Alam-Pedja area is an extensive wilderness area of vast mires and bogs, wet forests, floodplains and meandering rivers. The area under protection today covers 34,220 hectares. The nature reserve is located in the Lake Võrtsjärv depression bordered mainly by rivers – Pedja River, Põltsamaa River, Umbusi River, Pikknurme River, Laeva River and Emajõgi River. The nature reserve consists of zones with different protection regime and has several nature trails and a nature centers.

Some visiting restrictions are applied in the nature reserve. Please follow the tourist signs!

When noticing any activities harmful to nature call the Environmental Inspection at 1313.

Alam-Pedja Nature Reserve is governed by the Environmental Board of Estonia

http://www.keskkonnaamet.ee/alam

Visitor activities in the nature reserve are organized by nature conservation department of the State Forest Management Center

https://loodusegakoos.ee/kuhuminna/kaitsealad/alam-pedja-looduskaitseala

and the Alam-Pedja Nature Center of the Environmental Board.

Palupõhja nature school at Palupõhja

http://www.palupohja.ee

has become one of the most visited and active centers of environmental education.

The project is financed by the EU LIFE+ Programme, the Estonian Environmental Investment Center and the executor Wildlife Estonia (Eesti Loodushoiu Keskus).

For more information on the project HAPPYRIVER please visit

http://www.loodushoid.ee/HAPPYRIVER_342.htm

Text and diagram: Wildlife Estonia
Cover photo: Wildlife Estonia
Design and layout: Ain Tavita
Map: Ain Tavita
Printed: Ecoprint 2017

To this aim, Wildlife Estonia initiated its next LIFE project, this time a project called LIFE "Happyriver." In Alam-Pedja Nature Reserve (which is also a Natura 2000 site of international importance) two sections of the lower course of the Laeva River will be restored with the help of LIFE Programme and Estonian Environmental Investment Centre. Water will start flowing through its original, meandering watercourse. In all, 8 km of natural river will be restored. After that the Laeva River shall flow into the river Emajõgi at its original site, a few kilometers upstream from the Kärevere bridge on the Tallinn-Tartu road. This project is the first of its kind in Estonia – an extensive project of restoring the natural course of a river.

Photo: Marko Kohv

Positive effects of the river restoration on fish fauna

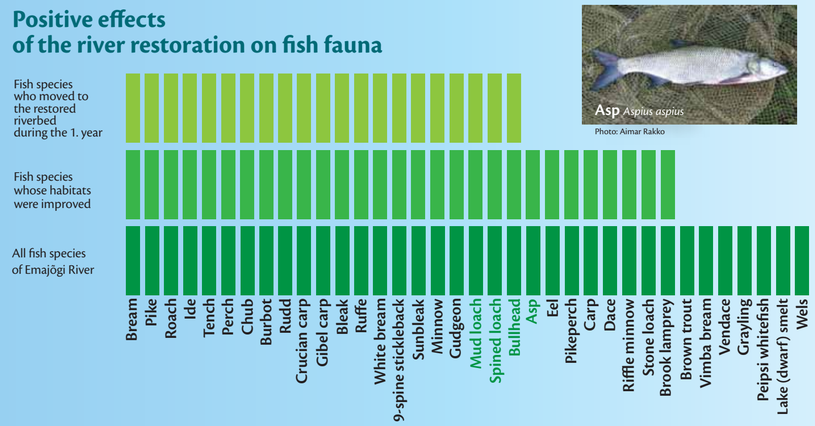

Photo: Aimar Rakko

For the well-being of fish in the river system of Emajõgi, the project LIFE "Happyriver" also includes cutting down the shrubs at the spawning grounds on the flooded meadows (over 10 ha), building spawning grounds for asp (300 m^2), and artificial propagation and restocking (10,000 young individuals).

Photo: Marko Kohv

There are 36 species of fish in Emajõgi River. Fish fauna of Emajõgi River and its oxbow lakes includes a number of **endangered European species** such as asp (*Aspius aspius*), mud loach (*Misgurnus fossilis*), spined loach (*Cobitis taenia*) and European bullhead (*Cottus gobio*), but also various species of high fishing importance such as bream, pike, roach, ide and tench.

Photo: Tiit Hunt

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Photo: Tiit Hunt

Revitalisation of the Laeva River

By the LIFE Happyriver Project