

Coastal meadow management in Matsalu National Park in case of Lesser White-fronted Goose

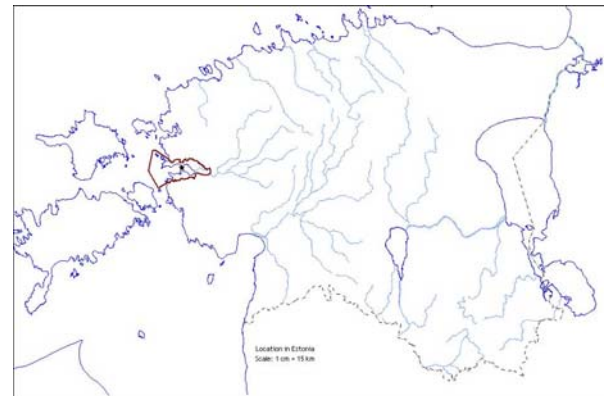
Maire Toming

Estonian Environmental Board



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Matsalu National Park



Matsalu National Park

Was established in 1957 as a Nature Reserve

Renamed in 2004 as National Park

Ramsar site from 1976, renewed status from 1994

Total area ca 50 000 ha:

- 3000 ha of reed-bed
- 3000 ha of coastal meadows
- 4000 ha of flooded meadows
- Open water with ~ 50 islands and islets
- Wooded meadows
- Arable land, settlements and cultural heritage



Lesser White-fronted Geese in Western Estonia

- Monitored annually since 1999
- Appearing on coastal meadows and fields in Matsalu NP and Silma Nature Reserve in Western Estonia
- Staging during spring migration from the end of April till the end of the first decade of May
- Average staging period 18 days
- Number of birds fluctuating between 13 – 32 during the last decade
 - in 2009 32 individuals
 - in 2010 30 individuals



National Action Plan for Lesser White-fronted Goose

Was prepared in years 2005-2008 during the Life-project “Conservation of *Anser erythropus* on European migration route”

- Management and restoration of coastal meadows in strategic areas – 13 meadow complexes in Western Estonia and on islands
- Public awareness focusing on hunters and farmers
- Monitoring the staging population of LWfG
- Educating the birdwatchers and nature conservation specialists
- International cooperation



Former roosting and feeding sites of LWfG on the islets in Matsalu Bay



Restoration of meadow areas on the islets





•40 ha restored during the Life-project
 •more than 100 beef cattle grazed annually since 2007

Results:

LWfG staging on the managed area on several cases during next spring after restoration

The first proved nesting occasion of *Tringa stagnatilis* in Matsalu NP recorded on Väikerahu island

Some pairs of Dunlin, the colony of Lapwings and several Redshanks nesting on both islands on restored area



But:

- All good effects appear mostly in the first year after the restoration
- Grazing on the islands is really complicated activity
- Reed is growing much faster than cattle can eat during some few suitable weeks for grazing
- The area is overgrowing fast
- We still hope to continue.....



Thank you!

