



*Pyhä-Luosto National Park*

# **VISITOR SURVEY**

**2015-2016 • SUMMARY**



METSÄHALLITUS | PARKS & WILDLIFE FINLAND



The spine of the national park is formed by a fell chain with rocky peaks surrounded by old-growth forests and aapa mires.

# Splendid scenic views from the trailside



*Deep gorges slice through these ancient rugged hills, where you can trek through age-old forests up onto windswept treeless fell-tops. Enjoy Lapland's big skies, lit by the Northern Lights in winter and the Midnight Sun around midsummer. Friendly Siberian jays appear from the woods as if by magic when hikers stop for a picnic. Visit picturesque places that were seen as sacred by the Forest Sámi people who used to live here. Take the epic trail between the park's two most famous fells – Pyhä and Luosto – both within reach of comfortable resort centres.*

Pyhä-Luosto National Park profile

## PYHÄ-LUOSTO NATIONAL PARK IN 2016

*Pyhä-Luosto National Park is managed by Metsähallitus Parks & Wildlife Finland. The national park is mainly a day trip destination, but also provides an ideal setting for longer treks.*

### ESTABLISHED

- On 1 March 2005, when the Pyhätunturi National Park established in 1938 and the Luosto Old-Growth Forest and Mire Reserves were combined.

### LOCATION

- In Kemijärvi, Pelkosenniemi and Sodankylä in Eastern Lapland.

### SURFACE AREA

- Approximately 143 km<sup>2</sup> (land areas 142.5 km<sup>2</sup>, water areas 0.5 km<sup>2</sup>)
- The area of the national park is divided into recreational, culture, restricted and remote zones.

### VISITOR NUMBERS

- National park 115 100 (2015)
- Resort centre 118 803 (overnight stays in 2015)

### SERVICES IN THE NATIONAL PARK

- Cross-country skiing trails 56 km, summer hiking trails 84.4

km, snowmobiling trails 19.4 km, mountain-biking trails 38 km, snowshoeing trails 12 km, winter cycling trails 7.5 km

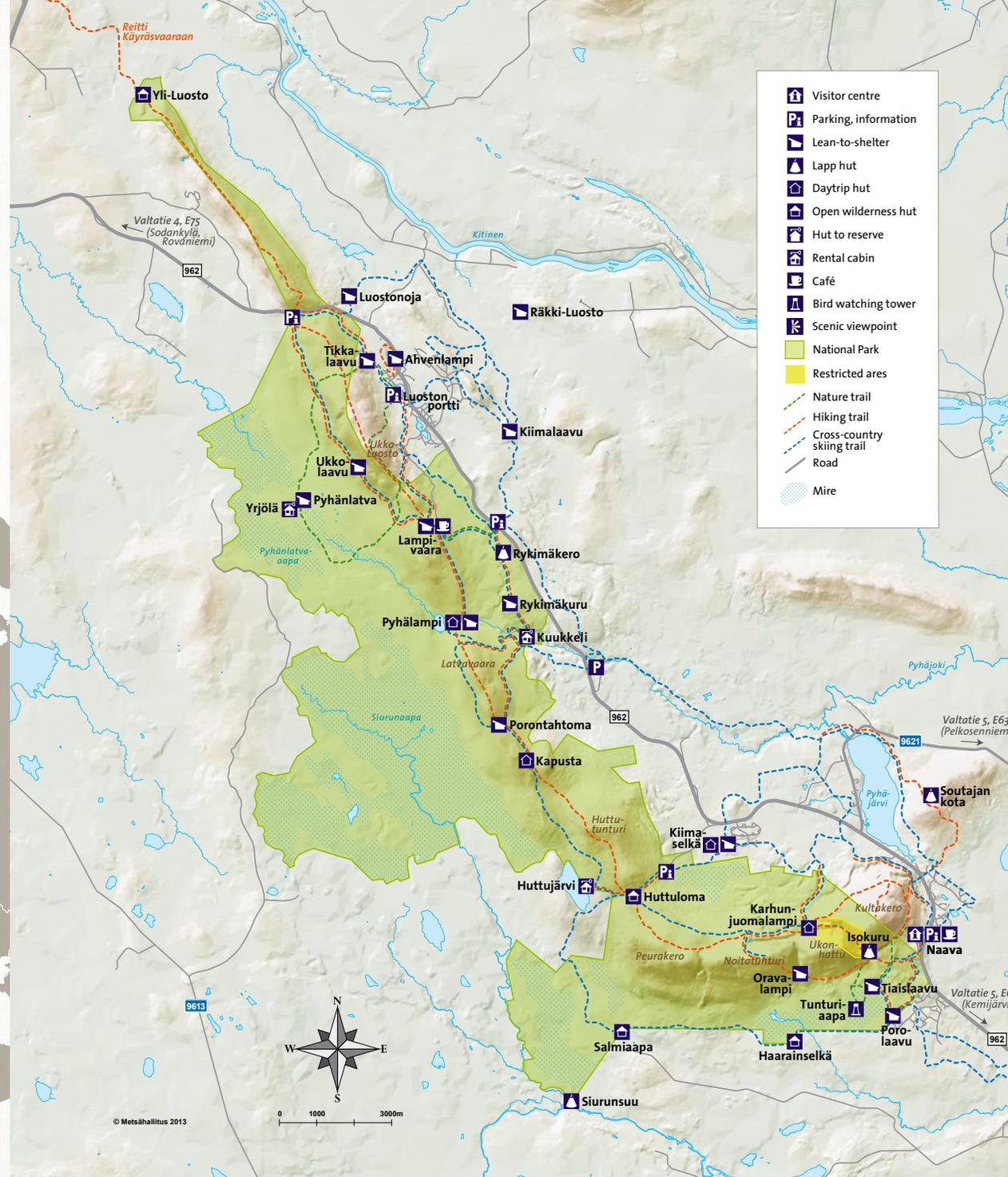
- 2 open wilderness huts, 3 day-trip huts and 3 rental huts
- 14 huts and lean-to-shelters
- Visitor Centre Naava, Pyhä Fell

### TYPES OF USE

Nature conservation, nature tourism, recreational use of nature, reindeer husbandry, research.

# AN EASILY ACCESSIBLE DESTINATION FOR DAY TRIPS

*The fells and aapa mires of Pyhä-Luosto National Park cover a wide area 50 km north of the Arctic Circle amid the large rivers of Central Lapland.*



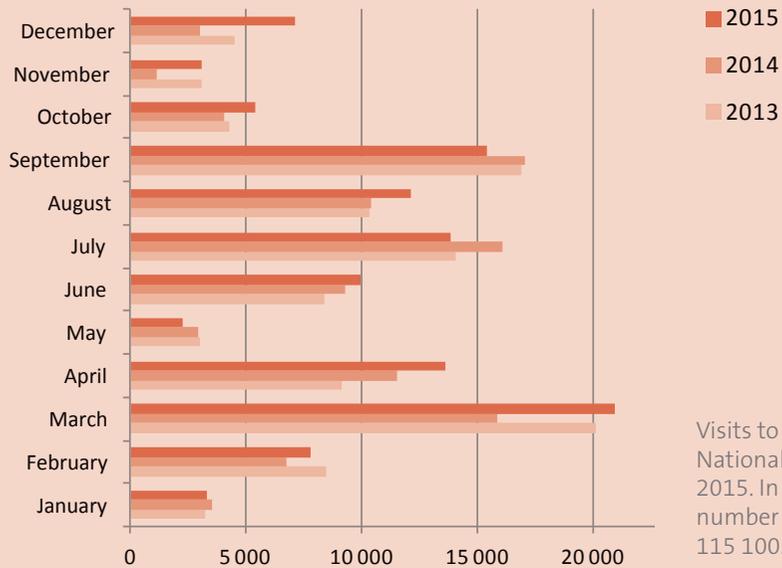
# THE SIXTH MOST POPULAR NATIONAL PARK IN FINLAND

*The number of visits to Pyhä-Luosto National Park has settled to over 100 000 per year.*

Visitor numbers are continuously monitored using electronic counting devices placed in the park. In 2015, Pyhä-Luosto National Park had 115 100 visits and was the sixth most popular national park in Finland.



## VISITS TO PYHÄ-LUOSTO NATIONAL PARK



Visits to Pyhä-Luosto National Park in 2013–2015. In 2015, the total number of visits was 115 100.

A coffee break at the Pyhälampi day-trip hut on a rainy day.





IMAGE: KATIA HEIKKINEN

Break at Oravalampi lean-to-shelter in early February deep snow.

## DATA FOR THE VISITOR SURVEY IS COLLECTED IN THE FIELD

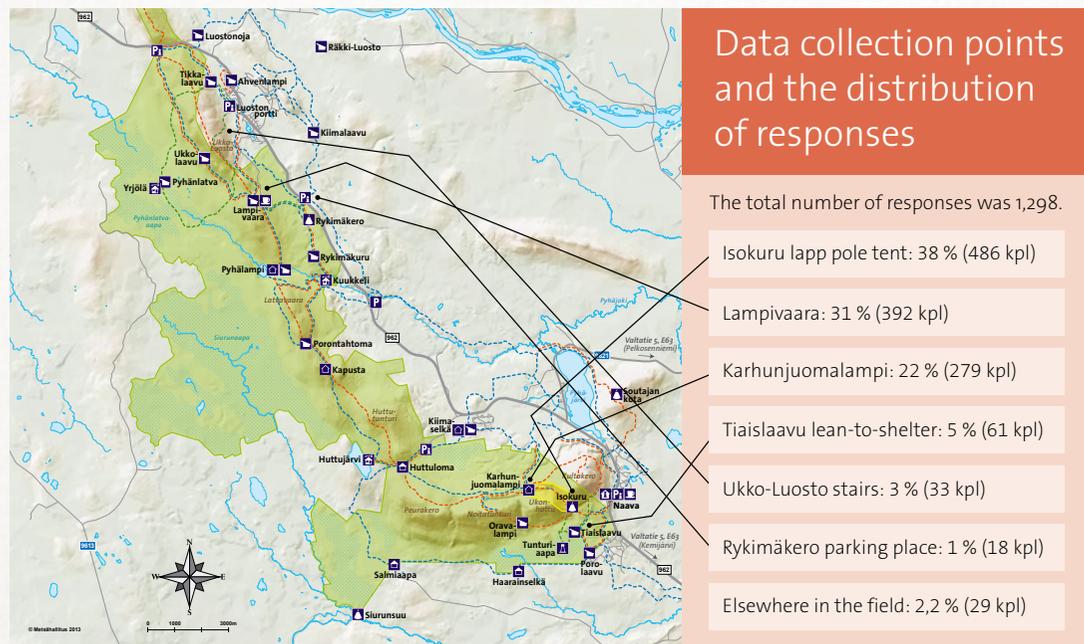
*Metsähallitus carries out visitor surveys in popular protected areas, historical sites and hiking areas. Data has been collected on almost all of the national parks, and the surveys will be repeated every five years.*

The surveys produce comparable data on visitors, recreational activities, use of the area, visitor satisfaction, duration of visits and visitors' spending. The information is used when locating, dimensioning and maintaining services, for example.

### A high number of responses in Pyhä-Luosto National Park

The data for the Pyhä-Luosto National Park Visitor Survey was collected at resting and fire places in the park in the summer of 2015 and in the winter of 2016. In addition to the usual visitor survey, impacts on health and well-being were studied for the first time.

The number of responses was high, 1,298 in total, representing approximately 1% of the total number of visitors to the park in 2015.



Visitor survey responses by data collection point in Pyhä-Luosto National Park.

# THE MAIN ATTRACTION IS ISOKURU, THE DEEPEST GORGE IN FINLAND

*The average visitor to Pyhä-Luosto National Park is middle-aged and spends a day hiking with their family in the Isokuru Gorge in the summer.*



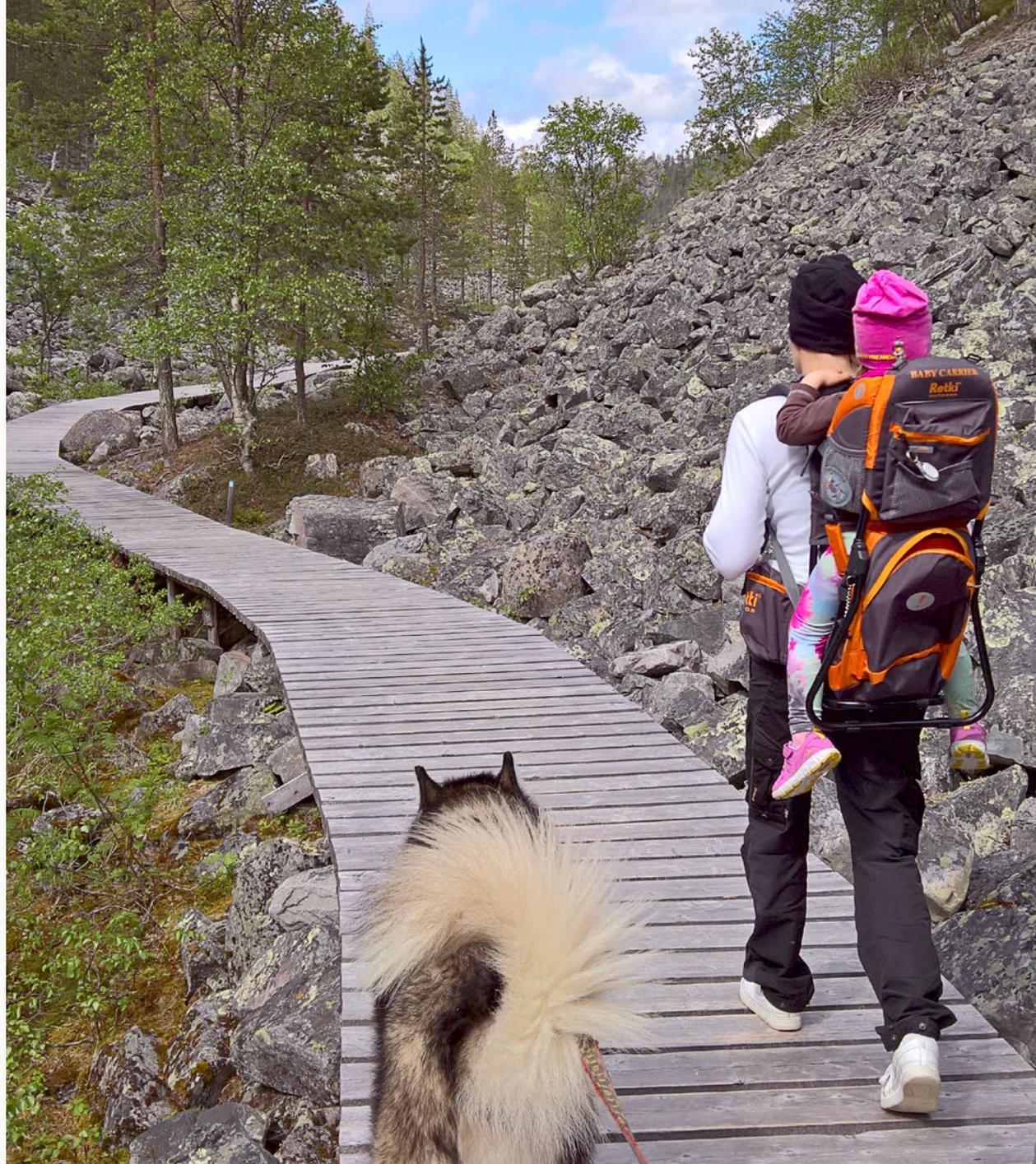
In winter, most visitors come to ski in March. Visitors stay in the national park for more than four hours on average. The most important reasons for a visit are experiencing nature and the beautiful scenery.

The most important destination for Finnish hikers

Most visitors to Pyhä-Luosto National Park are Finnish hikers for whom the national park is the main destination of their journey. Many foreign tourists visit the Pyhä-Luosto tourist area, but they have not yet been covered comprehensively enough by the survey.

## VISITORS TO PYHÄ-LUOSTO NATIONAL PARK

|                  |   |
|------------------|---|
| Average age      | 47 years  |
| Gender           | Women 54%, men 46%  |
| Season           | In summer-autumn 57%, in winter 43%   |
| Duration of trip | 4.2 hours   |
| Destination      | Isokuru, Karhunjuomalampi   |
| Purpose of trip  | Experiencing nature, scenery, relaxation, spending time in good company, spending time away from noise and pollution, as well as mental well-being. |



Side by side with your companion you can easily walk the Isokuru Trail, which is equipped with duckboards.

# THE NATIONAL PARK BENEFITS LOCAL ECONOMY

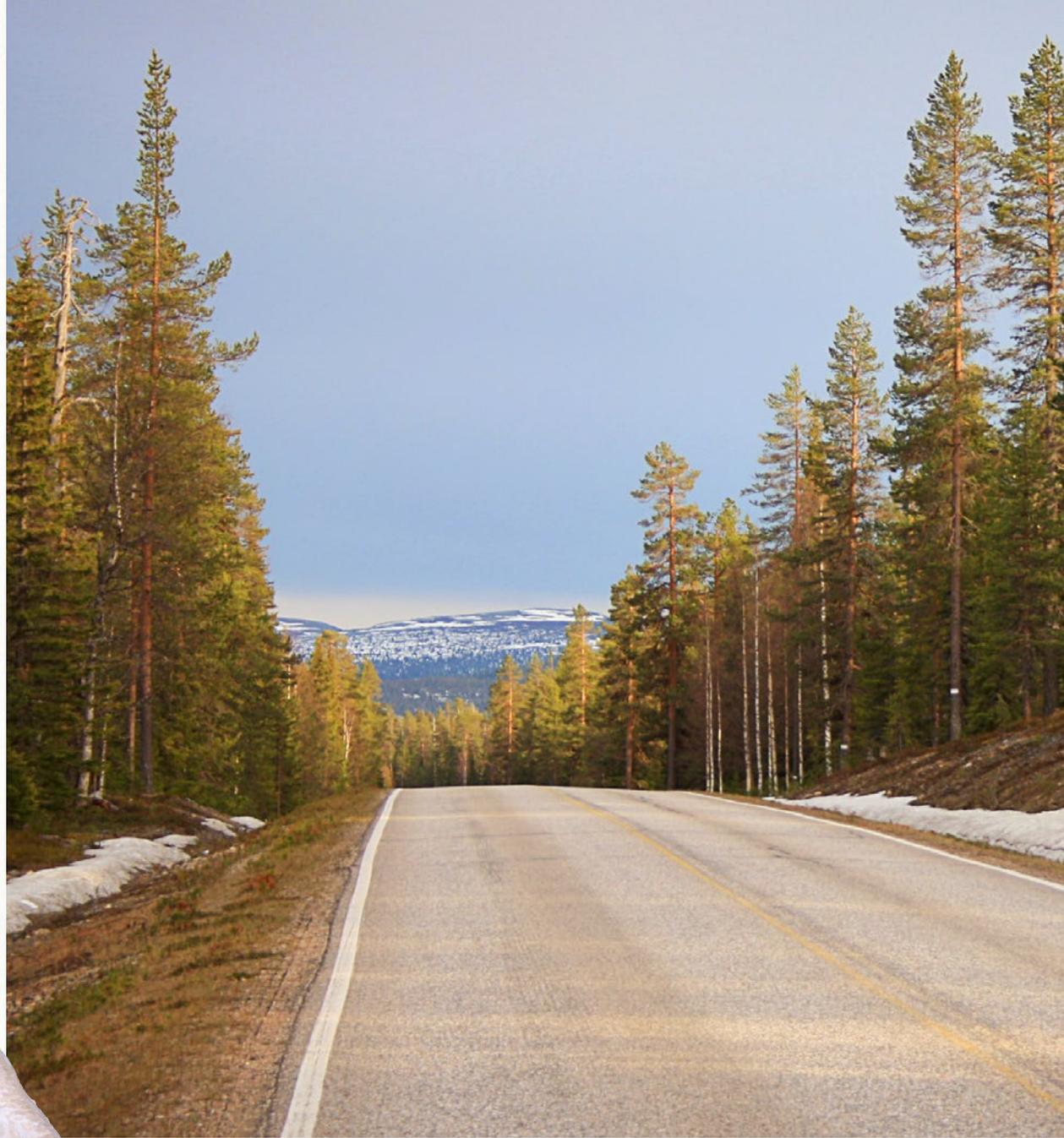
*Visitors to Pyhä-Luosto National Park estimated that they had spent 83 euros on average on various expenses relating to their visit. The largest amount was spent by foreign visitors, who estimated that they had on average spent 157 euros during their visit. Accommodation accounted for 54%, and café and restaurant services for 23% of the total spend by the visitors.*

The impact on the local economy of spending by national park visitors was at least 6.6 million euros in terms of income and approximately 66 person-years of work in terms of employment. This describes the impacts of spending by those visitors whose only or major destination was the national park.

## Impacts of Pyhä-Luosto National Park on the local economy

| Total impact |              | Minimum impact |              |
|--------------|--------------|----------------|--------------|
| EUR mill.    | person-years | EUR mill.      | person-years |
| 10.3         | 103          | 6.6            | 66           |

Impacts of spending by national park visitors on the local economy and employment (2015).



A view from the road when driving from Luosto to Pyhä.





A relaxed-paced summer trip on the Luosto Nature Hiking Trail.

## THE NATIONAL PARK CONTRIBUTES TO WELL-BEING

*Those visitors responding to the visitor survey were sent a separate health and well-being questionnaire which provided more information of the health effects of park visits.*

A visit to the park increased well-being in the long term

A total of 242 visitors responded to the separate questionnaire. Based on the results, a visit to the national park increased physical, psychological and social well-being, helped recovery from stress and relaxed people, improved their ability to concentrate, encouraged them to exercise every day, strengthened their relationships with their family and increased the interest in nature among the respondents' children. In addition, the respondents perceived that these impacts, especially psychological and social ones, continued for a long time after the visit.

### Valuable health benefits

The perceived health benefits of a park visit were highly valued by the respondents of the visitor survey. The median, which divides the material in half, was 200 euros as the average was 425 €. Many people considered the health benefits to be priceless and difficult to be valued in money. Visitors health benefit index was 4.39 (on a scale of 1-5).

“ Spending time outdoors in the magnificent landscape helped put things in perspective and appreciate nature and life.

A free-form answer to the health and well-being questionnaire on the impacts of visits to Pyhä-Luosto National Park.



| Increase in well-being   | Evaluation, %     |          |                            |       |                | Average (1-5) |
|--|-------------------|----------|----------------------------|-------|----------------|---------------|
|  | Strongly disagree | Disagree | Neither agree nor disagree | Agree | Strongly agree |               |
| Increase in social well-being (e.g. improved working capacity, strengthened relationships)   | 0                 | 2        | 15                         | 39    | 44             | 4.24          |
| Increase in psychological well-being (e.g. satisfaction with life, better mood, recovery from stress and fatigue, learning new things) | 0                 | 1        | 9                          | 37    | 53             | 4.43          |
| Increase in physical well-being (e.g. maintaining physical condition, feeling well, learning new skills)                               | 0                 | 1        | 7                          | 35    | 58             | 4.50          |

Perceived well-being by respondents to the visitor survey during their visit to Pyhä-Luosto National Park (n = 1,271).



IMAGE: JUHA PASO

The breath-taking views of Pyhä-Luosto National Park are important to its visitors.



Averages for visitor satisfaction components (1–5) in Pyhä-Luosto National Park.

## SATISFIED NATIONAL PARK VISITORS

*On average, visitors to Pyhä-Luosto National Park were very satisfied with their visit: the visitor satisfaction index for the entire park was as high as 4.28 (on a scale of 1–5) in 2016.*

Firewood supply and the Visitor Centre were praised

Visitors were satisfied with the services of the park. They were most satisfied with the firewood supply at the huts and rest stops as well as the services of the Visitor Centre Naava. There were very few factors disturbing the visitors. Respondents were least satisfied with the social media services and information provided in advance by the national park, although these are also the least used services. Brochures and services offered by enterprises were also given slightly less favourable evaluations.

Expectations were successfully met

Visitors' expectations relating to the national park, its scenery, trails, structures and services were very well met. In particular, expectations relating to the natural environment and the trails and structures were successfully met.

“ *The relaxing effect was important – I was even able to reduce my blood pressure medication during the holiday.* ”

A free-form answer to the health and well-being questionnaire on the impacts of visits to Pyhä-Luosto National Park.

## AN EASY DAY TRIP DESTINATION FOR MORE PEOPLE IN THE FUTURE

*The strongest assets of Pyhä-Luosto National Park are its ease of accessibility, varied network of easy trails and wide range of services. The aim is to encourage new visitors to come for a day trip or a short trek.*

### Positive comments in free-form answers

Free-form answers were received not only in the visitor survey, but also in pleasing numbers in the separate health and well-being survey, in which positive comments prevailed. Beautiful scenery, experiences as well as physical and psychological impacts were often praised. So were also the easy and well-maintained trails and how they helped even those less fit visitors to enjoy the great outdoors.

### Room for improvement in trails and signs

There were relatively few critical comments compared to positive feedback. However, visitors found there was room for improvement in structures and signs along the trails. The increasing popularity of mountain-biking was also reflected in the free-form feedback:

visitors would like to have more trails and maps for their sport. In addition, it will probably take time for visitors to become accustomed to new materials: gravel on paths and duck-boards made of metal were also sometimes criticised.



IMAGE: KATIA HEIKKINEN

The popularity of freeskiing was also reflected in the visitor survey: visitors would like to have their sport included in the multiple-choice questions. Freeskiers in the wintry Pyhä-Luosto National Park.

“ *Pyhä is always an enchanting place: the gorge makes you feel small – in a good way. The shortest trails and levelled paths provide almost everyone with the opportunity to experience nature.* ”

A free-form answer to the health and well-being questionnaire on the impacts of visits to Pyhä-Luosto National Park.



# SPLENDID SCENIC VIEWS FROM THE TRAILSIDE



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The misty Isokuru Gorge in midwinter.

Cover image: A hot summer's day at the Tunturiaapa birdwatching tower.  
Images (unless otherwise stated): Anna Pakkanen, illustrations: Juha Paso, translation: Semantix