

NORPPAPOLKU

The Saimaa Seal Trail



Wellbeing from nature – exercise until you are out of breath, or take a moment to breathe in the surroundings and enjoy the experiences along the Saimaa Seal trail on your own or with good company.

The Saimaa Seal trail showcases Lake Saimaa and its spectacular geological sights in depth. The trail takes you along great forest hiking routes, to observation points where you can rest, and to spots where you can dive into Saimaa's inviting waters. If you are lucky, you might catch a glimpse of one of the rarest seals in the world, the Saimaa ringed seal, after which the Saimaa Seal trail is named.

The Saimaa Seal trail is 13km long in total, and can be walked in either direction. You can choose from three shorter circular routes, if you don't wish to walk the entire trail. The routes are signposted with information. The Saimaa Seal trail runs through rugged forest, rocky lakeland and heathy terrain. The trail varies from fir needle-lined paths to rocky surfaces. During the winter, please be aware of the snowmobile route that runs past the Kitulanlenkki area.

Geological sights along the Saimaa Seal trail:

1. DRUMLINS

Drumlins are elongated moraine formations formed by the flow of an ice sheet. They often have a rocky core, behind which a long ridge of moraine accumulates. Drumlins are usually very large, and are therefore difficult to discern in the terrain, but there is a small drumlin ridge along the Kitulanlenkki path on the Saimaa Seal trail that is almost immediately discernible.

2. TYPES OF ROCK IN THE AREA, AND THE VIEW FROM THE OBSERVATION POINT

The observation point at Pääskytvuori provides excellent views of Lake Saimaa, but visitors should also take a look down at the solid bedrock under their feet. The type of rock at the observation point is striped mica gneiss,

which formed millions of years ago from sand and clay on the ancient seabed. These ancient sediments were transformed into mica gneiss through mountain folding, deep in the Earth's crust.

3. KETTLE

Kettles formed as large blocks of ice were buried in the sand and gravel at eskers and deltas formed by glacial rivers. As the ice blocks gradually melted away, holes of various shapes and sizes were left behind. The esker terrain around the Saimaa Seal trail is dotted by many kettles, and one kettle pond lies along the Kotkatsaarenkierron.

4. ANCIENT SHORELINES

There are beach banks, terraces and ridges at various elevations on the slopes of the esker terrain around the Saimaa Seal trail, such as along the Kotkatsaarenkierron. They are the ancient shorelines that formed in the ancient phases of Lake Saimaa, when the surface of the water was higher. They were revealed due to land uplift and a fall in water levels. The latest 2-3-metre drop in water levels took place when the Vuoksi outlet channel formed around 5,700 years ago.

5. LONGITUDINAL ESKERS

Eskers formed in long, narrow stretches in glacial river tunnels. The eskers comprise material that was layered and accumulated by meltwater that flowed through network of tunnels in the ice sheet. The core of the esker is made up of coarse gravel and rocks worn round by the meltwater. Finer sand accumulated over and around the core. The Kotkatsaarenkierron crosses over the esker ridge to the south of Maijavuori.

Check Puumala Art path along the route:

Check out also: Saimaa Swimrun competition!



Norppapolku at Outdooractive: <https://out.ac/9fBht>

Puumala tourist info, Keskustie 14, Puumala, tel. +358 50 562 0706, visit@puumala.fi, www.visitpuumala.fi

Fishing permits: www.puumalankalastusalue.net



Saimaa Geopark

Geology is a rising trend in nature tourism. Geoparks are internationally highly popular tourism operating models. The aim of the Geoparks is to achieve sustainable economic development in these areas with the help of geotourism. From the tourist attraction perspective, geoparks are similar to national parks and UNESCO World Heritage Sites, although a geopark is not a nature reserve as such. Saimaa Geopark consists of 9 municipalities: Sulkava, Ruokolahti, Juva, Savitaipale, Taipalsaari, Puumala, Lappeenranta, Imatra and Mikkeli. There are 14 geosites and 3 nature and culture sites in Puumala.

Saimaa ringed seal

The Saimaa ringed seal (*Pusa saimensis*) is one of the rarest seals in the world. Saimaa ringed seals live only in Finland. It is estimated that there are currently about 530 of them. The Saimaa ringed seal is one of the few seals to live in fresh waters. It was isolated in Saimaa about 8,000 years ago when the connection to the Baltic Sea was severed after the Ice Age. The Saimaa ringed seal has larger eyes and brain than its relatives, because it had to adjust to living in the dark and labyrinthine waters of Saimaa. The typical Saimaa ringed seal is: 130–145 cm long; weight: 50-90 kg; colour: dark grey with individual light rings on the fur; average lifespan: 20 years.

Respecting nature while hiking in Saimaa

You can move around the area freely in accordance with Everyone's right.

ym.fi/en/recreational-use-of-nature

It is only permitted to light a fire in designated areas. It is prohibited to light open fires during terrain or forest fire alerts.

Do not litter. Burnable waste can be burnt in campfires. Please take any other waste with you when you leave.

You can pick berries, mushrooms and non-protected plants.

Angling and ice fishing are permitted by Everyman's right. The relevant permits are required for other types of fishing.

Pets must be kept on the lead.

Stay on the trails and paths, and respect other trail users.

EMERGENCY NUMBER 112

Use "112 Suomi" app for mobile & sharing location. Your location at the Norppalaavu lean-to: Luukkolanatie 227.

