Highlights: Wetlands with rich birdlife, Kalajoki's sand dunes, the Rahja Archipelago, Rokua National Park, Rokua Geopark, Syöte National Park, City of Oulu. Finland's finest wetlands, coastal sand dunes, lovely wooded hills and traces of the Ice Age can all be seen along this route through the Oulu region — together with two national parks (Rokua and Syöte), which offer the peace of nature, as well as enjoyable activities and experiences.

Day 1
Coastal dunes and wetlands with rich birdlife

Your journey starts with a half-hour drive from Oulu to Liminka Bay, Finland's best known wetlands, which are internationally important for their bird life. At Liminka Bay Visitor Centre you can visit a fascinating featuring the "Eight Seasons of a Bird's Year", discover the secrets of our feathered friends, and experience them with all your senses. You can watch a live video of the bay's natural scene, and view birds at close range at the Virkkula birdwatching platform just 600 metres from the centre (also accessible to disabled visitors). Drive on for an hour to Kalajoki where you can stroll among Finland's most famous sand dunes, walk along the beach, or enjoy a bracing dip in the sea. The Spa in Kalajoki offers alternative indoor relaxation with its saunas and spa treatments. Enjoy dinner and an overnight stay by the dunes at Kalajoki.

Services:
www.nationalparks.fi/liminkabayvisitorcentre
Activities: exhibition, birdwatching, swimming, spa
Accommodation: Hotels, holiday cabins and cottages around Kalajoki www.kalajokikeskusvaraamo.fi
Tourist information:
www.nationalparks.fi/liminkabayvisitorcentre
www.nationalparks.fi/kalajokivisitorcentre
www.visitkalajoki.fi

Day 2
Marine life and cultural heritage
DAY 3

Landscapes shaped by the Ice Age

In the morning it's time to leave Kalajoki and drive to the next destination, Rokua, where you can explore the Finland's first UNESCO Geopark and Rokua National Park. Start from the Visitor Centre Suppa where you can learn about the Ice Age and how it has shaped the landscape around Rokua. It's well worth hiking into Rokua National Park, to Pookivaara Hill. Owing to its magnificent views, rangers used to stay on the hilltop watching out for forest fires. Information boards along the trail describe the area's natural features and cultural history. After returning from Pookivaara try a spa treatment or just enjoy bathing in the spa. You can have dinner and stay overnight in Rokua.

Services: www.rokuageopark.fi
Activities: exhibition, hiking, spa
Accommodation: Hotels, cabins and camping around Rokua
Tourist information: www.rokuageopark.fi
www.nationalparks.fi/rokuanp

DAY 4

Outdoor activities among rolling wooded hills

Alternatively, you can take an easy hike along the duckboards of the Lankkupolku Trail, which runs for 4 km through the region's famous sand dunes from the Kalajoki Visitor Centre to Vihaslahti Bay, where you will find a birdwatching tower, a traditional 'kota' shelter, a campfire site and information about local wildlife. Enjoy a packed lunch al fresco in a peaceful seaside setting. You can dine in the evening and stay overnight at Kalajoki again.

Services: www.visitkalajoki.fi
www.nationalparks.fi/kalajokivisitorcentre
Activities: exhibition, kayaking/Stand Up Paddling, hiking
Accommodation: Hotels, holiday houses, cottages and campsites around Kalajoki
www.kalajokihostusvaramo.fi
Tourist information: www.visitkalajoki.fi
www.nationalparks.fi/kalajokivisitorcentre

DAY 5

Back to the city via ecologically valuable marshlands

After breakfast head back towards the city of Oulu. A good place for a stop along the way is the Hirvisuo mire reserve. This open aapa bog is extremely valuable for its bird life. Watch birds from the reserve's viewing tower, and walk round the duckboards of the 1-km "Otökkäpolku" nature trail, where you can learn about the bog's fascinating insect life.

From Hirvisuo make for the bustling city of Oulu. Here you can go shopping and sightseeing, and find a good place for lunch, before heading for the airport.

Services: www.visitoulu.fi
Activities: Birdwatching, shopping, sightseeing
Tourist information: www.visitoulu.fi
For more information: Liminka Bay Visitor Centre; liminganlahti@metsa.fi
Syöte Visitor Centre; syote@metsa.fi
Kalajoki Visitor Centre; kalajoki@metsa.fi

Nationalparks.fi
Up-to-date information about Finnish national parks and their facilities
VisitFinland.com
The official travel guide of Finland
Outdoorsfinland.com
Find the best hiking, cycling and canoeing trails in Finland