>Within Biosphere Reserve South East Rügen</b>	11.877	0
<b>Within 10 km from the park</b>	32.422	9.835
<b>Within 25 km from the park</b>	227.000	87.123
<b>Within 50 km from the park</b>	395.474	101.938

Although there is a certain regional potential for the recreational services offered by the Biosphere Reserve Southeast Rügen, it is reduced due to the limited access related to the distribution of sea and land. The very high population density of overnight holiday guests during the tourist season represents the main basis for park visitors.



*Landscape in the Biosphere Reserve Southeast-Rügen*

### Strengths

- › Rügen is well connected to most of German urban centres like Rhein/Ruhr, Rhein/Main, Hamburg, Berlin by direct train connections (ICE-, IC- and EC-Train of Deutsche Bahn)
- › direct ferry connections to Sweden and Lithuania (from Sassnitz/Mukran)
- › national bicycle routes „Hamburg-Rügen-Radweg“, „Ostseeküsten-Radweg“;
- › international bicycle route „E 10 Ostsee-Böhmerwald-Alpen-Mittelmeer“
- › partnership with Deutsche Bahn in the project „Fahrtziel Natur“ (promotion of railroad connections to Biosphere Reserve)

### Opportunities

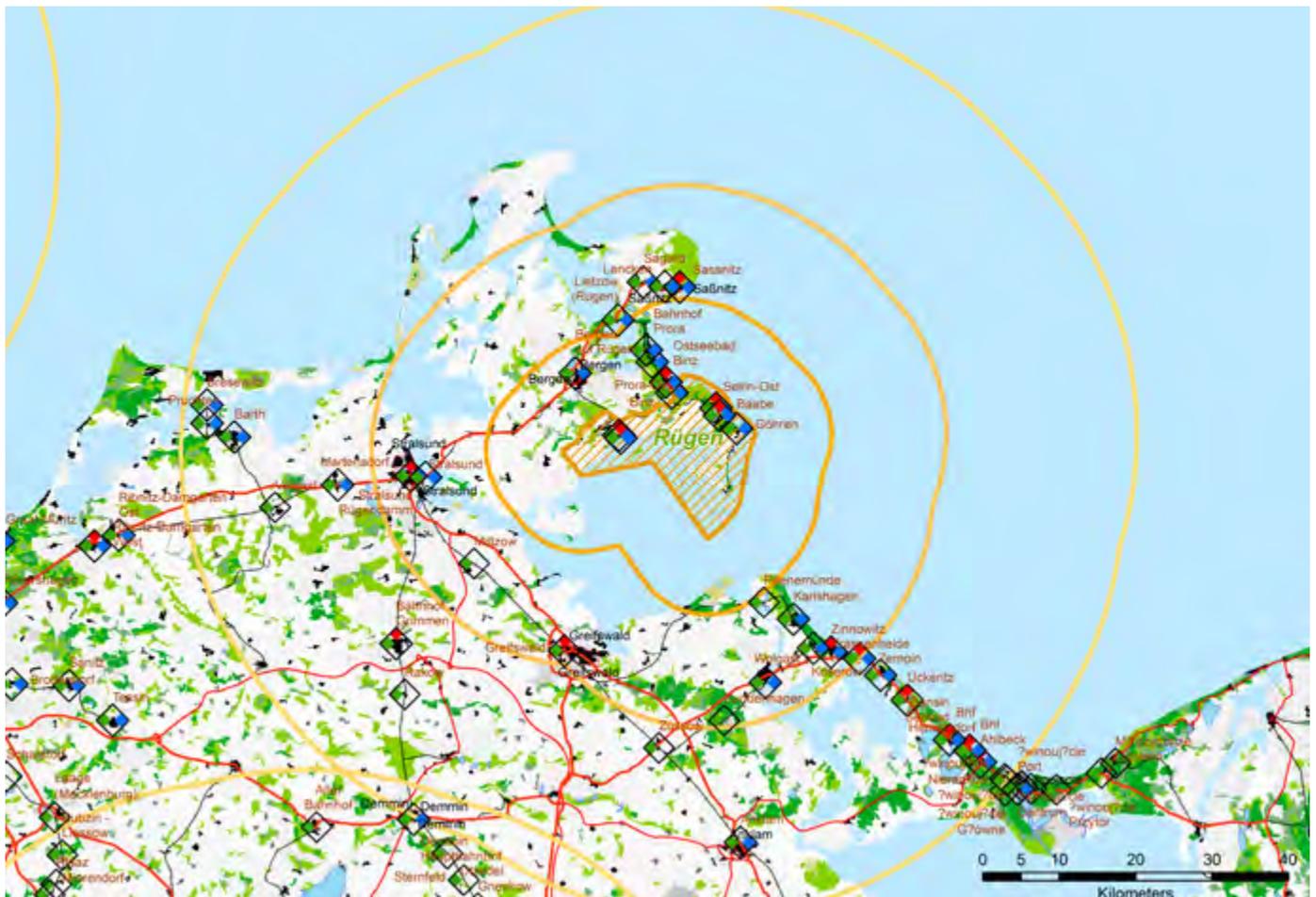
- › more faster and direct connections from German urban centres to Rügen
- › establish direct connections from European Cities to Stralsund/Rügen

### Weaknesses

- › some of the rail connections are offered only in summer season
- › no bicycle transport in ICE-Trains

### Threats

- › growing/increasing car traffic
- › closure of rail connections because of lack of passengers



### Strengths

- › bike and hiking path network
- › Part of “Fahrziel Natur”
- › Cooperation with Rasender Roland (RR; local train) and Weiße Flotte (Shipping on Baltic Sea Coastline): “Wasser und Dampf”-Ticket
- › Cooperation with RR and Mönchguter Museen (Reg. Museums) “Wir bringen Sie Hin”-Ticket
- › Flyer with Information about demand stops of RR

### Opportunities

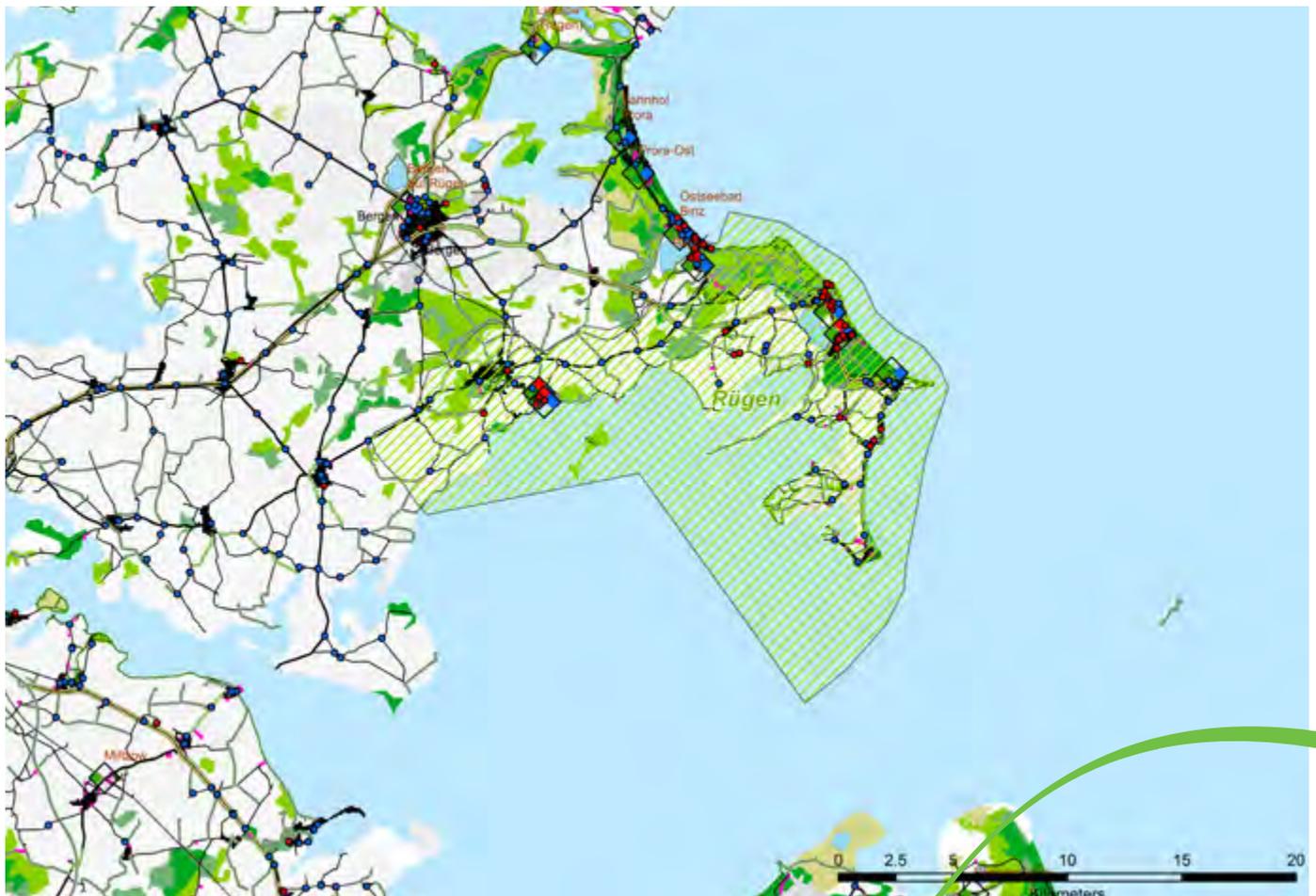
- › Rent-a-bike-System or advertising Bicycle-use

### Weaknesses

- › Public Transport can't be extended, because of island position
- › Rügen as touristic hotspot attracts a lot of car traffic

### Threats

- › Extension of car traffic



*Traffic provoke a real „hot spot“ situation in Biosphere Reserve Southeast-Rügen. At 120 days a year, in the main season, is absolute chaos on the roads!*

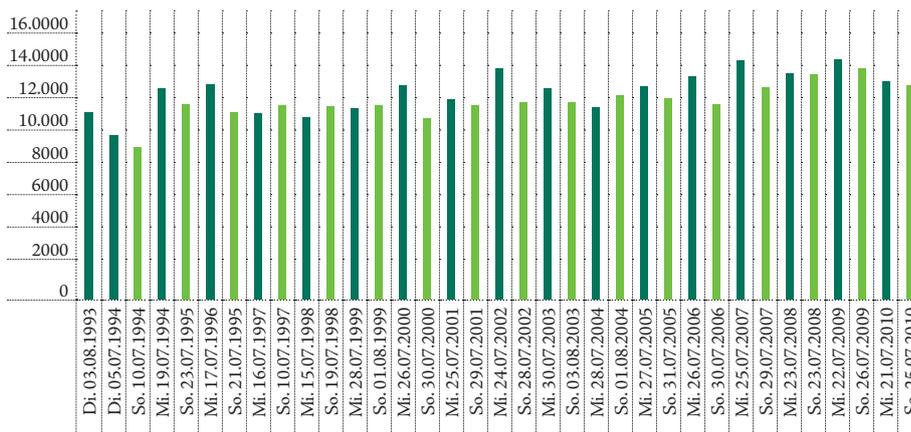


*Carrying capacity must be regarded even for bikes. Missing bicycle racks in the Biosphere Reserve Southeast Rügen*

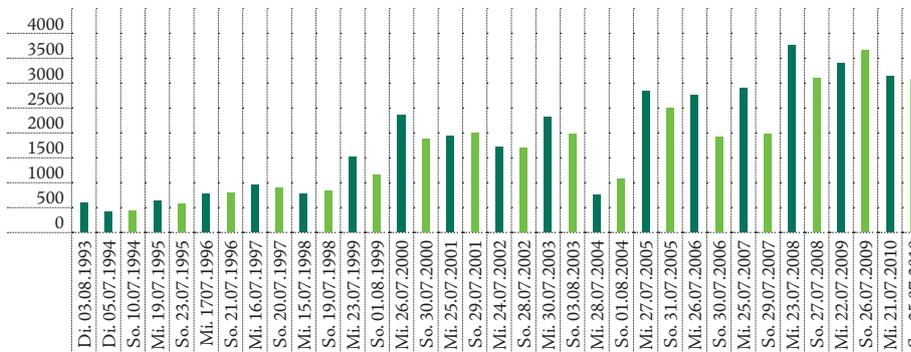


With its 64.000 guestbeds, 1,3 Mio guest-arrivals and 7 Mio guest-overnight stays per year, it is clear, that the temporal and spatial distribution of visitors creates extreme traffic peaks. More than half of the guests come in the months of June, July and August and 74% of them arrive by car. During the peak period the park have in addition about 25.000 tourist cars searching a parking place. But the parking facilities on the island of Rügen is currently at 14.000 spaces in public places and at the various attractions. This leads to extensive “parking search traffic” and also to the “wild” parking in and around the nature protected areas. Although busses carry about 3.5 million passengers per year, but they also are often stuck in traffic. The infrastructure for bicycle-tourism could be improved. Since 1992 six traffic concepts were developed, but nothing brought the problem closer to a solution.

**Cars passing the „Gate of Mönchgut“**



**Cyclists passing the „Gate of Mönchgut“**



Source: Southeast-Rügen Biosphere Reservat

## Dovrefjell-Sunndalsfjella National Park

[www.dovrefjellradet.no](http://www.dovrefjellradet.no)

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Dovrefjell-Sunndalsfjella National Park is a mountainous area in mid-Norway, situated between the main towns Lillehammer and Trondheim in the border areas between four Norwegian counties. This region is characterised by a very low population density (<5 inhabitants pr. km<sup>2</sup>), but a stable or partly increasing population. This is primarily due to a high net immigration to the area that has a very low unemployment rate.

Due to the missing Corine land cover data (since Norway is not a member of the EU), no estimation of the 'land cover population' in and around the national park exists. The population within the park is however less than 4.000 inhabitants and even within 50 km from the park the total population is less than 10.000. Most of the population is urban with Oppdal as the main center, and only a limited number of smaller additional towns (Sunndalsøra, Tynset, Dombås, Alvdal, Lom) exist in the vast area.

A number of locations with holiday houses and caravan sites within and around the park area exists together with. This gives a considerable foundation for a regional and national tourism. Additionally a substantial number of hotel accommodation spaces has for many years been used also for international tourism.



*Time for adventure in  
Dovrefjell National Park.*

### Strengths

- › long distance connection between Oslo and Trondheim
- › exotic nature and high number of visitors from abroad (40%)
- › Hjerkinn and Kongsvold stops inside the park

### Opportunities

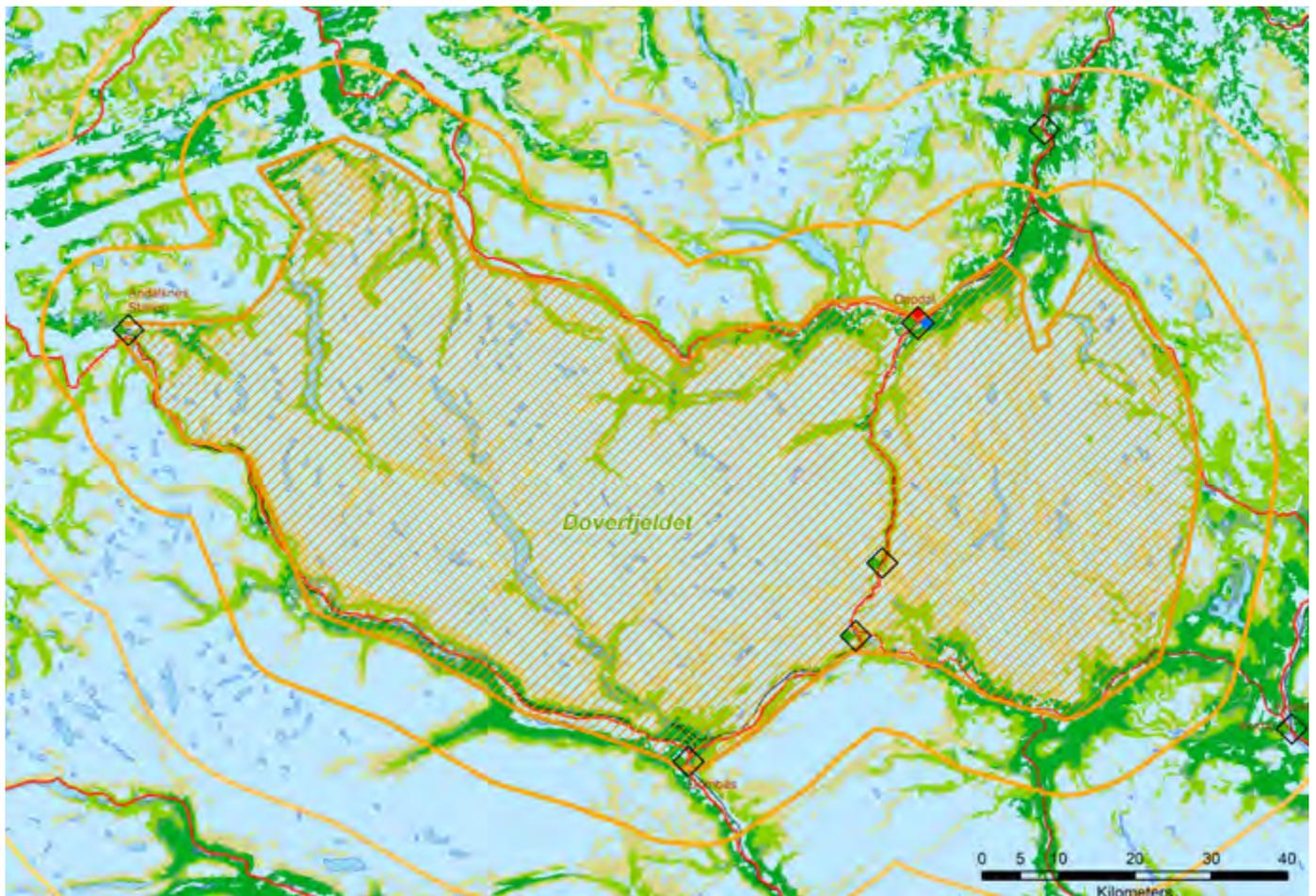
- › special promotion of public transport possibilities
- › more tourism products=more people=economical possibilities -> tour operators can include it
- › high speed trains in the next 10–15 years

### Weaknesses

- › lack of transport between villages on the west side (most attractive=fjords) and east side (axe north-south is rather easy)

### Threats

- › none



### Strengths

- › remote areas
- › accessible by train

### Opportunities

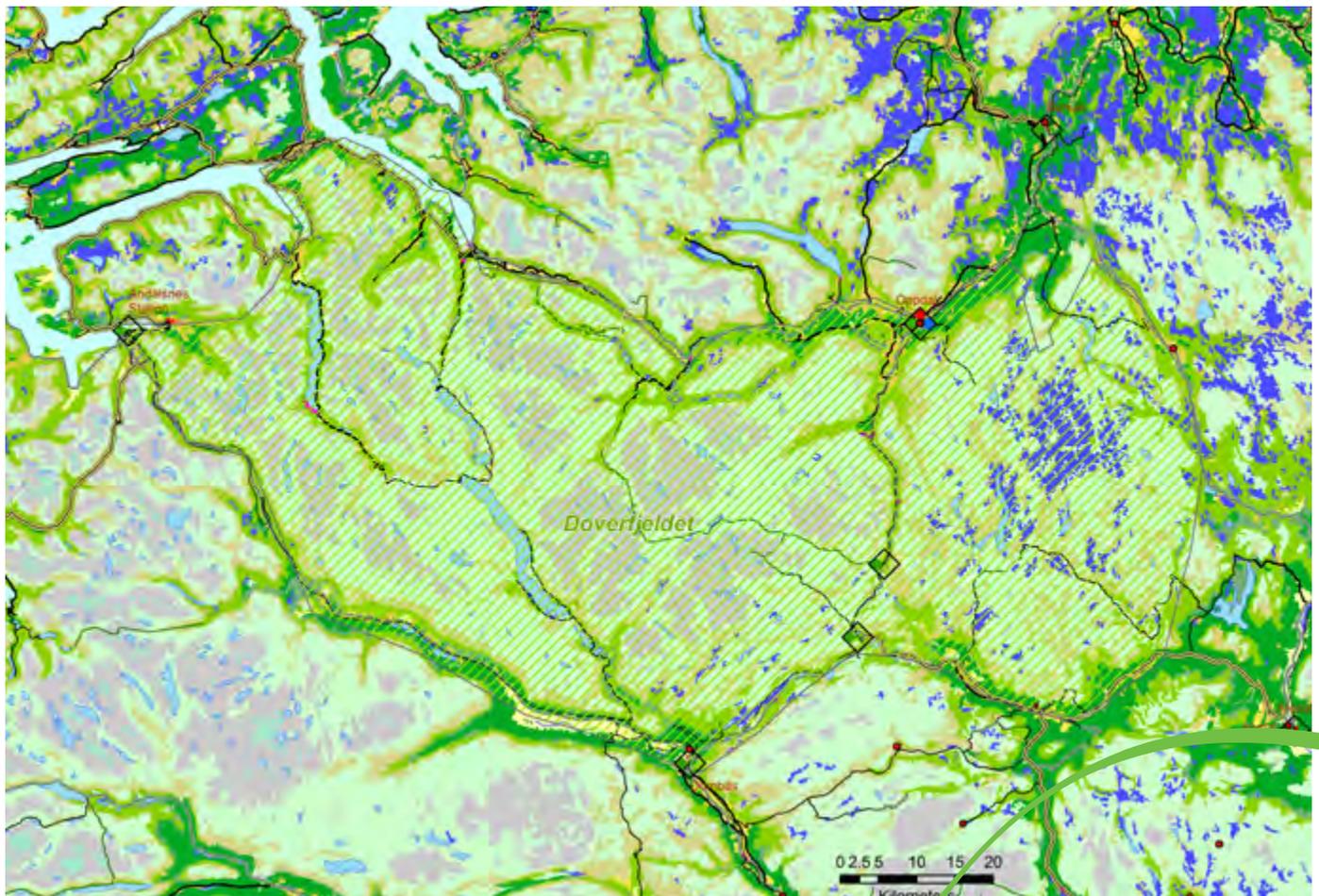
- › promoting train- and bus-stations as arrival- and departures-points

### Weaknesses

- › less demand for public transport by locals

### Threats

- › none



The Dovrefjell National Park and its surroundings is an area of low density, so car traffic is for the inhabitants the common mode of transport. The impressive nature attracts norwegian as well as international tourists, most for more than a day trip. The mobility inside the Park for visiting hikers would therefore be best provided by bus. Due to lack of Population on-demand busses would be a good solution. Special ticket offers combining the bus with the trespassing train line and long distance busses might be an opportunity to attract more visitors and guarantee sustainable transport for them. Especially in winter time, the use of busses for the skiing season could be expanded, so that visitors do not need a car to get to the skiing areas. Under the whole year the regulation of roads could be used to manage the visitor flows and carrying capacity in sensible area.

*Landscape in  
Dovrefjell National Park*







## Imprint

# PARKS & BENEFITS

Baltic protected areas and tourism



**Baltic Sea Region**

Programme 2007-2013



Part-financed by the European Union  
(European Regional Development Fund)



**VCD**  
**Verkehrsclub**  
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[www.parksandbenefits.net](http://www.parksandbenefits.net)

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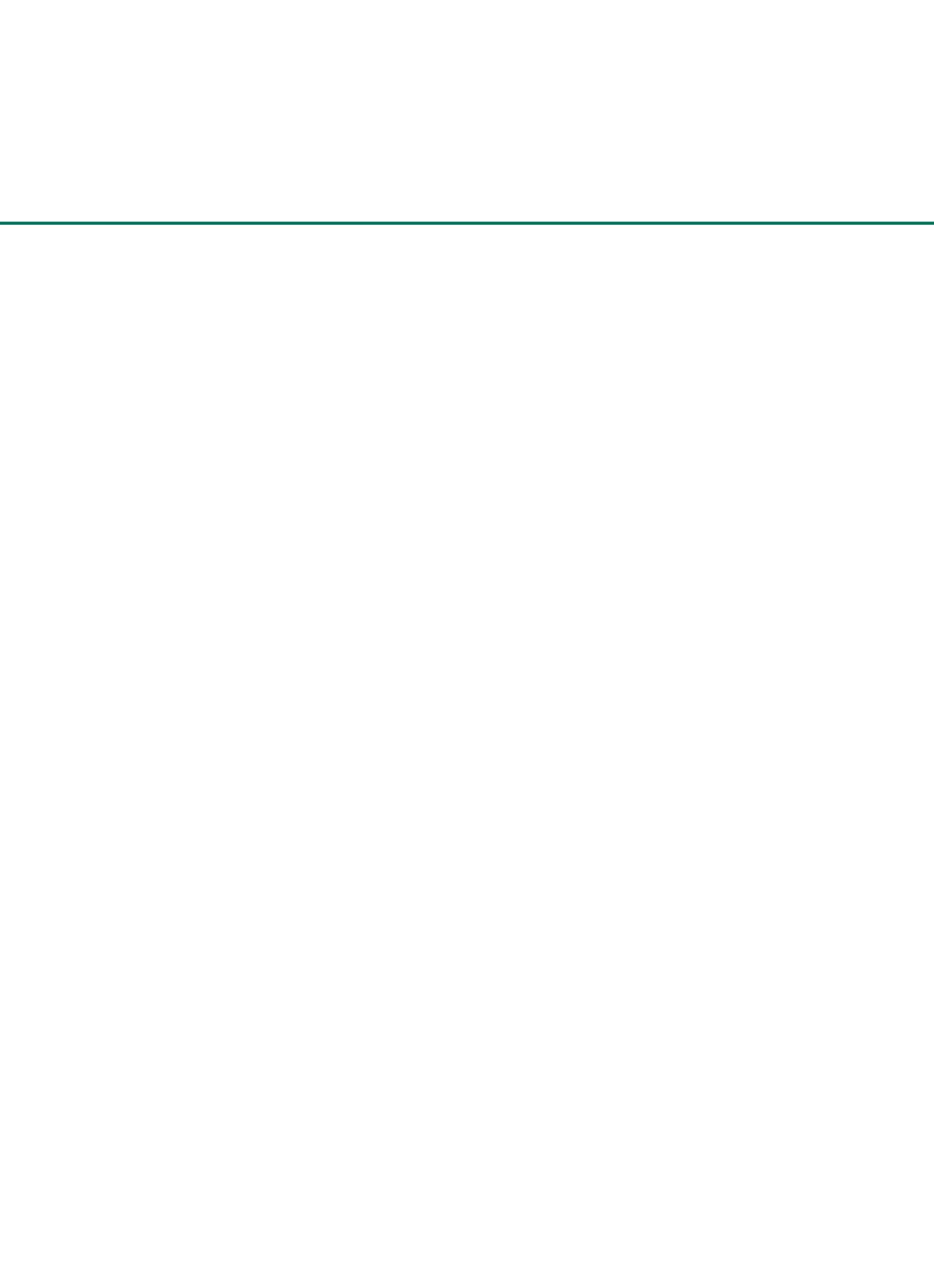
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## PARKS & BENEFITS

Baltic protected areas and tourism

**Natural heritage in the Baltic Sea Region**

Challenges and solutions for sustainable transport to and within protected areas



**Baltic Sea Region**

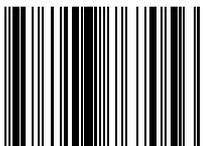
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