

Specially Protected Nature Territories

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Specially protected nature territories (SPNT) are geographically defined areas that are under special protection of the State in order to protect and preserve diversity of the nature – rare and typical nature ecosystems; living environment of protected species; original, beautiful landscapes characteristic of Latvia; geological and geomorphological formations, dendrological plantings and protected trees; as well as territories significant for leisure and education of society.

There are 690 specially protected nature territories in Latvia approved by the law or regulations of the Cabinet of Ministers.

Protected territories are categorised as:

Strict Nature reserves – territories little transformed or transformed in varying degrees by human activities, which include habitats of specially protected wild plant and animal species, an specially protected biotopes.. There are 4 strict nature reserves established in Latvia – Moricsala (1912), Grīņi (1936), Krustkalni (1977) and Teiči (1982).

National parks are vast areas with outstanding nature formations of national importance, landscapes and cultural heritage landscapes untouched by human activities or nearly natural, a diversity of biotopes, abundance of cultural and historical monuments. Along with nature protection, scientific research, education and organization of leisure have an important role. There are 4 national parks in Latvia: Gauja National Park (1973), Ķemeri National Park (1997), Slītere National Park (1999) and Rāzna National Park (2007).

Biosphere reserves are broad territories where landscapes and ecosystems of international importance are located. The aim of these reserves is to ensure the preservation of natural diversity and to promote sustainable social and economic development of the territory. In 1997 North Vidzeme Biosphere Reserve was established in Latvia. It is included in the international network of biosphere reserves.

Nature parks are territories that represent the natural, cultural and historical values in particular region, and is suitable for recreation and education of society. There are 42 nature parks in Latvia including the most popular – Engure Lake Nature Park, Tērvete Nature Park and Nature Park “Daugava’s Circles”.

Nature monuments are separate, isolated natural formations: protected trees, dendrological plantings, avenues, geological and geomorphological nature monuments, which have scientific, cultural and historical, aesthetic or ecologic value. 206 geological and geomorphological nature monuments, 89 dendrological plantings and 60 avenues are protected in Latvia.

Nature reserves are nature territories unaffected or slightly affected by human activity that include habitats of specially protected wildlife species of plants and animals and specially protected biotopes. There are 275 nature reserves in Latvia.

Protected landscape areas are territories remarkable for original and diverse landscapes and special beauty. The aim of these areas is to protect and preserve cultural environment and landscapes characteristic of Latvia in all their diversity, as well as to ensure the preservation of environment suitable for tourism and recreation. There are 9 protected landscape areas in Latvia.

Specially protected nature territories are established and managed in compliance with the Law “On Specially Protected Nature Territories” and with the Regulations of the Cabinet of Ministers “On General Protection and Use of Specially Protected Nature Territories”

<https://www.varam.gov.lv/en/specially-protected-nature-territories>