



Siikalahti Bay is one of Finland's richest wetlands for bird life. The birdwatching season lasts from early spring until late autumn. The light summer nights are particularly filled with birdsong. Visitors can also enjoy watching dragonflies and viewing the area's diverse wetland flora.



The wetlands of Siikalahti Bay have formed where the eastern part of Lake Simpelejärvi is gradually becoming overgrown. The great variety of birds breeding here or visiting on migration means that Siikalahti is among the top wetlands for bird life anywhere in Finland, and the country's richest inland wetland. The bay is also an internationally important staging area for migratory birds.

Almost 200 bird species are seen in Siikalahti every year, including more than 70 species that breed here. During migration seasons it is possible to spot more than 100 species during a single day. There are several good vantage points for birdwatching around the reserve.

## Siikalahti Nature Information Hut

The hut houses an exhibition featuring the wildlife of Siikalahti's rich wetlands. This unstaffed hut is open to visitors from April to mid October (check the hut's web page for updated information).

Outside the hut there is a cooking shelter and picnic table. Visitors may camp out here temporarily. During forest fire warnings visitors should not light campfires, however.

## Facilities for disabled visitors

About 300 metres beyond the main car park towards Kaukola is a second car park with a viewing platform accessible to disabled visitors. The toilets by the main car park have disabled access.

## Help us to protect the environment

No litter bins are provided in the reserve. Safely combustible materials may be burnt at the campfire site, but otherwise please take all wastes away from the reserve for suitable disposal.

### Siikalahti Nature Reserve

- area approx 445 ha
- trails and facilities maintained by Metsähallitus Natural Heritage Services

## Please observe the following regulations in the nature reserve:

### VISITORS MAY

- walk around the reserve (please keep to the trails and routes indicated to protect the area's birdlife)
- ski freely around the wetlands during the winter
- camp out in the grounds of the nature information hut
- light a campfire in the site provided near the hut (except when forest fire warnings are in effect)

### VISITORS MAY NOT

- let pets off lead
- take cuttings or otherwise damage trees, bushes and plants
- damage or remove soil, minerals or the bedrock
- hunt, trap, kill, disturb or destroy wild animals and birds or their nests
- trap or collect insects or other invertebrate animals
- use motor vehicles off public road
- leave litter or damage the reserve's facilities

## Metsähallitus – cherishing Finland's natural heritage

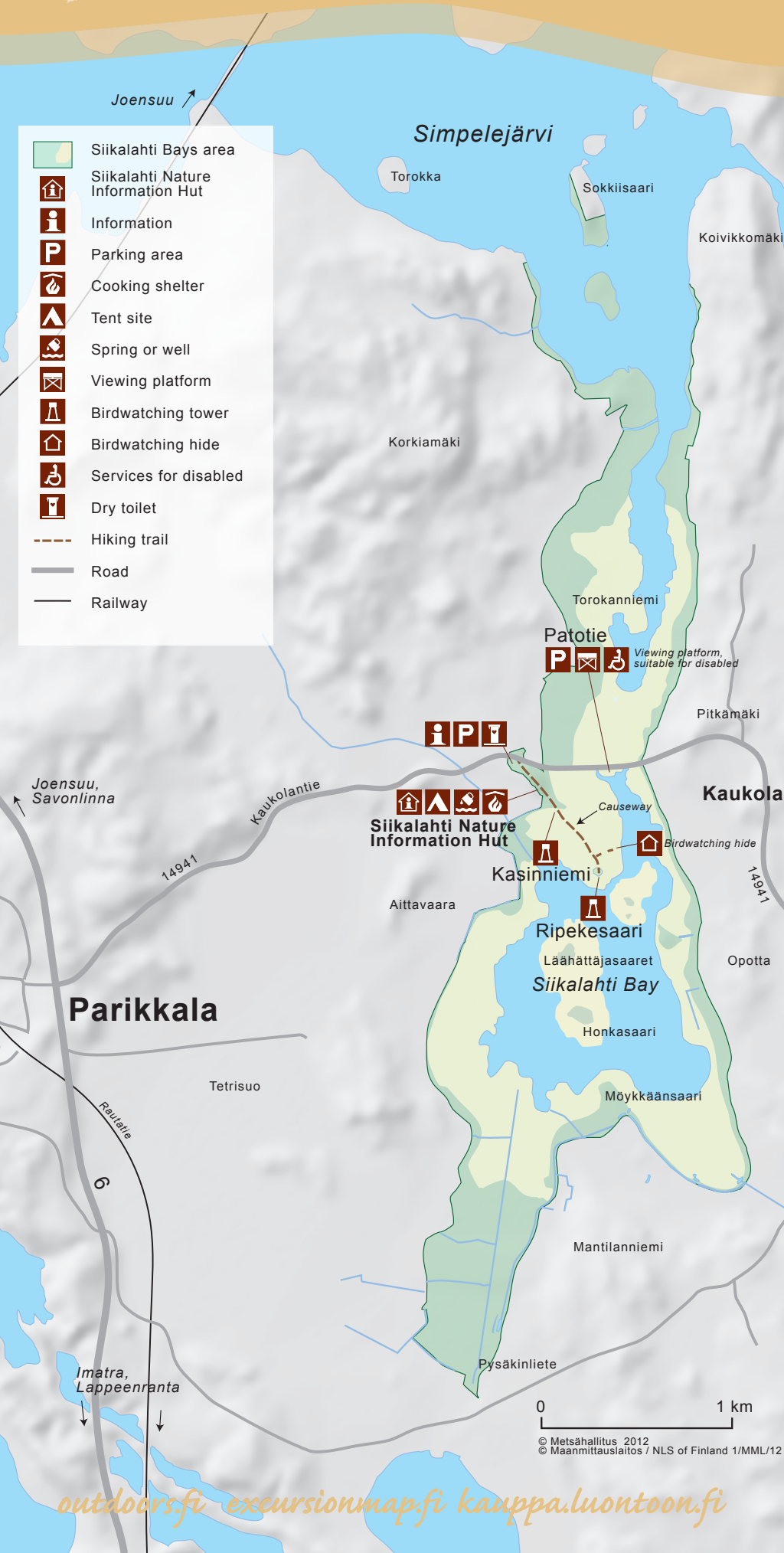
- Linnansaari Visitor Centre – Oskari, tel. +358 0205 64 5916, [saimaa@metsa.fi](mailto:saimaa@metsa.fi)
- Information on local natural attractions: [www.outdoors.fi/siikalahti](http://www.outdoors.fi/siikalahti), [www.excursionmap.fi](http://www.excursionmap.fi)

## Useful information for visitors

For more information about local attractions see [www.lintuinmaa.com](http://www.lintuinmaa.com).

PHOTO: METSÄHALLITUS / LAURA LEHTONEN





## Where to watch birds

- A 1-km nature trail starts from the main car park, passing the nature information hut and leading on to a birdwatching tower in the centre of the wetlands. Notice boards describe Siikalahti's history and rich wildlife. The trail has special wider sections in good spots for birdwatching.
- A birdwatching hide is located along a side trail branching off just before the birdwatching tower.
- A viewing platform also suitable for disabled visitors can be found 300 metres along the road from the main car park towards Kaukola.
- The birdwatching tower at Kasinniemi near the nature information hut has a lower level accessible to visitors with prams or pushchairs.

## Siikalahti's seasons

- Birds are abundant in the wetlands from April to October. The busiest times for birds and birdwatchers are during the spring and autumn migration seasons.
- Flocks of arctic geese pass through in the spring. Their numbers peak around 20th May.
- During the light nights of May and June the wetlands are filled with birdsong from about 11 pm.
- Many dragonflies can be seen flying over the wetlands from late May.
- Woodland plants bloom in May; wetland plants are at their best in July.

