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# Nature conservation in Latvia

**Gita Strode**

2023





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# Overview

- Nature protection institutional system
- Projects (past & future)
- Legislation



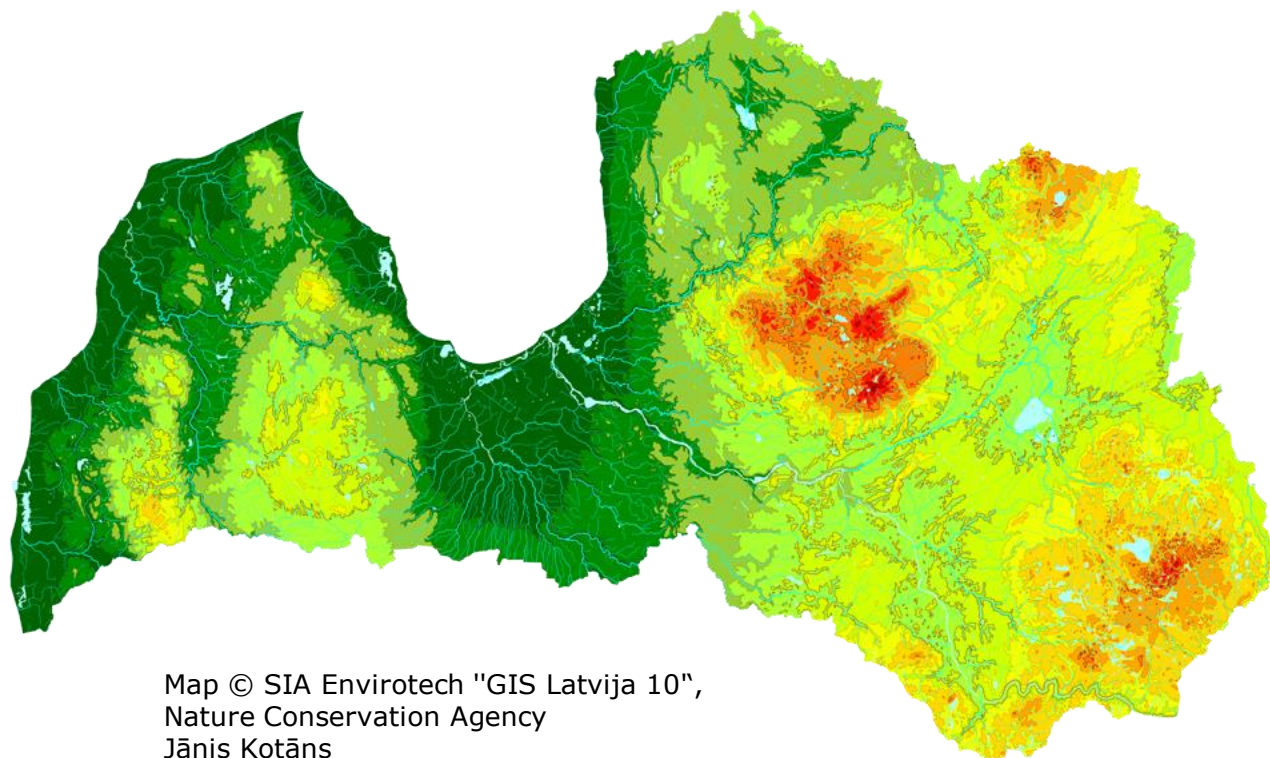
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# General Information

Area – 64 589 km<sup>2</sup>  
1,9 million  
inhabitants (May  
2014)

Land use:

- 38.5%  
agriculture
- 44.4%  
forests
- 9% mires
- 8.1% rest

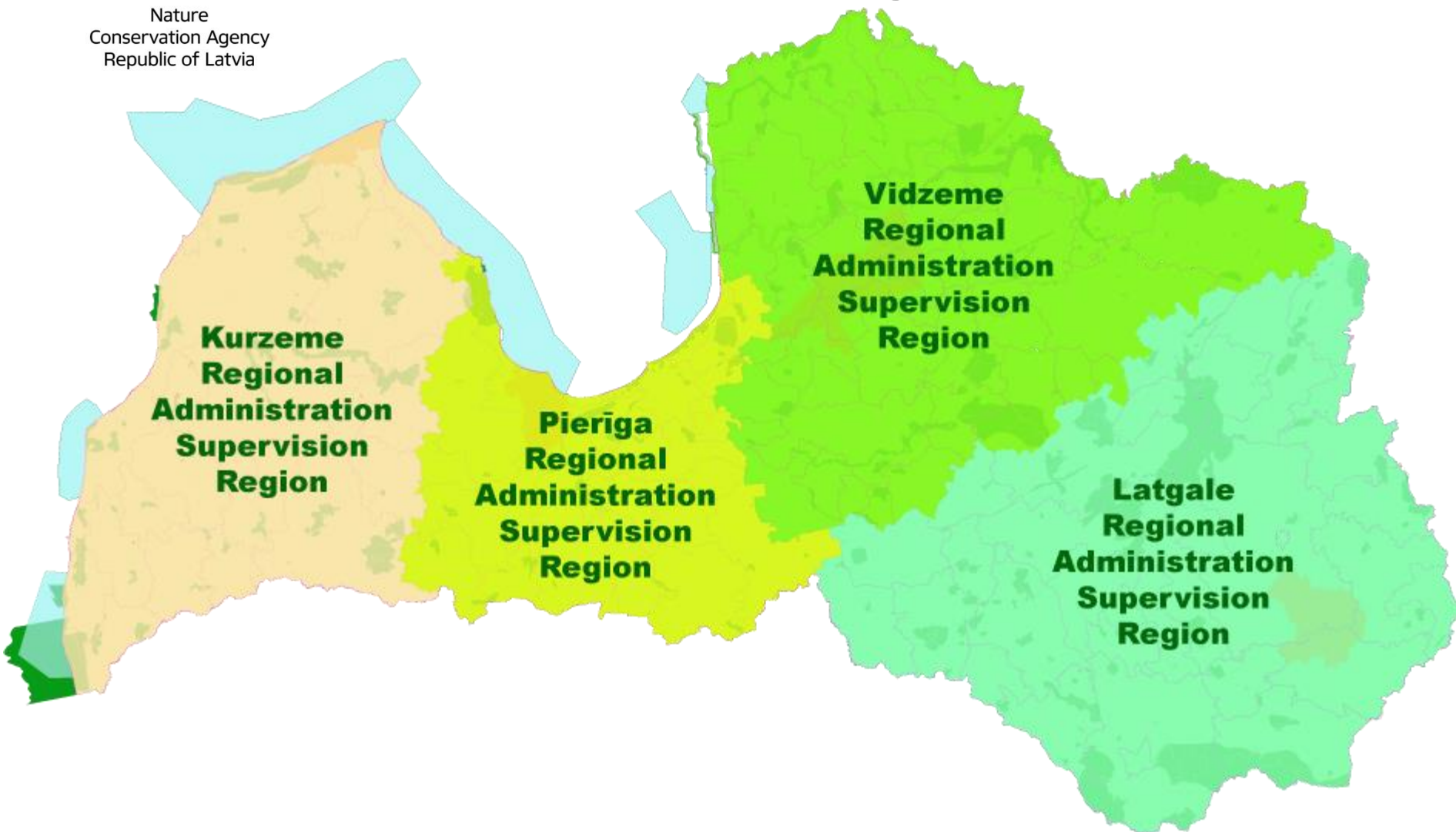


Map © SIA Envirotech "GIS Latvija 10",  
Nature Conservation Agency  
Jānis Kotāns



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# Specially Protected Nature Areas of Latvia – Management: 4





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# The Nature Conservation Agency of Latvia – Functions

## Realization

of state policy of nature  
conservation, species &  
biotopes protection

## Implement

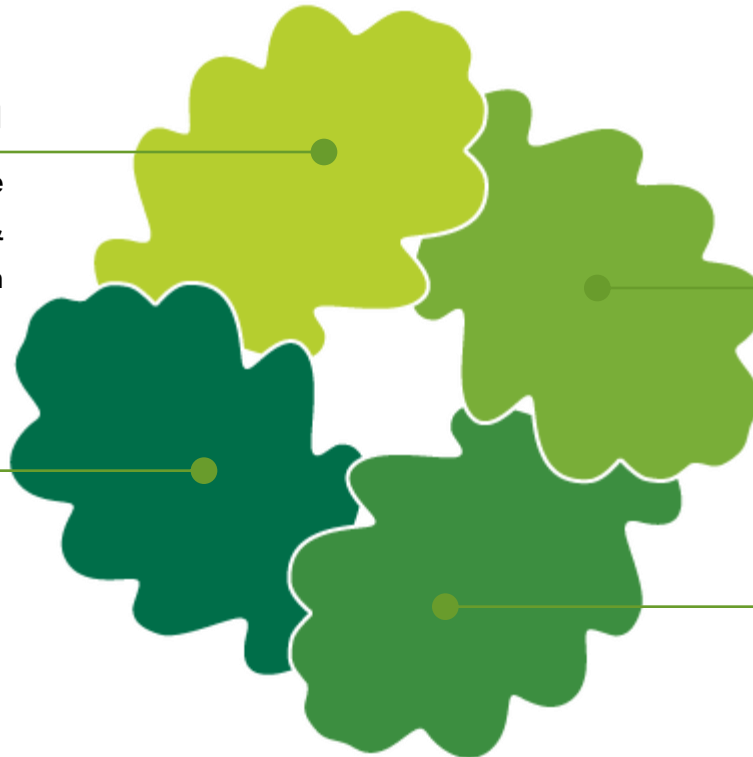
the functions of supervision of  
„The Convention on  
International Trade in  
Endangered Species of Wild  
Fauna and Flora” (CITES)

## Coordination

of administration and management  
of specially protected areas

## Maintain

records on scientific research in  
specially protected areas





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# The Nature Conservation Agency of Latvia – TASKS



## **plan**

necessary conservation activities in protected nature areas;

## **issue**

a statutory regulatory authorizations and reconciliations, including the Washington Convention "On International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora" (CITES) permits and certificates

## **organize**

creating & renewing the species and habitat conservation plans, as well as to promote the implementation of the plans

## **promote**

the public (including landowners) involvement in specially protected nature areas management

## **organize**

optimal maintenance and renewal activities of a specially protected species, their habitats, protected habitats, as well as necessary measures



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# The Nature Conservation Agency of Latvia – TASKS

## **coordinate and carry out**

scientific research and monitoring in the specially protected nature areas

## **organize & supervise**

process of creating & renewing the nature conservation and restoration plans of specially protected nature areas, as well as to promote and coordinate the implementation of the plans

## **implement**

international projects in environmental protection, as well as monitor their implementation

## **control**

of the specially protected nature territories, as well as environmental protection regulations on compliance

## **provide**

the public with information on special areas of conservation and the protection regime, to educate the public on matters of environmental protection

# Projects



Ecosystem services



Restoration of managed  
peatlands



**National Conservation and  
Management Programme for  
Natura 2000 sites**

LIFE+ projekts



LIFE+ projekts

Restoration of hydrological regime  
in wetlands in Kemeris NP



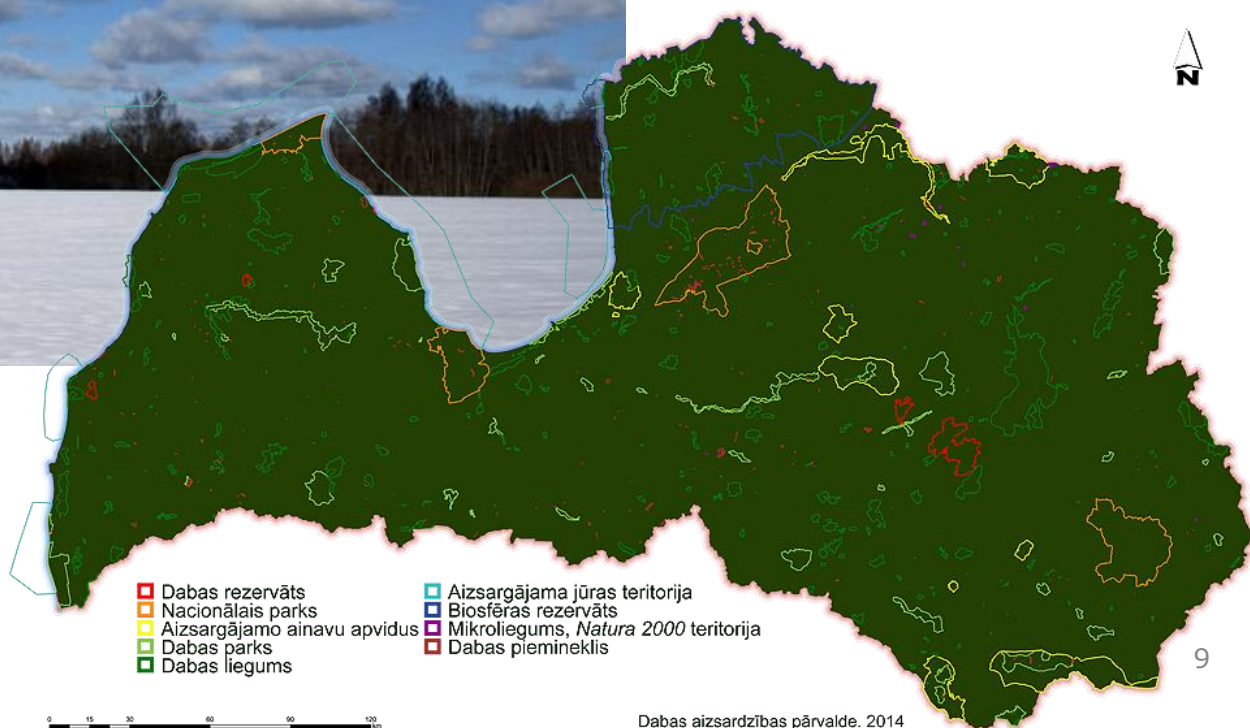
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# Projects

Inventarization of protected habitats in the whole territory of Latvia  
(ERAF)



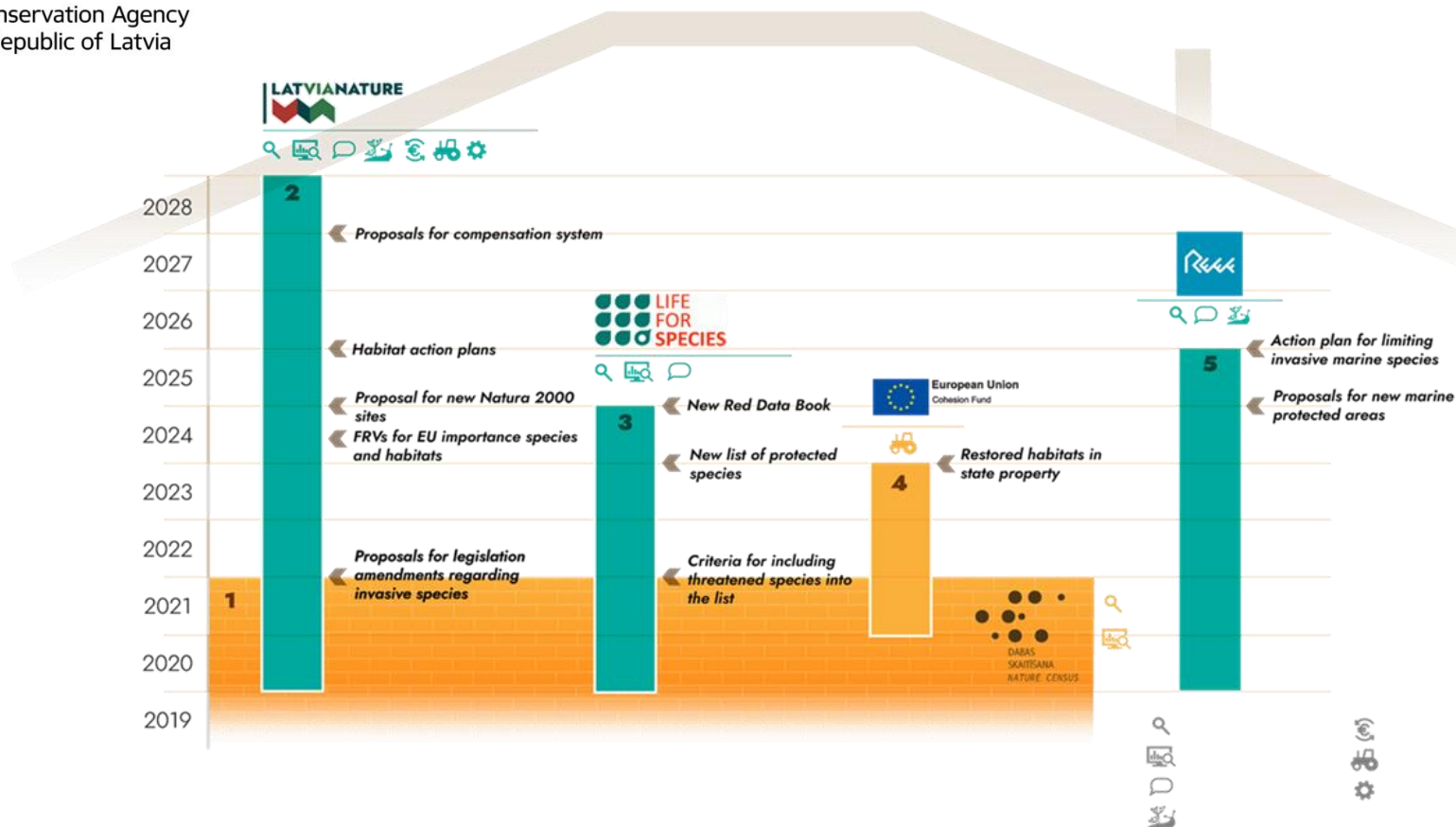
DABAS  
SKAITĪŠANA





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# Ongoing projects





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# Legislation

- Law on Specially Protected Nature Areas
- Law on the Conservation of Species and Biotopes
- On the Rights of Landowners to Compensation for Restrictions on Economic Activities in Specially Protected Nature Areas and Micro reserves



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# Protected Nature Areas of Latvia

Specially protected nature areas are geographical territories, that are under special state-level protection, in order to safeguard and maintain biodiversity of nature – rare and typical ecosystems, habitats for rare species, landscapes, that are peculiar, beautiful and characteristic for Latvia, geological and geomorphological formations, as well as territories, significant for recreational and educational purposes.

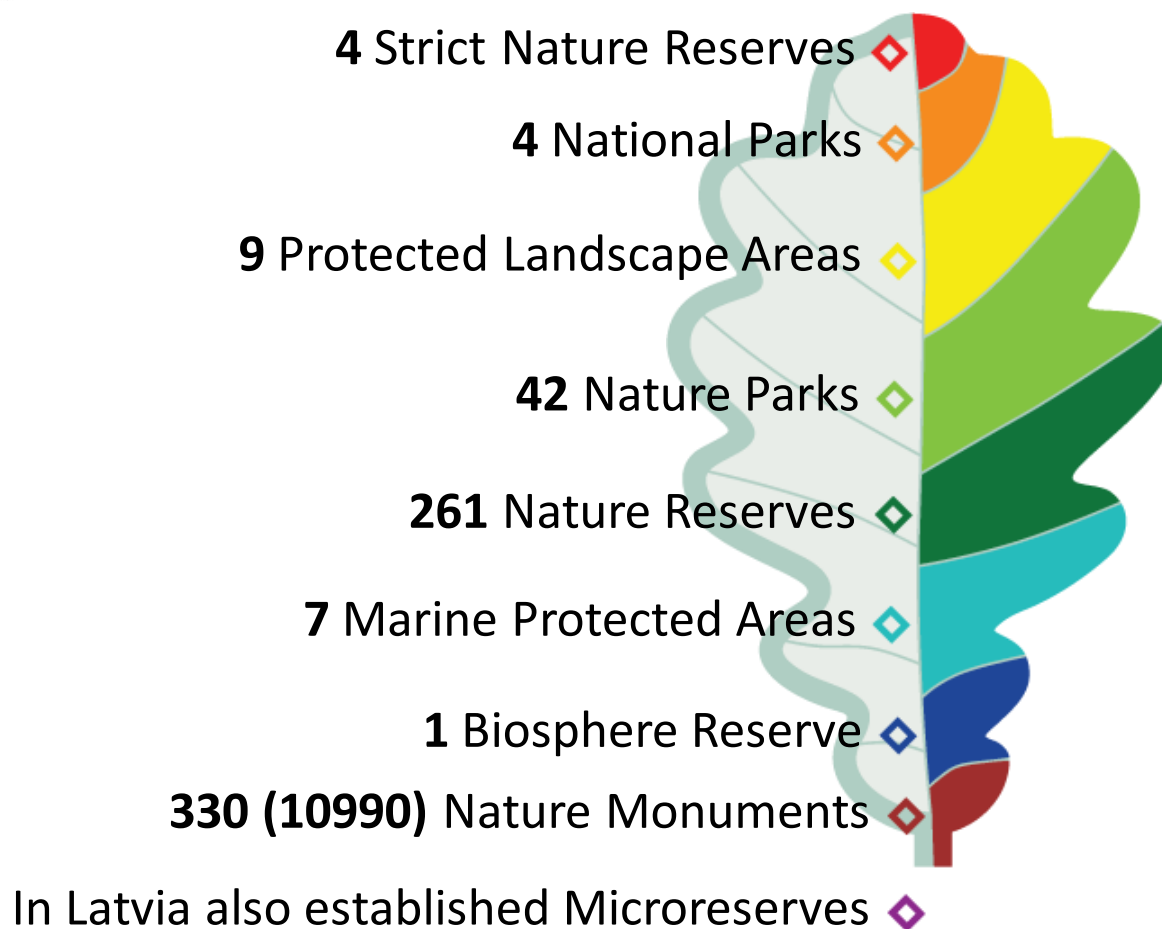


Altogether in Latvia there are 682 specially protected nature areas certified by law or regulations of the Cabinet of Ministers On Specially Protected Nature Territories (+ 10543 nature monuments – trees and 117 nature monuments – stones)



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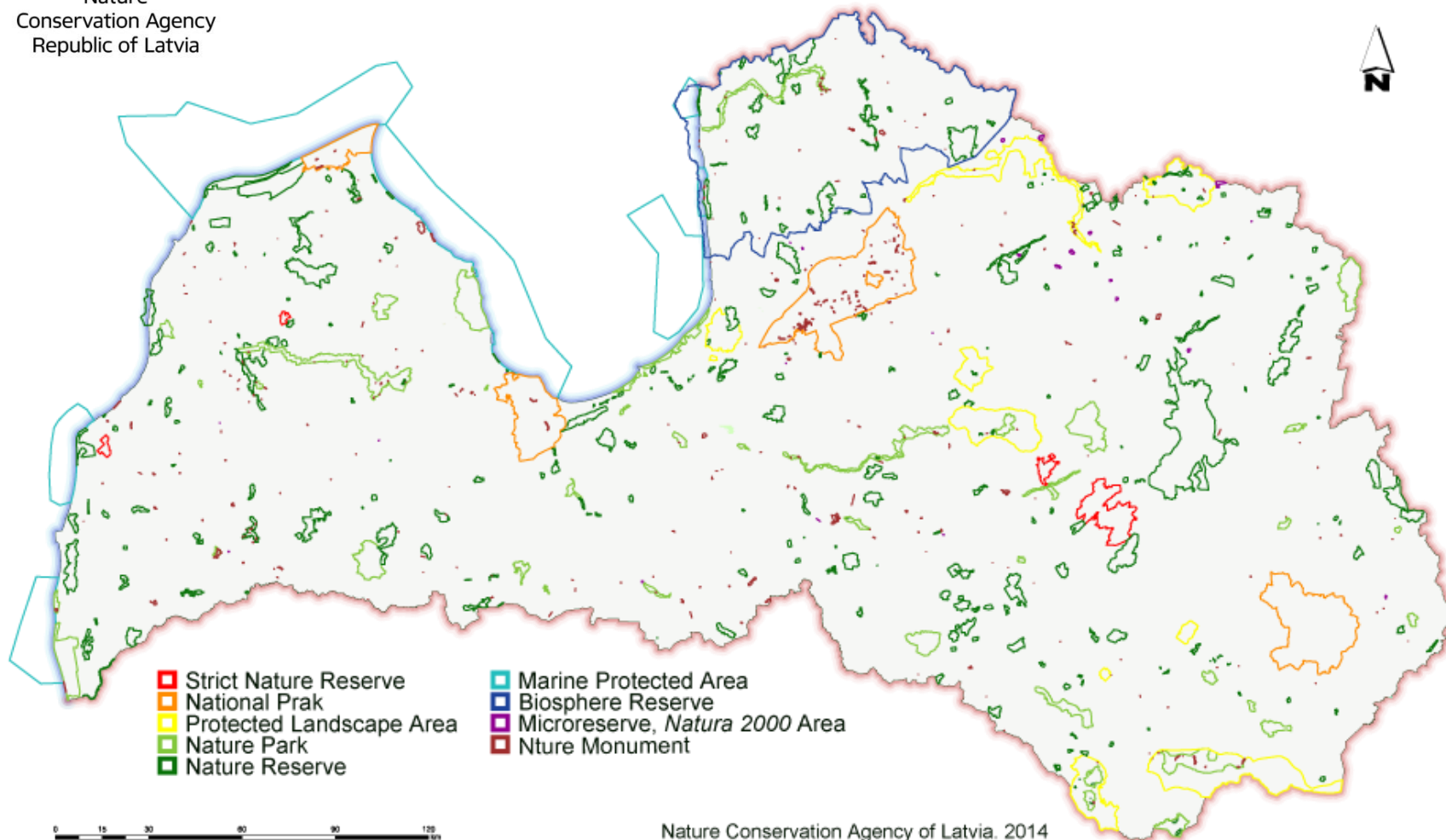
# Specially Protected Nature Territories of Latvia - Categories





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# Specially Protected Nature Territories of Latvia





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## ***Natura 2000 Areas***

333 Areas;  
~ 12% of  
terrestrial  
territory





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# Categories of Specially Protected Nature Areas



## 4 Strict Nature Reserves

Strict nature reserves are territories untouched by human activities or nearly natural, in which territories unhindered development of natural processes shall be ensured in order to protect and study rare or typical ecosystems and parts thereof.

Strict nature reserves shall have zones in which all natural resources are completely excluded from economic and other activities.



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# Strict Nature Reserve «Moricsala» 1912



Moricsalas simtgadīgie meži. Foto © A.Soms, DAP arhīvs



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# Categories of Specially Protected Nature Areas



## 4 National Parks

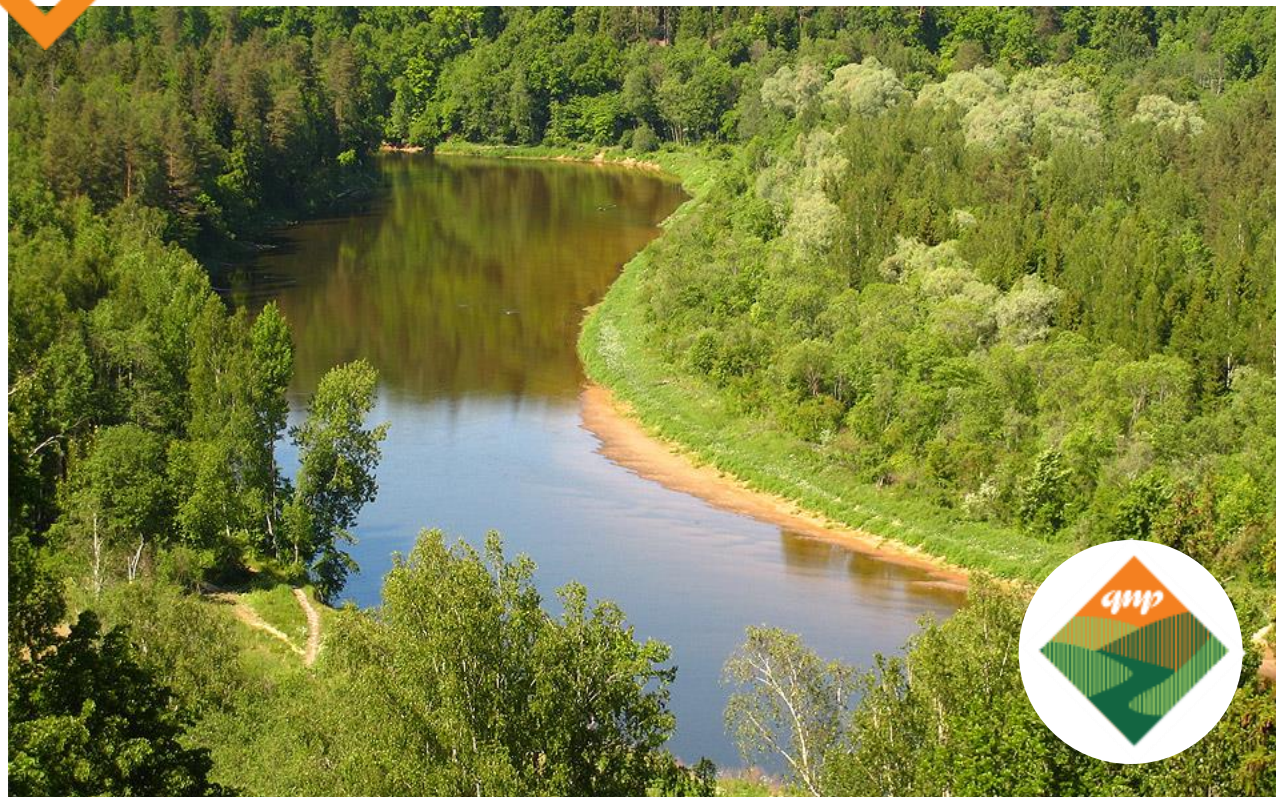
National parks are broad areas which are characterised by outstanding nature formations of national significance, landscapes and cultural heritage landscapes untouched by human activities or nearly natural, a diversity of biotopes, abundance of cultural and historical monuments, and peculiarities of cultural environment.

The main goals of national parks shall be nature protection, preservation of cultural and historical heritage, scientific research, organisation of education and recreation, which are restricted by the goals of the protection of nature and cultural environment.



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# Gauja National Park



Gauja. Foto © DAP arhīvs



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# Ķemeri National Park



Ķemeri trelis. Foto © J.Vītiņš, DAP arhīvs



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# Slītere National Park



Foto © DAP arhīvs



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# Rāzna National Park



Foto © DAP arhīvs



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# Categories of Specially Protected Nature Areas



## 9 Protected Landscape Areas

Protected landscape areas are territories remarkable for original and diverse landscapes and special beauty. The goals of such territories are to protect and preserve the cultural environment and landscapes characteristic of Latvia in all their diversity, as well as to ensure the preservation of environment appropriate for recreation of society and for tourism, and use of environment friendly management methods.



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# Protected Landscape Area «Veclaicene»



Veclaicene. Foto © A.Soms, DAP arhīvs



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# Categories of Specially Protected Nature Areas



## 42 Nature Parks

Nature parks are territories that represent the natural, cultural and historical values of a particular area, and that are suitable for recreation, education and the instruction of society.

Organisation of recreation and economic activities in nature parks shall be carried out by ensuring the preservation of the natural, cultural and historical values located in such parks.



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# Nature Park «Embūte»



Embūtes gravas. Foto © M.Keiša, DAP arhīvs



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# Categories of Specially Protected Nature Areas



## **261 Nature Reserves**

Nature reserves are nature territories little transformed or transformed in varying degrees by human activities, which territories include habitats of specially protected wild plant and animal species, and specially protected biotopes



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# Nature Reserve «Vidzeme Stony Seaside»



Vidzemes akmeņainā jūrmala. Foto © A.Soms, DAP arhīvs

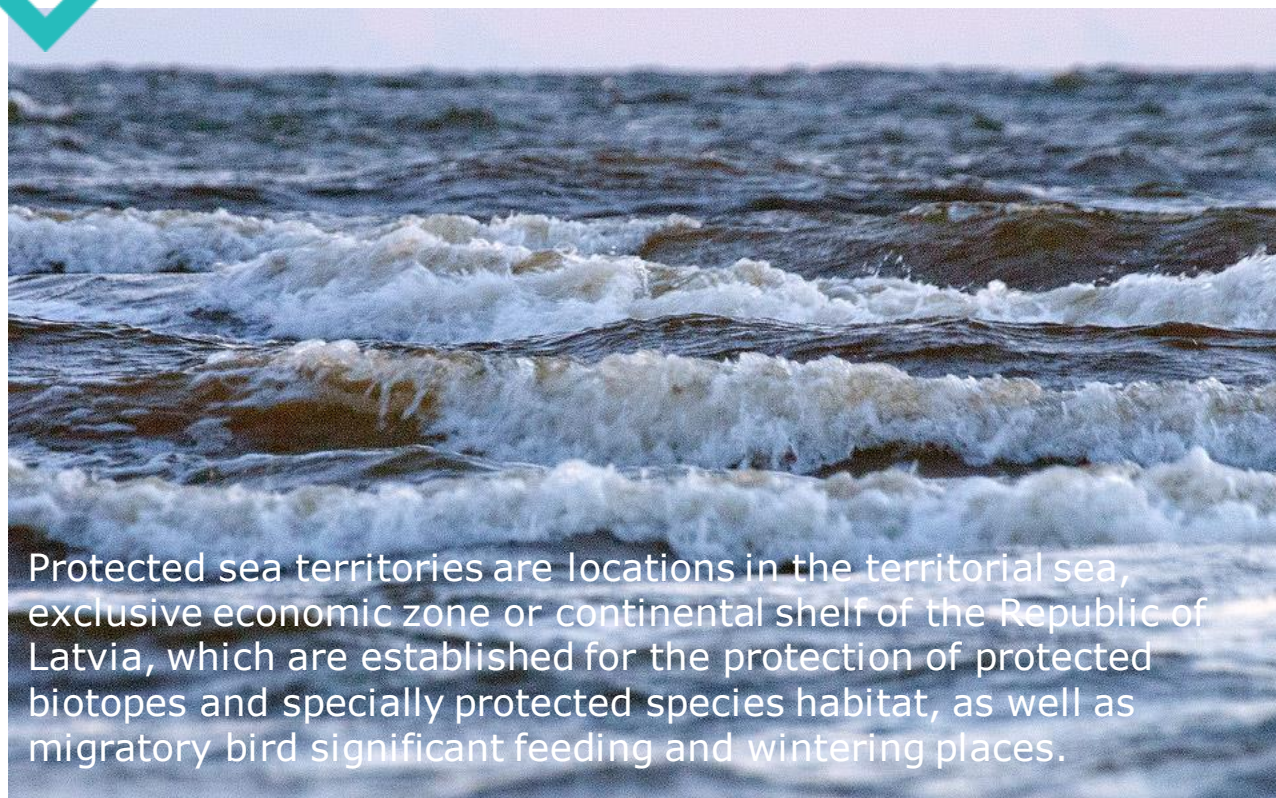


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# Categories of Specially Protected Nature Areas



## 7 Marine Protected Areas



Protected sea territories are locations in the territorial sea, exclusive economic zone or continental shelf of the Republic of Latvia, which are established for the protection of protected biotopes and specially protected species habitat, as well as migratory bird significant feeding and wintering places.



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# Categories of Specially Protected Nature Areas



## 1 Biosphere Reserve

Biosphere reserve are broad territory in which landscapes and ecosystems of international significance are located. The goal of establishing biosphere reserves is to ensure the preservation of natural diversity and to promote sustainable social and economic development of the territory.



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# Northern Vidzeme Biosphere Reserve



Salacas, Pietraga klintis. Foto © A.Soms, DAP arhīvs



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# Categories of Specially Protected Nature Areas



## **10990 Nature Monuments**

Nature monuments are separate, isolated natural formations: protected trees, dendrological plantings, avenues, geological and geomorphological nature monuments and other natural rarities having scientific, cultural and historical, aesthetic or ecological value.



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# Nature Monument Boulder «Jaunutēnu velnākmenis»



Foto © D.Ozols, DAP arhīvs

# Microreserves



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*Tragosoma depsarium*



*Tetrao urogallus*  
The western capercaillie



*Ciconia nigra*  
Black stork



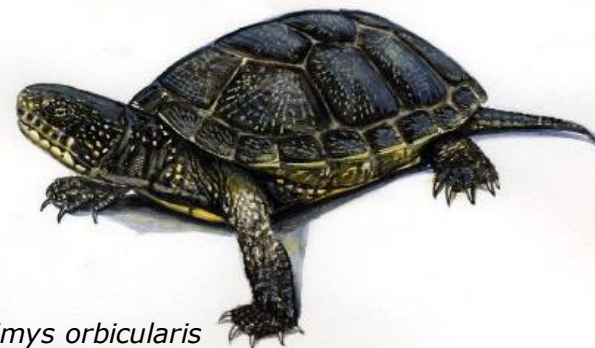
*Dryomys nitedula*  
The forest dormouse



*Bombina bombina*  
European fire-bellied toad



*Unio crassus*  
Thick shelled river mussel



*Emys orbicularis*  
European pond turtle



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# Species management plans/ Natura 2000 management plans



Ūdrs (*Lutra lutra*)

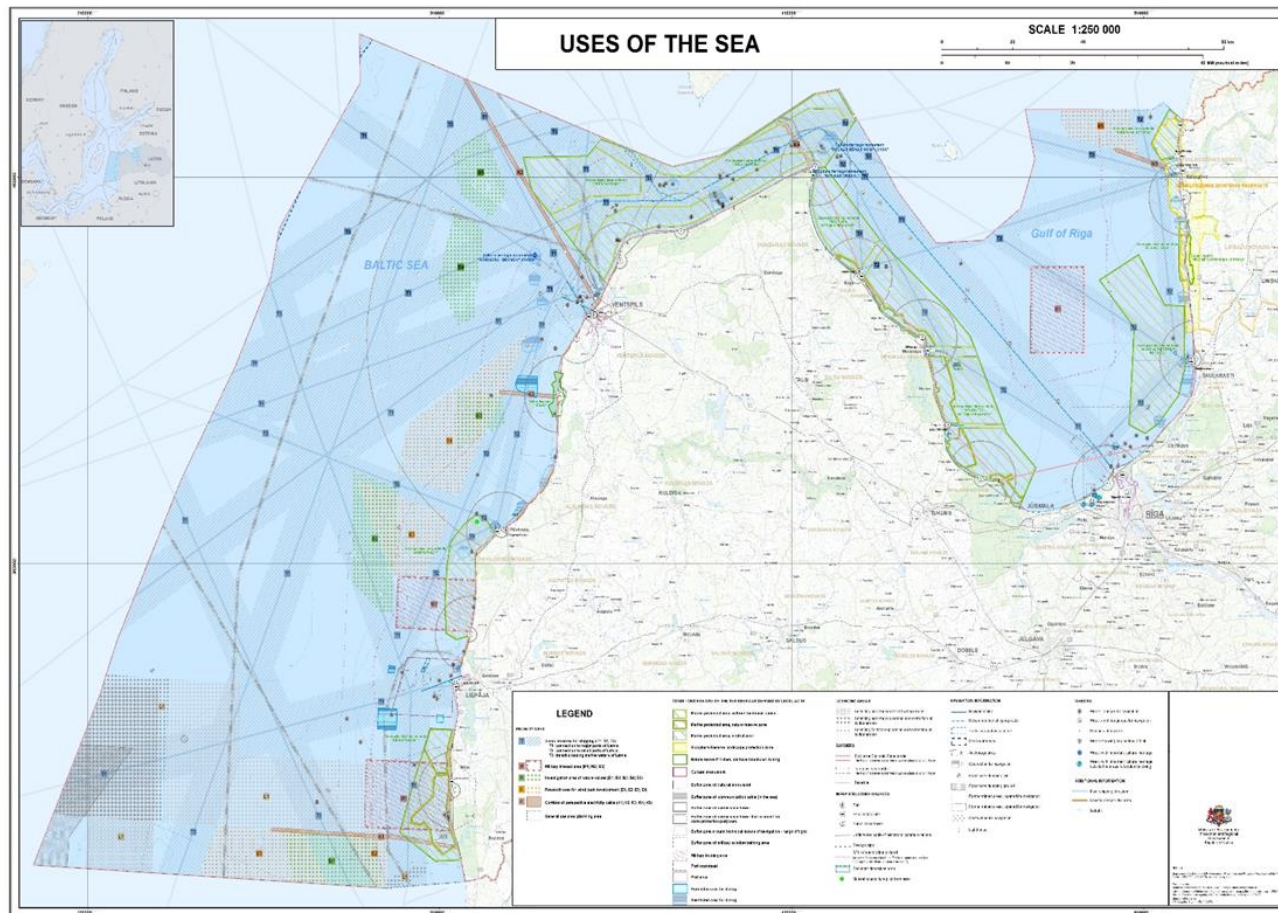
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# MARITIME SPATIAL PLAN

+ Protected belt  
along the Baltic sea and Riga gulf  
—  
free access to the  
sea & pristine  
nature





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# Future challenges

- Compensations paid for private landowners for the restriction of forestry activities in protected areas
- Revision of network of the protected areas – a lot of place for development, including improvement of management plan development and implementation
- Species management and protection – disperse species protection system
- Large-scale habitat inventory – biggest research activity since regaining independence. Use and analyse of data, including development of effective data update system
- Nature data information system Ozols is cross-linked with majority of other relevant data systems, but still lot of development necessary
- Political situation