



Pihlajavesi Nature reserve

- Location: Savonlinna and Sulkava
- Total area: 45 km²
- Established: Protected area in 2014, Natura 2000 site in 1998



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Nature reserve

Pihlajavesi

Pihlajavesi is lake nature at its best. Maze-like island chains alternate with vast open waters. The national landscape enchants waterway travellers for days. More than ten guest harbours are open for visitors. The Saimaa ringed seal also likes the clear waters of the area.

Lake nature is grand and rugged

Pihlajavesi in Lake Saimaa spreads to the south of Savonlinna. The area is nearly 20 kilometres wide and approximately 40 kilometres long. The diverse lakescape consists of large islands and hundreds of islets.

Rough, rocky pine forests dominate the rugged coastal landscape. You can find many birds enjoying the shelter of islets on the open water. Avoid landing on skerries and islets during bird nesting season.

The Saimaa ringed seal, the treasure of Pihlajavesi

Pihlajavesi is a very important breeding area for the Saimaa ringed seal. Almost one third of the entire Saimaa ringed seal population lives in Pihlajavesi.

If your trip takes you to the ice of Lake Saimaa in the winter, avoid islets on open waters and snowdrifts on the tips of peninsulas as they might hide a seal's nest. If the mother seal is startled by a disturbance, such as snowmobiles, the birth or nursing of a pup may be disturbed.

Please note that pets must be kept on a leash.

Surprises in the caves of a war-time Salpa post

At the southern end of the Kongonsaari Island, you'll find a Salpa Line base with caves excavated into the rock. You can explore the Salpa post on a trail that runs for about 400 m. In the

Saimaa area, the defence entirely relied on water areas, and the fortification line attempted to cut off the attacker's routes along waterways.

Iso-Kankainen has a trail of about 2 km. It is suitable even for newer hikers although it rises to a high ridge. You can see the signs left by the Ice Age, such as depressions and ancient coast banks.

Feel the tranquillity of the archipelago

Pihlajavesi is accessible from Savonlinna city centre by boat or canoe. The extensive water body requires experience in navigating and reading maps.

Getting a fish-eye view is worth it, though, as the Pihlajavesi—Ola-vinlinna area is one of Finland's national landscapes. You can visit Savonlinna's Riihisaari exhibition to learn about the nature and cultural history in the area.

Enjoy the outdoors while protecting nature

- Respect nature and take others in the area into consideration.
- Campfires are allowed on marked campfire sites. During high wind or forest fire warnings, campfires are prohibited.
- Leave no trace. There are no litter containers in the area, so pack your food so that no waste is created. You may burn waste that is suitable for burning in camp fires – take all other waste away with you.
- Keep your pets on a leash.
- Landing and movement are prohibited in restricted areas from 1 January to 30 April to ensure a quiet breeding environment for the seals.
- You may pick berries and mushrooms, but no stones or plants.
- Angling, ice fishing and lure fishing with one lure are permitted, with the exception of the restricted areas between 1 January and 30 April. Lure fishing requires 18–65 year-olds to pay a fisheries management fee.
- Trolling is permitted if you have an angling permit for Southern Finland (permit 7413, www.eraluvat.fi).
- Net fishing is prohibited. Other trap permits in the state-owned Pihlajavesi water area (permit area 7009, www.eraluvat.fi) are granted by Metsähallitus.
- Before you go fishing, you need to check for any fishing restrictions at kalastusrajoitus.fi.

Outdoor Etiquette

nationalparks.fi/hikinginfinland/visitorguidelines

Emergency number 112

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PHOTOS SAARA LAVI





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