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MPA FACT SHEET

WWF BALTIC ECOREGION PROGRAMME

Ingermanlandsky

Location

The proposed area strict nature reserve "Ingermanlandsky" is located on the islands of the East of Gulf of Finland in the Baltic Sea.

Reasons for Selection

The "Ingermanlandsky" is one of the most important ecological areas in the Baltic Sea. Thanks to a low level of anthropogenic stress, many components of nature complexes have remained intact, including a number of rare species long extinct in other areas of the region.

Area Description

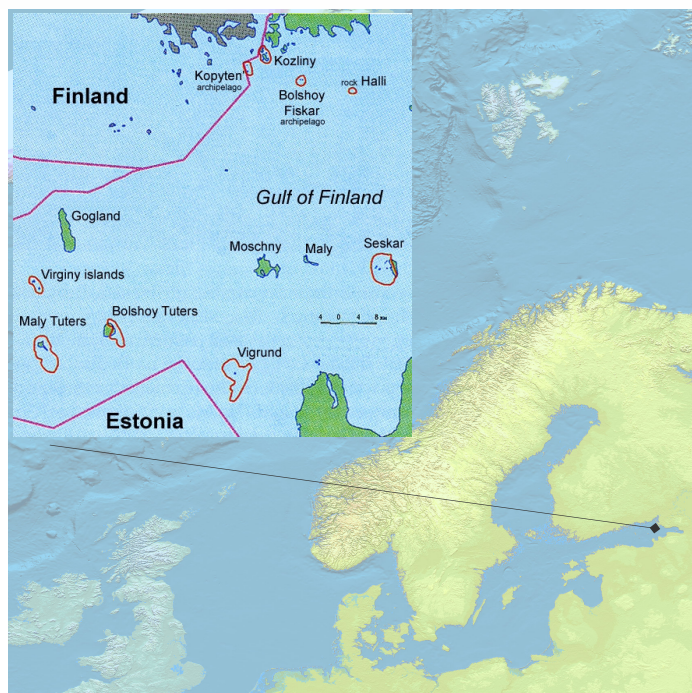
The reserve belongs to the cluster type and consists of nine isolated parts: part of the island Bolshoy Tyuters, Maly Tyuters, Severnyy and Yuzhnyy Virginy, Seskar, the water area adjoining the islands as well as the water area along the northern coast of the Gulf of Finland, from Finland's frontier to the Chistopolskaya Bay, including the islands of Kopytin, Dolgy Reef, Dolgy Kamen, Krutoyar, Ryabinnik, etc. and the Bolshoj Fiskar archipelago.

Habitats and Biological Features

Most of the islands are covered with forests. The Virginy, the Bolshoy Fiskar archipelago and other small islands are almost treeless. There are rock outcrops on Bolshoy Tyuters and those adjacent to the northern coast of the gulf. There are low sand dunes on Maly and Bolshoy Tyuters and Seskar as well as wide shallow zones surrounding the islands. The shallow waters are covered with patches of reed, sedges, horsetail and other coastal plants. The fauna is extremely rich in hydrobionts, fishes and birds.

Plants

The flora of the territory is quite distinctive. Of special interest is the vegetation of rocks, sand and meadow littorals. The following rare species are worth mentioning: the Alpine Catch-fly, *Silene rupestris*, *Lotus ruprechtii*, etc. The flora totals 661 vascular species.



Fish and crustaceans

The central part of the Gulf of Finland is an area of migration and fattening-place for the Baltic Herring, Smelt, Salmon, Sea Trout, Baltic European Whitefish and River Lamprey. Occasionally, mass approach of the European Sprat can be observed there. The shallow waters surrounding the islands and sand banks serve as a pre-spawning concentration area and spawning sites for the main commercial fish: the Baltic Herring, European Smelt, Bream, European Pike-Perch, Perch, Eelpout, as well as the fattening area for virtually all the fish species in the eastern part of the Gulf of Finland.

Feature	Value
Area size	app. 180 km ²
Depth range	0 – 10 m
Salinity	0.5 - 4 ‰

Birds and mammals

The Black-throated Diver, Black-necked Grebe, Mute

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Swan, Shelduck, Graylag Goose, Velvet Scoter, Eider Duck, Oystercatcher, Turnstone, Black-tailed Godwit, Caspian Tern, Black Guillemot, Razorbill and Yellow-breasted Bunting are to be found here. Large colonies of the Cormorant have been found on the islands of Bolshoj Fiskar, Seskar and Dolgy Reef. The Baltic Ringed Seal and Grey Seal inhabit the waters of the gulf and cube here. The islands are of great value as resting and feeding sites for migratory



Nestling of Razorbill

birds. The largest numbers of migrants accumulate on the shallow waters around the island of Seskar. The list of registered birds includes 120 species.

Human uses and impacts

At present increasing shipping and especially of oil transport within the Gulf of Finland is a significant disturbance for resting birds and hauling-out seals around the islands as well as increased potential danger of accidents and oil pollution. The occasional military activities near the islands cause the same effect. The impact of fisheries includes the exploitation of stocks of commercial species as well as non-commercial species, seabirds and marine mammals through unintended by-catch especially during the spring.

As the islands are very attractive for visiting (especially with yachts) and housing, both the uncontrolled tourism and potential human settlements are also the threats for the ecosystems.

Protection and Management

Protection mode envisages a ban on all kinds of economic activity. It is being planned in the reserve to do research on the composition and ecology of rare species, the fauna of coastal hydrobionts and the flora, as well as investigate the migration.

Of special research interest are the nature complexes of rocks, the marine littoral and shallow waters and of rare species of plants and animals like *Silene rupestris*, Sea-Milkwort, Dwarf Cornel, Black-throated Diver, Shelduck, Eider, White-tailed Sea

Eagle, Caspian Tern, Black Guillemot, Baltic Ringed Seal and Grey Seal.

Existing / Proposed Protection

There is no legal protection of the area yet, but Biological Institute of St-Petersburg State University, the Ministry of Environmental Protection and Natural Resources of the Russian Federation and the Finnish Ministry of Environment proposed to establish the strict nature reserve in order to preserve the marine and island ecosystems in the eastern part of the Baltic area, the habitats of many marine plant and animal species and a large number of rare and endangered species.



Photo: M. Verevkin

Ringed Seals are typical in the area

References and further reading

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