



Most of the nature reserve is occupied by forests. Spruce, pine, birch, aspen, black alder forests can be found there, as well as broadleaved forests of linden, elm, maple and ash. Broadleaved forests, which used to be common in the area, are now the relics of the warmer periods. They are rare in the Leningrad Region and need special protection. However, this is not the only reason why the forests of the Kurgalsky reserve have such a high nature conservation value. In many places there the so-called old-growth forests, where trees live up to their natural old age, can be found. Ageing and dying, such trees provide habitats for numerous organisms (mosses, lichens, fungi and insects) that cannot survive in younger forests as they require a special microclimate and substrates provided, for example, by the wood of dead fallen tree trunks. At the site where an old tree has fallen, young trees eventually grow, ensuring the continuity of the forest.

Due to the encroaching industrial development, few old-growth forests are left. Many species associated with them are on the verge of extinction. Every conserved area of an old-growth forest, however small, is a valuable contribution to sustaining biological diversity.



The grey seal (*Halichoerus grypus*), quite common in the Gulf of Finland after a heavy decline of the 1990s. This means that this species, too, needs special protection in the reserve.



The Baltic sea is home to the Baltic subspecies of the ringed seal (*Pusa hispida botnica*), registered in different Red Data Books. Fewer than 300 of these seals are left in the Gulf of Finland. The Baltic ringed seal is considered to be one of the most vulnerable animal species in the Leningrad Region and in the Baltic.

The nature reserve takes special pride in the sea mammals. Two species of seals occur there. In summer and autumn their favourite haul-out site are the rocky reefs off the Kurgalsky Peninsula, where they feed, rest and socialize. Resting seals are very sensitive to any disturbance.



Rules for visitors of the reserve

Prohibited activities

- unauthorized cutting of trees and bushes
- tapping trees, collecting bark
- camping and making fires outside specially designated areas, burning grass and reeds
- driving motor vehicles off the roads, parking motor vehicles outside specially designated areas and in water protection zone
- organization of landfills, dump household or industrial waste
- amateur fishing in the Gulf of Finland, the Luga Bay and Lake Lipovskoe from April 15 to July 15
- hunting, killing birds and mammals
- visiting areas of mass nesting of waterbirds (northern coast of the Kurgalsky Peninsula and islands of the Kurgalsky Reef) from April 15 to July 15
- collecting/killing protected species of plants, fungi and animals

You may

Walk in the nature reserve, pick mushrooms and berries for personal use, fish in accordance with current fishing regulations*, use personal transport in compliance with the above mentioned rules and restrictions.

Detailed rules and regulations concerning the protected area can be found in the Statute (polozhenie) of “Kurgalsky” state nature reserve adopted by the Government of the Leningrad Region (Decree of the Government of the Leningrad Region no. 82 of 08.04.2010).

* Fishing Regulation for the Western fishery basin is adopted by the Federal Agency for Fisheries (Order no. 393 of 10.12.2008).

Persons found guilty of infringing the protection regime of the reserve will be subject to administrative penalty.

The visitors’ respect both to the nature and to the efforts at its conservation is essential for the welfare of the protected area. Remember that in certain seasons animals are extremely sensitive to any disturbance and that coastal and bog plant communities suffer a lot from trampling. Please take this into account when planning your visit to Kurgalsky Peninsula.

Rubbish collection points on the Kurgalsky Peninsula are few and far between, being mostly located in the villages. You certainly can take away everything that you have brought with you.

Let's keep the Kurgalsky Peninsula tidy!

Wetlands of International Importance (Rasmar sites) in the Leningrad Region



Contracting Parties to the Ramsar Convention develop and maintain an international network of Ramsar sites ensuring their protection and wise use.

The management authority of “Kurgalsky” state nature reserve is the Committee for Natural Resources of the Leningrad Region.



You can learn more about thisand other protected areas of the Leningrad Region at: www.nature.lenobl.ru

Attention!
The protected area is situated in the border zone.

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References: Glazkova E.A., Bubyreva V.A. Flora of the Kurgalsky Peninsula. St. Petersburg, Publishing House of the Saint-Petersburg State University, 1997. 164 p.
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Eleven species from the above groups are listed in the Red Data Book of the Russian Federation, 11 species are listed in the Red Data Book of the Leningrad Region. Many species are also included in the IUCN Red List and the Red Data Book of the Baltic Region.

- numerous invertebrates, mosses, lichens and fungi, which are still poorly studied in the reserve
- 47 species of mammals
- more than 250 species of birds
- 4 species of reptiles
- 6 species of amphibians
- more than 40 species of fish
- 2 species of cyclostomes
- 19 species of marine macroalgae
- more than 750 species of vascular plants

The protected area provides habitats for

- threatened species of animals, plants and fungi
- grey seal and ringed seal haul-out sites
- natural purification site of the Gulf of Finland waters
- spawning grounds of commercial fish species and as shallow areas of the Gulf of Finland important as
- massifs of natural forests

The nature reserve also protects

- biological diversity of wetland ecosystems
- southern coast of the Gulf of Finland
- typical natural complexes of coastal landscapes of the large stopover sites of waterbirds
- nesting colonies of waterbirds

In order to preserve

(Ramsar Site) is established

The Wetland of International Importance

regional state nature reserve (*zakaznik* in Russian). (Ramsar site) coincide with those of “Kurgalsky Peninsula” the borders of the Wetland of International Importance valley of the Narva River. They are the remaining fragments of the early post-glacial freshwater Lake Beloe and brackish-water Lake Lipovskoe. There are two large lakes in the nature reserve: islands of Kurgalsky and Tiskolsky Reefs, Reimosar Island and others. The adjacent water area of the Gulf of Finland with the Rivers, adjacent to the peninsula from the south, as well as area between the Gulf of Narva and the Luga and the Rossos area between the Kurgalsky Peninsula, the

Total area: 599 km² (207 km² of land, including the islands, 8 km² of lake water area, 384 km² of the Gulf of Finland water area).

“Kurgalsky Peninsula” Protected Area

Regional state nature reserve



KURGALSKY



Wetland of International Importance “Kurgalsky Peninsula” (Ramsar site no. 690)

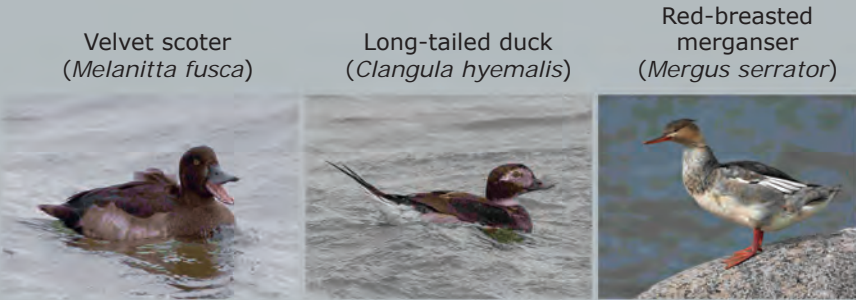
This wetland area has been designated by the Government of the Russian Federation for inclusion in the List of Wetlands of International Importance established under the Ramsar Convention on Wetlands (signed in Iran in 1971)



The coast of the Kurgalsky Peninsula, together with the adjacent shallow water areas, is one of the most important stopovers in the region, where migrating waterbirds stop on the way from their wintering areas in Western Europe and Africa to nesting areas in Northern Eurasia. In spring, numerous bird flocks find there excellent opportunities for feeding and resting.



In autumn large flocks of migratory birds head for their winter quarters. Their routes are different: while some spend the winter in Western and Southern Europe, others fly to South Africa. As in spring, many of the migrants find a resting place on the Kurgalsky Peninsula and nearby. From mid-August to November one can see there large flocks of dabbling ducks, sea ducks, divers, swans, gulls and waders.



The best way to watch birds in winter is to put out a bird table with seeds. Several species of birds are likely to come and feed there. On Kurgalsky Peninsula one can usually see great tits (*Parus major*), blue tits (*Parus caeruleus*) and marsh tits (*Parus palustris*). Nuthatches (*Sitta europaea*) are also frequent visitors of the table.



A winter landscape breathes peace and tranquillity. The nature seems to have fallen asleep, to rest till spring. The impression of total desertion and silence is false, however. Many birds stay in the reserve during winter too.



A characteristic feature of the reserve as well as the object of special protection are diverse marine and coastal natural complexes.

Coastal meadows usually stretch along the water edge as narrow strips. They mostly consist of halophilic ("salt-loving") plants, which have adapted to frequent brackish water floods. Many of them are rare protected species, such as sea centaury (*Centaurium littorale*), Salt-marsh Flat Sedge (*Blysmus rufus*), Mackenzie's sedge (*Carex mackenziei*), sea aster (*Aster tripolium*) (1).



Lyme grass (*Leymus arenarius*), beach pea (*Lathyrus maritimus*) (2), sea sandwort (*Honkenya peploides*) (3) grow on open pebbly and sandy shores. Plants rare for the Leningrad Region such as sea mayweed (*Tripleurospermum maritimum*), dyer's woad (*Isatis tinctoria*), sand sedge (*Carex arenaria*) (4) can also be found there.

Summer, the high season of nesting, is the crucial time for the birds. Over a short period they have to build a nest, to lay and cover eggs, and, last but not least, to feed and bring out the nestlings. It is essential to ensure that the birds are not disturbed throughout the nesting season.

Out of the 250 species of birds registered in the Kurgalsky nature reserve, about 200 species also nest there.



The hatch of greylag goose (*Anser anser*) is brought up by both parents, the male and the female.



The chicks of white-backed woodpecker (*Dendrocopos leucotos*), a species included in different Red Data Books, leave the nest as early as in May. This species needs humid small-leaved forests with a lot of standing deadwood.

Birds are very caring parents. In the nesting period they devote most of their time to their insatiable chicks.



Common terns (*Sterna hirundo*) feed their young on small fry but even the most attentive parent can sometimes get it wrong...

Great reed warbler (*Acrocephalus arundinaceus*) builds its nest in the reeds, usually above the water. Common rosefinches (*Carpodacus erythrinus*) feed their chicks on different seeds. Red-backed shrikes (*Lanius collurio*) nesting nearby bring large insects.



Baltic dunlin (*Calidris alpina schinzi*), one of the rarest birds of the Baltic, has recently been registered on the Kurgalsky Peninsula. In the summer of 2008, a nest of this cute bird was found on the coast of the Gulf of Narva. This is the second such finding in the history of ornithological research in the Leningrad Region, the first one dating back to more than 40 years ago.

Numerous colonies of seagulls (herring gull – *Larus argentatus*, common gull – *Larus canus*, lesser black-backed gull – *Larus fuscus* and great black-backed gull – *Larus marinus*) and terns (common tern – *Sterna hirundo* and Arctic tern – *Sterna paradisaea*) can be found on the islands and at the sea coast. Ducks (mallard – *Anas platyrhynchos*, common eider – *Somateria mollissima*, velvet scoter – *Melanitta fusca*, goosander – *Mergus merganser*, red-breasted merganser – *Mergus serrator*), several species of waders, gulliemots, cormorants and other wetland birds nest there too.

