

European Wilderness Network

Čepkeliai Wilderness



2018

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Let's get Wild!

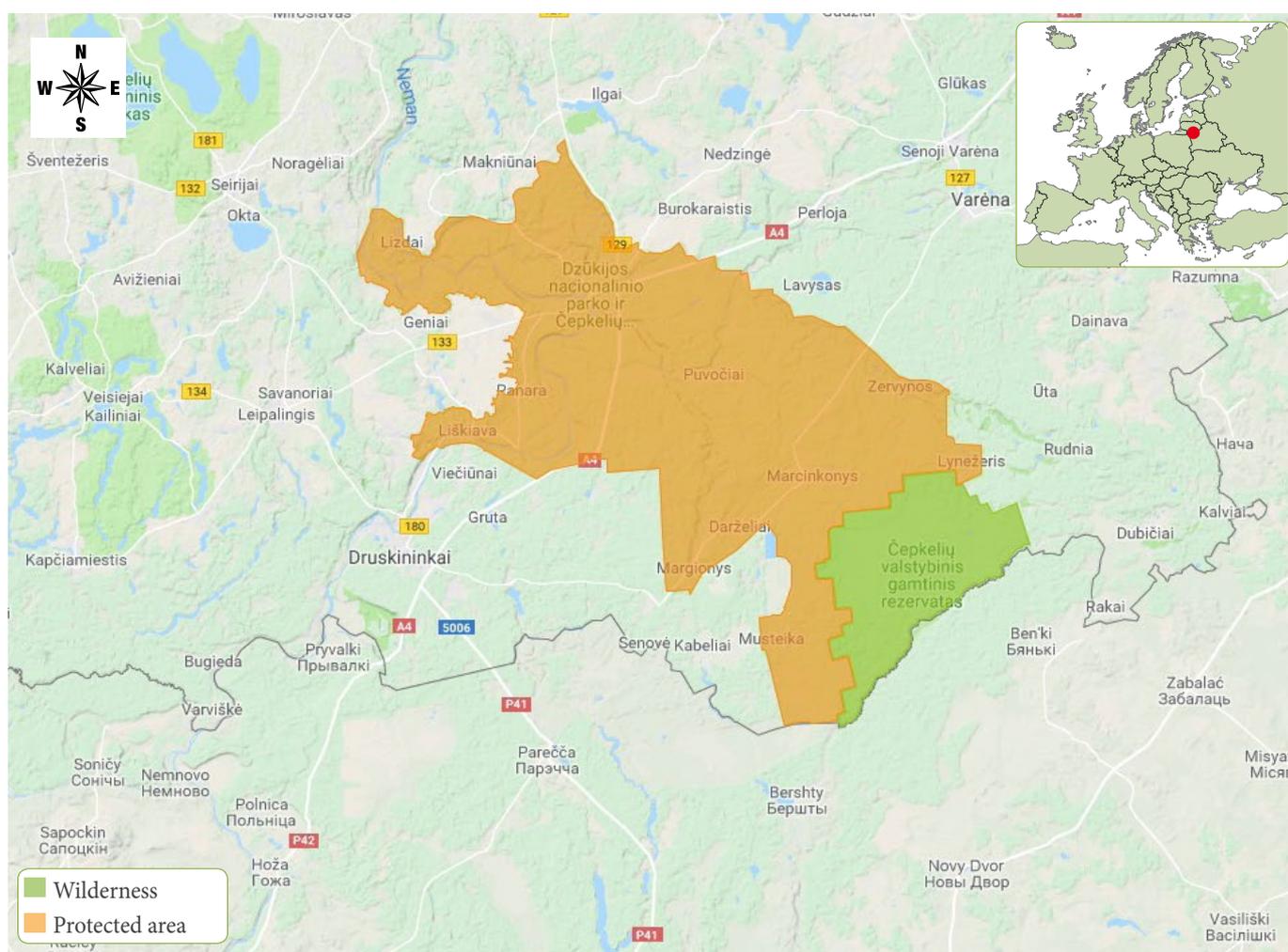
Čepkeliai Wilderness, Lithuania

The 13 004 ha Čepkeliai Wilderness is embedded in the Dzūkija National Park and Čepkeliai Strict Nature Reserve, Lithuania. Čepkeliai Wilderness is the largest contiguous piece of Wilderness in Lithuania consisting of two areas: Čepkeliai and Musteika Strict Nature Reserves. It is located in the south-eastern corner of Lithuania and forms one ecological complex, representing the most valuable ecosystems of wetlands and surrounding forests, at the border with Belarus. Čepkeliai Wilderness has been protected since 1961 and Čepkeliai Strict Nature Reserve, established in 1975, was nominated as Ramsar area together with Kotra Landscape Reserve in Belarus in 1993. Čepkeliai Wilderness is a unique area that has been only slightly impacted in the past centuries by activities of local people, such as cutting of grass and collection of berries.

European Wilderness Quality Standard Audit System

The 13 004 ha Čepkeliai Wilderness was audited in 2011 and meets the Platinum Wilderness Quality Standard. A European Wilderness Quality Standard Renewal-Audit is scheduled for 2021.

Wilderness information	
Protected area	Dzūkija National Park and Čepkeliai Strict Nature Reserve
Wilderness	Čepkeliai Wilderness
Country	Lithuania
Size of the protected area	69 745 ha
Size of the Wilderness	13 004 ha
European Wilderness Quality Standard Audit	2011
Wilderness Uniqueness	Large active raised peat-bogs, lowland sedge fens and black alder swamps, surrounded by lichen pine forests on continental dunes
Number of visitors per year to the protected area	approx. 35 000
Number of visitors per year to the Wilderness	approx. 4 000



Map scale 1 : 880 000



Biodiversity

The Čepkeliai Wilderness includes pine forests at the tops of inland dunes and in rolling sandy plains, intersected by river valleys and vast areas of wetland. Beneath this seemingly monotonous veil of pine forests, dry grasslands and orchid filled meadows, raised bogs, fens and transitional mires, sand dunes, fast-flowing rivers and streams have become the habitat for a multitude of rare plants and animals. Some of them are unique for Lithuania or for Western Europe. It provides nesting grounds for the capercaillie, the symbol of Čepkeliai Wilderness. Čepkeliai Wilderness is home to wolves, lynx, black grouse, cranes, European beaver and more than 4 000 other species of animals and plants. In nearly every village situated in the woods, you'll hear the sharp cry of the green woodpecker or the sound of the hoopoe. Furthermore, dry riverside pastures and sand openings are a paradise for bees and bumblebees, and many rare species of butterflies enjoy the warm, open slopes around rivers.

Wilderness Tourism Experience

Čepkeliai Wilderness is offering well-designed visitor infrastructure that allows the general public to visit and experience the edges of this vast Wilderness. Boardwalks and watchtowers guide people along the western border of vast peatbogs without the risk of getting lost or damage to the Wilderness. Visitor programmes such as birdwatching are regularly combined with nature talks and interpretive programmes.



Contact

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Let's
Get
Wild!

European Wilderness Society

Founded on more than 20 years of Wilderness work by our members, the European Wilderness Society is the only Pan-European, Wilderness and environmental advocacy non-profit, non-government organisation.

It has a dedicated multi-cultural and experienced team of Wilderness and wildlife specialists, nature conservationists, researchers and scientists, tourism experts, marketing and business professionals, legal advisors and Wilderness advocates, whose mission is to:

- ▶ identify
- ▶ designate
- ▶ steward
- ▶ promote

Europe's last Wilderness, WILDCoasts, WILDForests, WILDIslands and WILDRivers. Here non-human intervention leads to open-ended, dynamic processes.

This is conveyed through a range of projects that facilitate Wilderness knowledge exchange, including education, culture and science, from local community through to scientific and governmental level.

European Wilderness Network

The European Wilderness Network connects Europe's wildest places. Certified by the European Wilderness Quality and Audit System, these unique areas host diverse wild ecosystems governed by dynamic open-ended processes, with no or minimum human-intervention. The Network includes, for example, Europe's last primeval beech forests, the arctic tundra, and mountain landscapes in different climate conditions. It aims to promote Europe's last Wilderness, WILDCoasts, WILDForests, WILDIslands and WILDRivers, with a comprehensive marketing strategy. The European Wilderness Network offers a platform to share Wilderness Stewardship best-practice examples and Wilderness research. It connects like-minded Wilderness managers and advocates and fosters the exchange of ideas and knowledge across Europe and the world through the European Wilderness Exchange Programme.

For more information please see <http://european-wilderness.network>

European Wilderness Society

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