

# Natura 2000 compensation for private forests in Estonia

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**ERAMETSAKESKUS**

# Natura 2000 areas and forestland in Estonia



- There is totally 1 485 930 ha of Natura 2000 network in Estonia
- Estonia's Natura 2000 forestland area is 363 882 ha, which is **15,9%** of total forestland area
- Estonia's Natura 2000 private forestland area is 89 122 ha, which is **8,1%** of private forestland area (the whole area of private forest land is 1 100 000 ha)

# The purpose of the Natura 2000 network

- To ensure the protection of rare or endangered birds, animals, plants and their habitats.



# The purpose of Natura 2000 private forest land compensation



- To compensate for the private forest owners the loss of economic income due to nature protection restrictions from the forest located in Natura 2000 network

# How private forests look like on Natura 2000 area?

- More pine stands comparing to other private forests
- Less hardwood stands, specially gray alder stands
- Forests are older than an average private forest
- Forestland (without forest) and young stands are less than 10% of the area
- Maturing and already mature forest are more than half of the area
- Spruce, aspen and alder stands are mature more than half of the territory



# How private forests look like on Natura 2000 area?

- When looking at the site-specific distribution, compared to average, then mostly there are represented **alvar forests** and **peatland forests**:



- There are less **nemoral forests**:



# Natura 2000 forestland compensation - applying

- Applications are being accepted and processed by Estonian Private Forest Centre. The compensation is paid by PRIA (Agricultural Registers and Information Board). 75% of finances come from EU budget, 25% from state budget.
- Applications must be re-submitted each year



# Rates for Natura 2000 forestland compensation

- Limited management zone, limited-conservation area and planned area - up to **60 EUR** per hectare per year (due to limited budget, the support rate is approx 52-54 EUR/ha)
- Conservation zone – **110 EUR** per hectare per year (also in conservation zone that is outside of Natura 2000 network)
- The compensation is subject to income tax (20%), but from 2020 up to 5000 EUR is subject to a tax exemption for income earned from the forest, including Natura 2000 forest compensation



# New national support

- In the next year there will be extra 1,1 mln € in state budget for compensation for nature conservation restrictions on private forest land
- 60 €/ha forest owners whose forest sites are in limited management zone out of Natura 2000 network
- Concerns about 1000 forest owners and 14 000 ha of forest

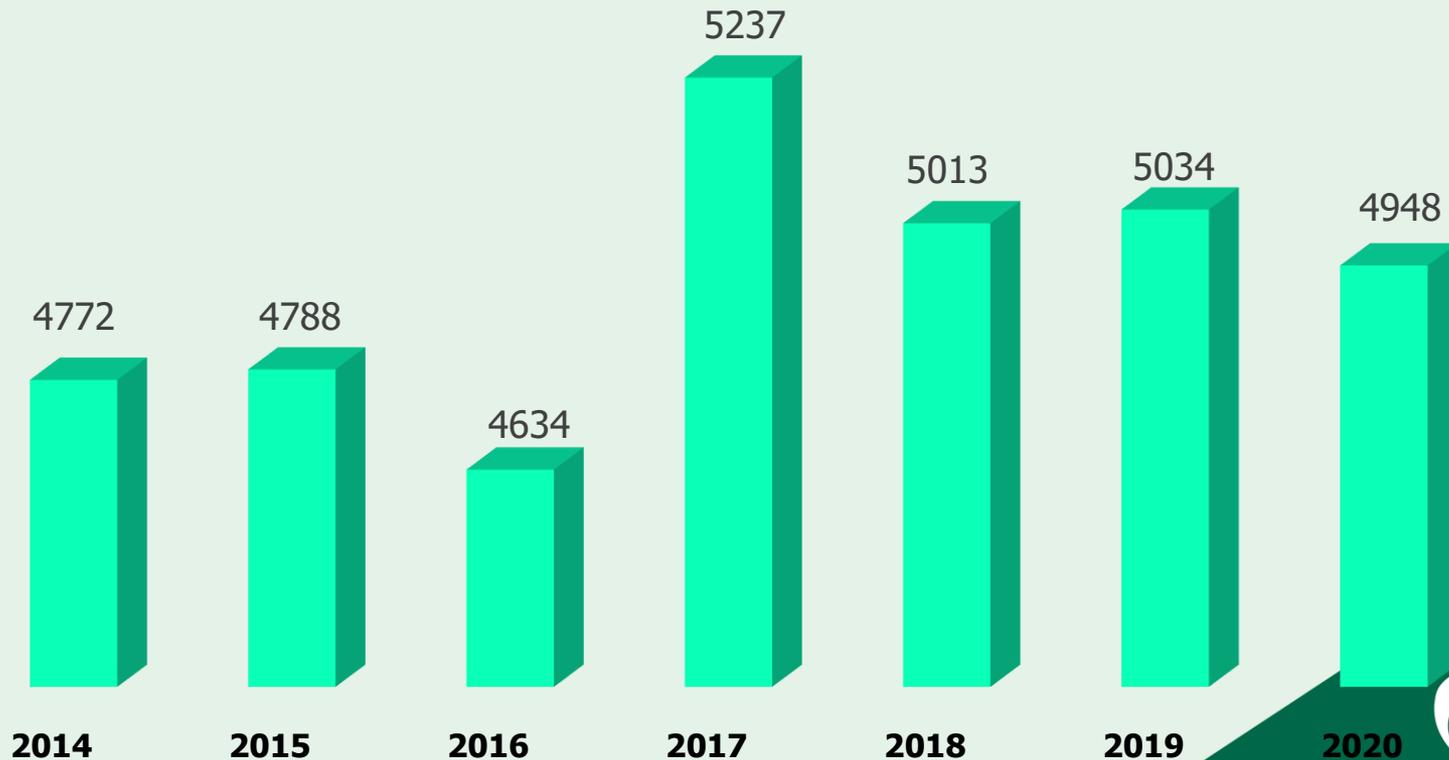


# Natura 2000 compensation in 2020

- Eligible area of Natura 2000 private forest in total 89 046 ha
- 67 811 ha ha was applied
- support was granted for 65 871 ha
  
- There was 4948 submitted
  
- Budget was 4,385 mln, but it wasn't enough, so the limited zone zone rate (which should be 60 EUR) had to be reduced to 51.63 EUR

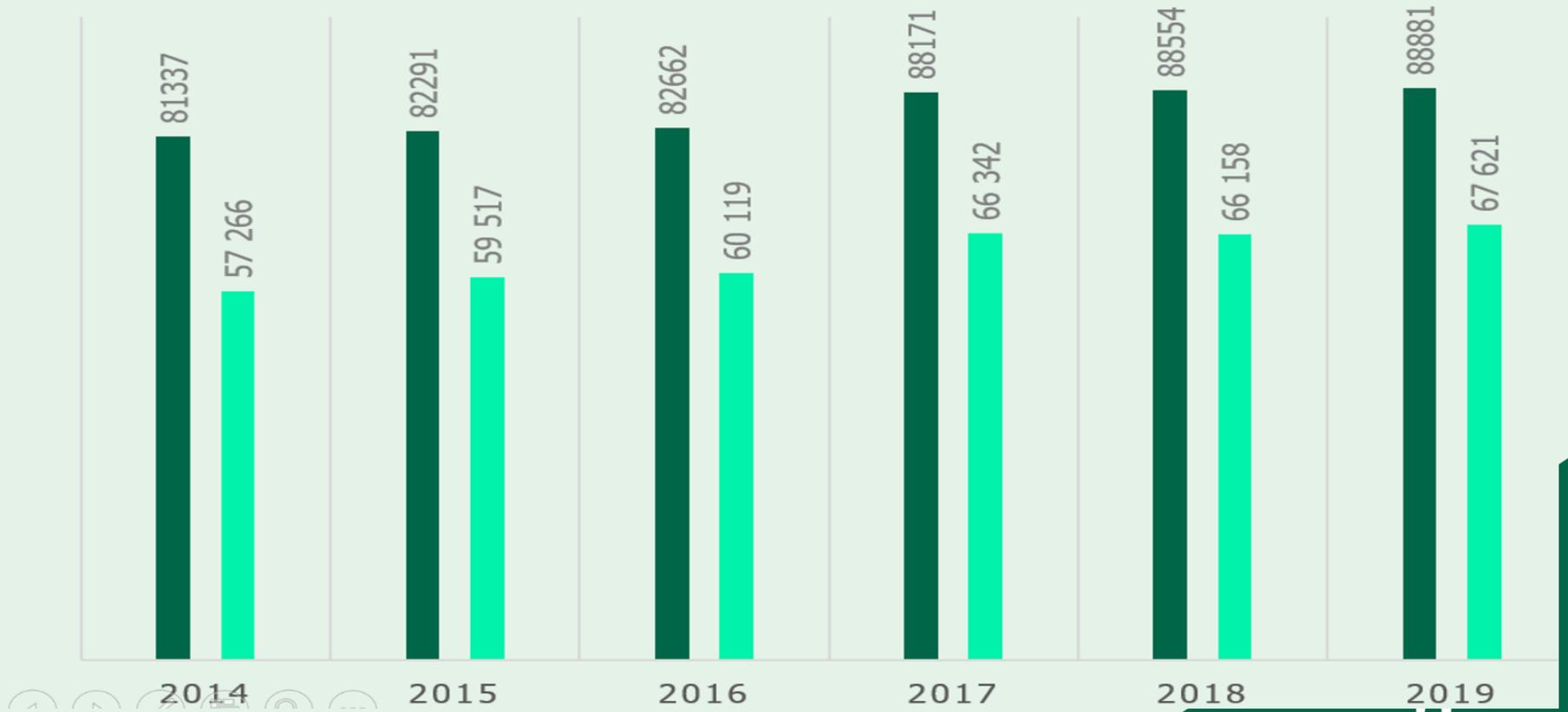


# Natura 2000 private forest land compensation applications submitted



■ Eligible for Natura forest support, ha

■ Submitted area, ha



# Requirements for applicants



- An applicant is owner until 31.12
- Co-owners have given their permission for one owner to apply subsidy or submit joint application. In both cases, the money is transferred to one co-owner.
- An applicant complies with the requirements of the Nature Conservation Act and the Forest Act
- An applicant must ensure that the forest border points are visually identifiable

# Support for key habitats



**Key habitat** is an area in a forest where there is a high probability of the occurrence of narrowly adapted, endangered or rare species.

- Protection of key habitats in state forest is compulsory, but voluntary in private forest.
- In order to protect a key habitat, a private forest owner may voluntarily enter into a formal agreement with the state for 20 years. The forest owner and the state then agree that the owner will not manage the valuable (key habitat) part of the forest and that the state will compensate for the loss of income.



# Support for key habitats



- The agreement between a forest owner and the state prohibits the removal of down timber from the forest, drainage of the forest, construction of forest roads, reforestation, camping, making fire and deforestation.
- By so far the average amount of the compensation has been 364 EUR/ha per year.

# Compensation for key habitats



- In total there is registered 24 897 hectares of key habitat area in Estonia. 19% of key habitat area (4708 hectars) is located in private forest land.
- The budget for the key habitat compensation has increased in recent years:

2018	2019	2020
<b>161 800 €</b>	<b>241 800 €</b>	<b>271 800 €</b>

# LIFE-IP project ForEst & FarmLand

Duration: 2020-2029

The **purpose** of the project is to:

- to protect and restore traditional Estonian landscapes and ecosystems and to improve the condition of species in both public and private forests and their habitats.
- modernize the nature conservation management and information system
- promoting general environmental awareness, individual and communitybased environmental protection.



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# LIFE project activities

- 66 different activities
- divided into 6 areas: forests, semi-natural communities, environmentally friendly agriculture, species, environmental awareness, nature conversation management and information system.



# LIFE project activity - planning of private forest measures in protected areas

- Analysis and renewal of Natura 2000 private forest support
- Development of an active forest measure to improve the conservation status of forest habitats and species – active role for forest owners to protect the nature values in their forest!



# Some of the things that have been done in the LIFE project by so far

- Natura 2000 forest owners have replied to the short questionnaire, where we tried to map the satisfaction and future wishes about the Natura 2000 forest support and about their vision about for future nature conservation support
  - (This is input to a bigger survey in the next year)
- Think tanks – which techniques, that promote nature protection, should be supported in Estonia
  - **20 techniques and some of them are:**
  - Closure of ditches as complete wetland,
  - Diversification of stand through planting,
  - Creation of landscape mosaic by felling,
  - Preservation of burned forests.



# How can climate warming impact our forests?

- As warming is thought to occur primarily in the north and not in the equator areas, environmental conditions are also changing more in northern forests

So in Estonian forests there will be:

- Increase in an average air temperature;
- increase in average winter air temperature;
- higher rainfall during the growing season;
- shortening of snow-covered winter;



# How can climate warming impacts our forests?

- more frequent storms;
- more frequent droughty summers;
- higher maximum temperatures;
- possible extremely low temperatures in winter;
- of conifers, pine will probably adapt best to new conditions
- the proportion of spruces in our forests may decrease significantly



# What changes in the daily lives of forest inhabitants?

- Many birds will winter here, instead of migrating to south
- Game that has turned white in winter (such as the white rabbit) is more visible to the species hunting it and their numbers will be declining
- If there is little snow than wild boars have better access to food and their numbers are increasing
- Also the red deers and roe deers will be doing better due to little snow



# What changes in the daily lives of forest inhabitants?

- Moose needs cooler temperature for living, so their condition will be worsened (the number of its food competitors is also rising)
- The condition of ringed seals will be worsened, because lack of ice which would be necessary for giving birth
- The hibernation of bears, common raccoon dogs and badgers shortens. The common raccoon dogs and the badger therefore compete more fiercely for food
- We can predict the arrival of new species from the south to Estonia. For example there is raccoon already in Lithuania.



# The species of the year 2021 in Estonia

## Thank you for listening!

