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| Type:                  | Act        |
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# Nature Conservation Act<sup>1</sup>

Passed 21.04.2004  
 RT I 2004, 38, 258  
 Entry into force 10.05.2004

Amended by the following acts

| Passed     | Published           | Entry into force                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              |
|------------|---------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 17.06.2004 | RT I 2004, 53, 373  | 18.07.2004                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |
| 22.02.2005 | RT I 2005, 15, 87   | 03.04.2005                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |
| 21.04.2005 | RT I 2005, 22, 152  | 29.04.2005                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |
| 07.06.2006 | RT I 2006, 30, 232  | 01.01.2007                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |
| 21.02.2007 | RT I 2007, 25, 131  | 01.04.2007                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |
| 14.11.2007 | RT I 2007, 62, 396  | 16.12.2007                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |
| 19.06.2008 | RT I 2008, 34, 211  | 01.08.2008                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |
| 10.12.2008 | RT I 2008, 56, 314  | 01.01.2009                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |
| 18.12.2008 | RT I 2009, 3, 15    | 01.02.2009                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |
| 20.05.2009 | RT I 2009, 28, 170  | 01.07.2009                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |
| 18.06.2009 | RT I 2009, 35, 232  | 01.07.2009                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |
| 15.10.2009 | RT I 2009, 50, 336  | 09.11.2009                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |
| 27.10.2009 | RT I 2009, 53, 359  | 21.11.2009                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |
| 22.04.2010 | RT I 2010, 22, 108  | 01.01.2011 will enter into force on the date specified in the decision of the Council of the European Union concerning abrogation of the derogation established with regard to the Republic of Estonia on the basis of Article 140(2) of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union, Decision No 2010/146/EU of the Council of the European Union of 13 July 2010 (OJ L 196, 28.07.2010, pp. 24-26). |
| 20.05.2010 | RT I 2010, 29, 151  | 20.06.2010                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |
| 17.06.2010 | RT I 2010, 38, 231  | 01.07.2010                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |
| 16.06.2010 | RT I 2010, 43, 255  | 17.07.2010                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |
| 22.02.2011 | RT I, 10.03.2011, 2 | 20.03.2011                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |
| 31.05.2011 | RT I, 10.06.2011, 3 | 31.05.2011, a judgment of the Court en Banc of the Supreme Court declares the text "regulation" in subsection 1 of § 10 of the Nature Conservation Act to be unconstitutional and null and void.                                                                                                                                                                                                              |
| 08.12.2011 | RT I, 29.12.2011, 1 | 01.01.2012                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |
| 23.01.2013 | RT I, 14.02.2013, 2 | 01.03.2013                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |
| 20.03.2013 | RT I, 05.04.2013, 2 | 15.04.2013                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |
| 27.03.2013 | RT I, 18.04.2013, 1 | 01.05.2013                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |
| 25.04.2013 | RT I, 16.05.2013, 2 | 01.06.2013                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |
| 19.02.2014 | RT I, 13.03.2014, 4 | 01.07.2014                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |
| 05.06.2014 | RT I, 29.06.2014, 1 | 01.07.2014                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |

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|------------|-----------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 20.06.2014 | RT I, 08.07.2014, 3   | 01.08.2014                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |
| 19.06.2014 | RT I, 29.06.2014, 109 | 01.07.2014, the ministers' official titles have been replaced on the basis of subsection 4 of § 107 <sup>3</sup> of the Government of the Republic Act.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              |
| 18.02.2015 | RT I, 23.03.2015, 3   | 01.07.2015                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |
| 19.02.2015 | RT I, 23.03.2015, 6   | 01.07.2015                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |
| 16.03.2016 | RT I, 05.04.2016, 2   | 15.04.2016                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |
| 27.10.2016 | RT I, 10.11.2016, 1   | 01.01.2017                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |
| 06.04.2017 | RT I, 18.04.2017, 2   | 28.04.2017                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |
| 19.06.2017 | RT I, 05.07.2017, 2   | 15.07.2017                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |
| 14.06.2017 | RT I, 06.07.2017, 1   | 01.09.2017                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |
| 16.01.2018 | RT I, 26.01.2018, 5   | 05.02.2018                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |
| 07.11.2018 | RT I, 14.11.2018, 4   | 24.11.2018                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |
| 30.01.2019 | RT I, 22.02.2019, 1   | 01.10.2019                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |
| 20.04.2020 | RT I, 06.05.2020, 1   | 07.05.2020                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |
| 10.06.2020 | RT I, 01.07.2020, 1   | 01.01.2021                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |
| 17.06.2020 | RT I, 10.07.2020, 2   | 01.01.2021                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |
| 15.12.2020 | RT I, 30.12.2020, 2   | 01.03.2021                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |
| 02.06.2021 | RT I, 16.06.2021, 1   | 01.07.2021, in part 01.01.2026                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |
| 11.05.2022 | RT I, 27.05.2022, 1   | 06.06.2022                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |
| 08.06.2022 | RT I, 29.06.2022, 1   | 09.07.2022                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |
| 15.02.2023 | RT I, 07.03.2023, 21  | 17.03.2023                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |
| 14.06.2023 | RT I, 17.06.2023, 1   | 14.06.2023 - Resolution of the Constitutional Review Chamber of the Supreme Court declares unconstitutional and invalid clause 3 of subsection 1 <sup>1</sup> of § 20 of the Nature Conservation Act to the extent that it does not allow the state to acquire an immovable containing a protected natural object, which was acquired from a spouse, descendant, parent or their descendant or grandparent or their descendant, where the person from whom the immovable was acquired became the owner of the immovable after it had been placed under protection or after the protection regime had been made stricter, but the transfer transaction did not contain any information concerning the natural object to be protected. |
| 20.06.2023 | RT I, 30.06.2023, 1   | 01.07.2023; pursuant to subsection 6 of § 105.19 of the Government of the Republic Act, the words "Ministry of the Environment" have been substituted by the words "Ministry of Climate" and pursuant to subsection 7 of § 105.19 the words "Ministry of Rural Affairs" have been substituted by the words "Ministry of Regional Affairs and Agriculture" in the appropriate case form.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              |
| 15.06.2023 | RT I, 06.07.2023, 2   | 16.07.2023                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |
| 20.06.2023 | RT I, 06.07.2023, 6   | 01.01.2024                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |
| 06.12.2023 | RT I, 22.12.2023, 3   | 01.01.2024, in part 01.06.2024                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |
| 09.04.2024 | RT I, 17.04.2024, 1   | 01.05.2024                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |
| 28.05.2024 | RT I, 11.06.2024, 1   | 21.06.2024                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |
| 19.11.2024 | RT I, 04.12.2024, 1   | 01.01.2025                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |
| 17.06.2025 | RT I, 12.07.2025, 1   | 01.10.2025                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |
| 14.01.2026 | RT I, 28.01.2026, 1   | 07.02.2026                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |

# Chapter 1

## GENERAL PROVISIONS

### § 1. Purpose of Act

The purpose of this Act is to:

- 1) protect the natural environment by promoting the preservation of biodiversity through ensuring the natural habitats and the populations of species of wild fauna, flora and fungi at a favourable conservation status;
- 2) preserve natural environments of cultural or esthetical value, or elements thereof;
- 3) promote the sustainable use of natural resources.

### § 2. Principles of nature conservation

(1) Nature conservation is carried out by means of restricting the use of areas important from the aspect of preservation of the natural environment, by regulating steps involving specimens of species of wild fauna, flora and fungi and specimens of fossils, and by promoting nature education and scientific research.

[RT I, 08.07.2014, 3 – entry into force 01.08.2014]

(2) Nature conservation will be based on the principles of balanced and sustainable development and in each individual case, alternative solutions will be considered which, from the position of nature conservation, are potentially more effective.

### § 3. Favourable conservation status of natural habitats and species

(1) The conservation status of a natural habitat will be taken as favourable when its natural range and areas it covers within that range are stable or increasing, and the specific structure and functions which are necessary for its long-term maintenance exist and are likely to continue to exist for the foreseeable future, and the conservation status of its typical species is favourable as defined in subsection 2 of this section.

(2) The conservation status of a species will be taken as favourable when population dynamics data on the species concerned indicate that it is maintaining itself on a long-term basis as a viable component of its natural habitats, and the natural range of the species is neither being reduced nor is likely to be reduced for the foreseeable future, and there is, and will probably continue to be, a sufficiently large habitat to maintain its populations on a long-term basis.

### § 4. Protected natural objects

(1) The following are protected natural objects:

- 1) protected areas;
- 2) limited-conservation area;
- 3) protected species and fossils;
- 4) species' protection sites;
- 5) individual protected natural objects;
- 6) natural objects protected at the local government level.

[RT I, 08.07.2014, 3 – entry into force 01.08.2014]

(2) Protected areas are areas maintained in a state unaltered by human activity or used subject to special requirements where the natural environment is preserved, protected, restored, researched or introduced. The following are protected areas:

- 1) national parks;
- 2) nature conservation areas;
- 3) landscape conservation areas.

(3) Limited-conservation areas are areas designated for the conservation of habitats, for the preservation of which the impact of planned activities is estimated and activities liable to damage the favourable conservation status of the habitats are prohibited.

(4) 'Protected species' means a taxonomical unit of a species of fauna, flora or fungi, the specimen or habitats or places of finding of which are protected on the basis of this Act or which are listed in Annexes A to D of Council Regulation No 338/97/EC on the protection of species of wild fauna and flora by regulating trade therein (OJ L 061, 03.03.1997, p. 1). 'Protected fossils' means fossils of a protected category, specimens or places of finding of which are protected under this Act.

[RT I, 08.07.2014, 3 – entry into force 01.08.2014]

(5) For the purposes of this Act, 'species protection site' means an area located outside of a protected area or in the limited management zone of a protected area, which is delimited and can be used in accordance with special requirements, and which is:

- 1) the reproduction site or place of other periodic concentration of protected animals;
- 2) the natural habitat of a protected plant or fungus;
- 3) the spawning site of salmon or river lamprey;
- 4) the hibernation site of brown bear;
- 5) the natural habitat of crayfish;
- 6) a badger sett with more than ten entrances.

[RT I 2007, 25, 131 – entry into force 01.04.2007]

(6) Individual protected natural object means an animate or inanimate natural object such as a tree, spring, erratic, waterfall, rapid, bluff, terrace, outcrop, cave or karstic form or system which is protected on the basis of this Act.

(7) At the local government level, a landscape, valuable arable land, valuable natural biotic community, individual landscape object, park, green area or an individual object of a green area which has not placed under protection as an individual protected natural object and is not located within a protected area may be a protected object.

## **§ 5. Shores and banks of bodies of water**

(1) A shore or a bank of a water-body is a land zone immediately adjoining a sea, lake, river, artificial lake, brook, spring or land improvement system used in accordance with special requirements and protected under this Act.

[RT I, 22.02.2019, 1 – entry into force 01.10.2019]

(2) Land immediately adjoining the Baltic Sea, Lake Peipus, Lake Lämmijärv, Lake Pskov and Lake Võrtsjärv is deemed to be a shore.

(3) A shore or a bank of a water-body protected under this Act is not a protected natural object within the meaning of this Act.

## **§ 6. Application of Administrative Procedure Act**

The provisions of the Administrative Procedure Act apply to administrative proceedings conducted in accordance with this Act, taking account of the specifications provided for in this Act.

# **Chapter 2 PLACING UNDER PROTECTION**

## **§ 7. Prerequisites for placing natural objects under protection**

(1) A natural object that is under risk, is rare or typical, has scientific, historic, cultural or esthetical value or that is subject to protection under an international agreement is deemed to have the prerequisites for placing the natural object under protection based on this Act.

(2) A natural object is placed under protection based on this Act also if it is necessary for implementing Council Directive 92/43/EEC on the conservation of natural habitats and of wild fauna and flora (OJ L 206, 22.07.1992, pp. 7–50) or Directive 2009/147/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council on the conservation of wild birds (OJ L 20, 26.01.2010, pp. 7–25).

[RT I, 05.04.2016, 2 – entry into force 15.04.2016]

## **§ 8. Proposal to place natural objects under protection**

(1) Everyone has the right to submit a proposal to place a natural object under protection to the authority competent to initiate the proceedings for placing under protection.

(2) A proposal to place a natural object under protection must contain:

- 1) the justification for placing the natural object under protection;
- 2) the objective for placing the natural object under protection;
- 3) a map indicating the location or the borders of the natural object and the natural values for the protection of which the proposal was made;

[RT I, 18.04.2013, 1 – entry into force 01.05.2013]

- 4) a description of the restrictions planned for protection purposes;
- 5) an estimation of the costs related to placing under protection and organising of protection.

(3) The authority competent to initiate the proceedings for placing under protection will arrange for expert assessment of the justification and purposefulness of placing the natural object under protection and assessment

of the purposefulness of the planned restrictions, involving a person who has relevant specific expertise in the field (hereinafter *expert*).

[RT I, 18.04.2013, 1 – entry into force 01.05.2013]

(4) If based on expert opinion, it is obvious that the natural object lacks the prerequisites required by this Act for placing the object under protection, the authority competent to initiate the proceedings may refuse to proceed with the matter, communicating the decision to refuse to place the object under protection along with the expert opinion to the person who submitted the proposal.

[RT I, 18.04.2013, 1 – entry into force 01.05.2013]

(5) If a natural object has the prerequisites required by this Act for placing the object under protection and placing the object under protection is purposeful, the proceedings for placing the natural object under protection will be initiated in accordance with the provisions of § 9 of this Act.

[RT I, 18.04.2013, 1 – entry into force 01.05.2013]

(6) If a proposal is made to place a natural object under protection or proceedings regarding placing a natural object under protection are initiated within the meaning of subsection 1 of § 9 of this Act, the administrative authority who has received an application for making another administrative decision that could affect the state of the natural object specified in the proposal will have the right to suspend the proceedings for making the administrative decision. The proceedings for making the administrative decision will be suspended until a decision to place the natural object under protection or refusal to place the natural object under protection is made, but not for more than 28 months as of making the decision to suspend the proceedings of making the administrative decision.

[RT I, 18.04.2013, 1 – entry into force 01.05.2013]

## **§ 9. Proceedings for placing natural objects under protection**

(1) The proceedings for placing a natural object under protection are initiated and the authority conducting the proceedings is appointed by the Ministry of the Environment, except in the event specified in subsection 2 of this section, taking account of the prerequisites for placing a natural object under protection provided by this Act.

[RT I, 18.04.2013, 1 – entry into force 01.05.2013]

(2) Proceedings for placing a natural object under local protection are initiated and conducted by the local authority.

[RT I, 18.04.2013, 1 – entry into force 01.05.2013]

(3) The authority conducting proceedings for placing a natural object under protection publishes a notice concerning the initiation of the proceedings in the official publication *Ametlikud Teadaanded* and at least one national newspaper or local newspaper. A notice concerning the initiation of the proceedings for placing a natural object under protection at the local government level is published in the local newspaper.

[RT I, 22.12.2023, 3 – entry into force 01.01.2024]

(4) The notice must include information on:

- 1) the natural object to be placed under protection;
- 2) the possibilities to examine the proposal or draft decision to place the natural object under protection;
- 3) the place and time of public discussion or a proposal to decide the matter without a public discussion;
- 4) the term for filing objections and propositions;
- 5) the authority conducting the proceedings;

[RT I, 18.04.2013, 1 – entry into force 01.05.2013]

6) further steps in the proceedings, estimated time limits of the proceedings and the estimated time of termination of the proceedings.

[RT I, 18.04.2013, 1 – entry into force 01.05.2013]

(5) The authority conducting the proceedings for placing a natural object under protection will forward the notice containing the information specified in subsection 4 of this section to the local authority and the owner of the immovable of the location of the natural object by registered mail or electronically, provided that the authority knows the electronic mail address. In the event of electronic delivery, the person is required to immediately confirm the receipt of the notice by electronic mail. If the person has not confirmed the receipt of the notice, it will be delivered to them by registered mail.

[RT I, 05.04.2016, 2 – entry into force 15.04.2016]

(6) If a party to the proceedings has not filed, by the deadline for submitting objections and proposals, an objection to the proposal of the initiator of the proceedings to omit the public discussion in the matter of placing the natural object under protection, the party to the proceedings is deemed to have waived the right to discuss the matter in public.

[RT I, 18.04.2013, 1 – entry into force 01.05.2013]

(6<sup>1</sup>) For the purposes of this Act, ‘party to the proceedings’ means the owner of an immovable located in the territory of or contained in a natural object to be placed under protection and the local authority as well as another person who has participated in the proceedings of placing the natural object under protection.  
[RT I, 18.04.2013, 1 – entry into force 01.05.2013]

(7) A draft decision for placing a natural object under protection together with documents obtained or prepared in the course of the proceedings that are not subject to confidentiality requirements in accordance with law will be displayed for public examination at facilities of the Environmental Board or the local authority of the location of the natural object. The duration of the public display must not be less than two weeks.  
[RT I 2009, 3, 15 – entry into force 01.02.2009]

(7<sup>1</sup>) Upon making a proposal or objection in proceedings involving placing a natural object under protection, a clear proposal or objection and reasons thereof must be specified:

- 1) regarding the existence or absence of natural values;
- 2) justification of the protection procedure;
- 3) information about valid administrative decisions or pending proceedings for making an administrative decision, which may affect placing the natural object under protection;
- 4) other essential circumstances that may affect the placing of the natural object under protection.

[RT I, 18.04.2013, 1 – entry into force 01.05.2013]

(8) The initiator of the proceedings must reply to written proposals and objections filed in the course of the public display 30 days after the end of the display or, if a public discussion is held, before the public discussion.  
[RT I, 18.04.2013, 1 – entry into force 01.05.2013]

(9) After the proceedings regarding proposals and objections and renewal of a draft decision to place a natural object under protection, a public discussion will be organised except where no proposals or objections were filed within the term and a proposal to omit the public discussion of the matter had been made in accordance with clause 3 of subsection 4 of this section.

[RT I 2007, 25, 131 – entry into force 01.04.2007]

(10) If as the result of the public display or public discussion, the main positions expressed by the decision on placing the natural object under protection change, a new notice will be published and a new public display will be organised in accordance with subsections 7–9 of this section.

(10<sup>1</sup>) If a natural object that is to be placed under local protection is located at a mineral deposit, the draft decision to place the natural object under protection must be approved by the Ministry of the Environment.  
[RT I, 10.11.2016, 1 – entry into force 01.01.2017]

(11) The requirements provided for in subsections 3–10 of this section do not apply to the placing under protection of species, species protection sites or fossils.

[RT I, 08.07.2014, 3 – entry into force 01.08.2014]

(12) The requirements of this section do not apply to placing a natural object under protection at the local government level based on a plan.

## **§ 10. Placing natural object under protection**

(1) An area will be placed under protection as a protected area or a limited-conservation area by the Government of the Republic.

[RT I, 10.06.2011, 3 – entry into force 31.05.2011 A judgment of the Court en Banc of the Supreme Court declares the text “regulation” in subsection 1 of § 10 of the Nature Conservation Act to be unconstitutional and null and void.]

(2) An area will be placed under protection as a species protection site by the minister in charge of the policy sector.

[RT I, 18.04.2013, 1 – entry into force 01.05.2013]

(3) Species will be placed under protection as species in the protected category I or II by a regulation of the Government of the Republic including a list of the species. Species whose sites are automatically placed belong under protection in accordance with subsection 2 of § 50 of this Act will belong to the protected category I.

(4) Species in the protected category III will be placed under protection by a regulation of the minister in charge of the policy sector including a list of the species.

(5) Rare or endangered natural fossils found in Estonia will be placed under protection by a regulation of the minister in charge of the policy sector.

[RT I, 08.07.2014, 3 – entry into force 01.08.2014]

(6) Individual protected natural objects will be placed under protection by the minister in charge of the policy sector.

[RT I, 18.04.2013, 1 – entry into force 01.05.2013]

(7) A natural object protected at the local government level will be placed under protection:

- 1) on the basis of an established comprehensive plan or detailed plan;
- 2) without drawing up a plan.

[RT I, 18.04.2013, 1 – entry into force 01.05.2013]

(8) If a natural object is placed under protection without drawing up a plan, a boundary description of the protected area or a map of the protected individual landscape object will be drawn up and the rules of protection of the area or the individual landscape object will be approved.

[RT I 2009, 28, 170 – entry into force 01.07.2009]

### **§ 11. Decision for placing natural object under protection**

(1) For the placing under protection of a natural object with a surface area:

- 1) the objective of placing the area under protection will be determined;
- 2) the protection procedure (protection rules) of the area will be established in the event provided for in subsection 1 of § 12 of this Act;
- 3) the boundary of the area will be determined;
- 4) the manager of the area to be placed under protection will be appointed;

[RT I 2009, 3, 15 – entry into force 01.02.2009]

- 5) the map of the natural object will be appended to the decision.

(1<sup>1</sup>) Upon placing a natural object with a surface area under protection in the event specified in subsection 2 of § 7 of this Act, the ecological needs of the habitat or species that is the objective of protection must be relied on.

[RT I, 05.04.2016, 2 – entry into force 15.04.2016]

(2) For the placing under protection of a species, a list of species in that category of protection will be prepared in Latin and Estonian.

(3) Upon placing an individual natural object under protection, the following will be established:

- 1) the objective for placing the natural object under protection;
- 2) the extent of the protective zone;
- 3) the manager of the individual protected natural object;

[RT I 2009, 3, 15 – entry into force 01.02.2009]

- 4) the protection procedure.

(4) In the letter of explanation of placing a natural object under protection, the following will be set out:

- 1) reasons regarding the compliance of the purposes of placing under protection with the prerequisites for protection;
- 2) reasons for the practicability of placing the natural object under protection;
- 3) reasons for selection of the type of the natural object to be protected;
- 4) reasons for the external boundaries and the boundaries of internal zones of the natural object to be protected;
- 5) reasons for the protection procedure;
- 6) description of the proceedings for placing the natural object under protection, including a chronological list of the stages of the proceedings, the results of the hearing, and changes made on the basis of proposals made in the course of the proceedings along with the reasons.

[RT I, 18.04.2013, 1 – entry into force 01.05.2013]

(5) A letter of explanation specified in subsection 4 of this section, except for the letter of explanation of a decision to place natural objects protected at the local government level under protection, will be published on the website of the Ministry of the Environment. The letter of explanation of a decision to place natural objects protected at the local government level under protection will be published on the website of the rural municipality or city government.

[RT I, 18.04.2013, 1 – entry into force 01.05.2013]

(6) A decision to place a natural object under protection will enter into force on the tenth day after publication in *Riigi Teataja* at the time specified in the decision.

[RT I, 18.04.2013, 1 – entry into force 01.05.2013]

### **§ 11<sup>1</sup>. Refusal to place natural object under protection**

(1) If in the course of the proceedings it becomes evident that it is not practicable or possible to protect the natural object with regard to which the proceedings were initiated, a decision to refuse to place the natural object under protection will be made. A decision to refuse to place a natural object under protection will be made by a directive of the minister in charge of the policy sector and a decision to refuse to place a natural object under local protection will be made by the authority that initiated the proceedings regarding placing the object under protection.

(2) A decision to refuse to place a natural object under protection will enter into force upon signature of the decision.

[RT I, 18.04.2013, 1 – entry into force 01.05.2013]

### **§ 11<sup>2</sup>. Delivery of decision to place natural object under protection and of decision to refuse to place natural object under protection**

(1) The authority conducting the proceedings of placing a natural object under protection will deliver the decision to place the natural object under protection and the letter of explanation thereof to the party to the proceedings within ten days after the publication of the decision in *Riigi Teataja* and deliver the decision to refuse to place the natural object under protection within ten days after signing the decision.

(2) The documents specified in subsection 1 of this section will be delivered to the parties to the proceedings electronically if, in the course of placing the natural object under protection, the person has granted consent thereto. In the event of electronic delivery, the person is required to immediately confirm the receipt of documents by electronic mail.

(3) If the electronic delivery is not possible or the person has not confirmed the receipt of the documents in the event of electronic delivery, the documents specified in subsection 1 of this section will be delivered to the party to the proceedings by registered mail with advice of delivery.

(4) If electronic delivery is not possible and it is impracticable or impossible to send registered mail with advice of delivery, the authority conducting the proceedings will deliver the documents specified in subsection 1 of this section pursuant to the procedure established in §§ 28-32 of this Act.

[RT I, 18.04.2013, 1 – entry into force 01.05.2013]

### **§ 12. Protection rules**

(1) The protection procedure of a protected area, species protection site or individual protected natural object will be established by the protection rules.

(2) The protection rules must set out the extent of one or several protective zones with equivalent or different degrees of strictness of restrictions, and determine whether the restrictions provided by this Act are applicable in part, in full, permanently or temporarily in each protective zone.

### **§ 13. Amendment and revocation of decision to place under protection and of protection rules**

(1) The provisions of §§ 8 and 9 of this Act apply to the change in the type of the protected object, the objective of protection, the outer borders of the object, and to significant amendment of the scope or revocation of the restrictions or obligations related to the natural object set out in the protection rules.

(2) If a natural object protected at the local government level is also placed under protection as a protected area or an individual protected natural object, the natural object still remains under protection at the local level but, if the protection procedures conflict, the protection procedure for protected areas or individual protected natural objects will apply.

## **Chapter 3 ORGANISATION OF PROTECTION**

### **§ 14. General restrictions**

(1) Without the express consent of the manager of a protected natural object, the following is prohibited within a protected area, limited-conservation area, species protection site or protective zone of an individual protected natural object:

- 1) to change the boundaries of the areas of the land use types and the intended use or uses thereof;
- 2) to prepare a land readjustment plan and to perform land readjustment activities;
- 3) [Repealed – RT I, 18.04.2013, 1 – entry into force 01.05.2013]
- 4) [Repealed – RT I 2007, 25, 131 – entry into force 01.04.2007]
- 5) to establish a detailed plan and a comprehensive plan;
- 6) to grant consent for the construction of a construction works whereby a construction notice is required or for the construction of a construction work whereby a building permit is required, including for the construction or expansion of a boat landing;  
[RT I, 23.03.2015, 3 – entry into force 01.07.2015]
- 7) to issue design criteria;
- 8) to issue building permits;
- 9) to create a new body of water the area of which is larger than five square metres if a water permit or a building permit does not need to be issued therefor or a building notice does not need to be submitted therefor;  
[RT I, 22.02.2019, 1 – entry into force 01.10.2019]
- 10) to additionally feed wild game;  
[RT I, 18.04.2013, 1 – entry into force 01.05.2013]

11) to issue a superficies licence specified in subsection 1<sup>2</sup> of § 113<sup>1</sup> of the Building Code.  
[RT I, 11.06.2024, 1 – entry into force 21.06.2024]

(2) The manager of a protected natural object will not approve of the activity specified in subsection 1 of this section and any other activity requiring, in accordance with the protection rules, the consent of the manager of a protected natural object if such activity is liable to interfere with achieving the objective of protecting the natural object or damage the state of the protected natural object.

(3) On approval of the activity specified in subsection 1 of this section and any other activity requiring, in accordance with the protection rules, the consent of the manager of the protected natural object, the manager of the object may set written requirements which, if complied with, ensure that the activity does not interfere with achieving the objective of protecting the natural object or damage the state of the protected natural object.

(4) If an activity specified in subsection 1 of this section are not been submitted for approval to the manager of the protected natural object or the requirements set in accordance with subsection 3 of this section are not complied with, then in accordance with the provisions of the Administrative Procedure Act, the person in whose interests such activity is performed will have no legitimate expectation as to the legality of such activity.

(5) [Repealed – RT I, 23.03.2015, 6 – entry into force 01.07.2015]

(6) The conditions provided for in the Annex to this Act must be taken into account upon carrying out selective cutting and shelterwood cutting at a protected natural object, unless the rules of protection provide otherwise.  
[RT I, 06.07.2017, 1 – entry into force 01.09.2017]

### **§ 15. Movement within territory of protected natural objects**

(1) All roads and pathways within conservation zones and limited management zones of protected areas or within limited-conservation area or leading to protected natural monuments must be open for public use from sunrise until sunset, and if such roads or paths exist within the territory of an immovable where a protected natural monument is located, the possessor of the immovable will ensure public access to the monument during such time.

(2) Other persons are allowed to stay in a yard where a protected natural monument is situated with the consent of the possessor of the immovable.

(3) The possessor of an immovable situated within the area of a protected natural object, or of an immovable where a protected natural object is situated has no right to prohibit the following from staying within the immovable:

1) a representative of the manager of the protected natural object in connection with administration of the natural object;

[RT I 2009, 3, 15 – entry into force 01.02.2009]

2) a research worker who holds a certificate prepared according to the format established by the minister in charge of the policy sector and issued in accordance with the terms established by the minister in charge of the policy sector;

3) a person exercising national monitoring or making a survey or inventory commissioned by the manager of the protected natural object who presents a contract on the commissioned work or a certificate of employment at the request of the possessor.

[RT I, 22.12.2023, 3 – entry into force 01.01.2024]

### **§ 16. Transfer of immovable containing natural object**

(1) For the purpose of transfer of an immovable or a part thereof situated within a protected area or limited-conservation area or containing a single natural object or the protection site of a species or encumbrance of such immovable or a part thereof with a right *in rem*, the corresponding contract must contain the following information concerning the natural object:

[RT I, 18.04.2013, 1 – entry into force 01.05.2013]

1) type and name of the natural object;

2) name of the manager of the natural object;

[RT I 2009, 3, 15 – entry into force 01.02.2009]

3) reference to the decision to place the natural object under protection.

(2) [Repealed – RT I, 22.12.2023, 3 – entry into force 01.06.2024]

(3) [Repealed – RT I, 22.12.2023, 3 – entry into force 01.06.2024]

(4) [Repealed – RT I, 22.12.2023, 3 – entry into force 01.06.2024]

(5) [Repealed – RT I, 22.12.2023, 3 – entry into force 01.06.2024]

(6) [Repealed – RT I, 22.12.2023, 3 – entry into force 01.06.2024]

### **§ 17. Necessary activities within protected natural object**

(1) The activities necessary within the area of a protected natural object hosting semi-natural biotic communities are activities which promote natural aspect and species composition thereof, such as mowing, grazing, and designing, thinning or deforestation of tree and shrub layers, the extent of which will be determined, in the event of a limited-conservation area, by a management plan and in the event of other protected natural objects, by protection rules.

(2) Semi-natural community occurrence areas are areas hosting communities of natural biota, such as wooded meadows, alvars, paludified meadows, fen meadows, coastal meadows, flooded meadows, grasslands on mineral soils, wooded pastures which have developed in the course of long-term human activity, such as grazing or mowing.

(3) Activities necessary for restoring natural forest and mire community within a protected area, such as ditch blocking, felling gaps or mineralizing the ground, may be ordered by the protection rules.

(4) Cutting may be ordered within a protected area by the protection rules as an activity necessary for clearing particular views.

(5) [Repealed – RT I 2006, 30, 232 – entry into force 01.01.2007]

(6) The administrative authority may grant the owner or possessor of an immovable located within the boundaries of a protected natural object use without charge of a movable owned by the state for the performance of necessary activities arising from the protection regime or management plan of the protected natural object. [RT I 2009, 3, 15 – entry into force 01.02.2009]

(7) The provisions concerning the grant of use of state assets of the State Assets Act do not apply to the grant of use without charge of movables owned by the state. A contract for grant of use will be concluded between the manager of the protected natural object and the person using the immovable and the contract must set out at least the following:

[RT I 2009, 3, 15 – entry into force 01.02.2009]

- 1) the types of movables dispatched to the user, their numbers in the register of state assets and the number of things by type;
- 2) the name, and residence or seat of the user;
- 3) the term of the contract;
- 4) the time of transfer of the things and the term of and procedure for their return;
- 5) the obligation to insure and the extent of required insurance coverage;
- 6) the obligation to maintain the thing dispatched to the user in good working order, and to replace or repair the thing;
- 7) the bases for premature termination of the contract;
- 8) the terms, description and technical requirements for the necessary activity arising from the protection regime;
- 9) the intended purpose of the thing dispatched to the user.

[RT I 2007, 25, 131 – entry into force 01.04.2007]

(8) If the possessor of the immovable refuses to perform the necessary work prescribed by the protection rules or the management plan or fails to reach an agreement with the manager of the protected natural object, the possessor has no right to prevent the manager of the protected natural object from arranging such work. [RT I 2009, 3, 15 – entry into force 01.02.2009]

(9) In the event specified in subsection 8 of this section, the necessary work to the extent determined by the protection rules will be carried out by the manager of the protected natural object at the expense of the state, unless the natural object has been placed under protection at the local government level.

[RT I 2009, 3, 15 – entry into force 01.02.2009]

(10) Performance of work necessary for preservation of semi-natural biotic communities of protected areas, limited-conservation areas or species protection sites is not deemed to be economic activities or business.

### **§ 18. Nature conservation subsidy**

(1) The nature conservation subsidy is paid for performance of work specified in the protection rules, management plan and action plan for conservation of a species or habitat action plan necessary for preservation of semi-natural biotic communities of a protected area, limited-conservation area or species protection site. [RT I, 05.04.2016, 2 – entry into force 15.04.2016]

(1<sup>1</sup>) Nature conservation subsidy can be applied for to ensure the preservation of semi-natural biotic communities entered in the Estonian nature information system.

[RT I, 27.05.2022, 1 – entry into force 06.06.2022]

(2) Possessors of immovables have the right to apply for nature conservation subsidy.

(3) The procedure for application for the nature conservation subsidy, review of applications and payment of the subsidy, the requirements for payment of the subsidy, the rates of the subsidy and recovery of the subsidy will be established by a regulation of the minister in charge of the policy sector.  
[RT I, 05.04.2016, 2 – entry into force 15.04.2016]

(4) Nature conservation subsidy is not paid if:

- 1) the person who is performing the work fails to comply with the contract concluded for obtaining the subsidy, or the result of the nature conservation work does not meet the requirements established by the contract or legislation;
  - 2) the person who is performing the work has submitted inaccurate information upon application for nature conservation subsidy;
  - 3) no funds are prescribed by the state budget of the current year for payment of nature conservation subsidy to a land unit which ranks lower in the priority list of applications, or
  - 4) the activity is to be carried out within a parcel of land with regard to which compensation for damage caused by migratory birds in the current year is applied for under subsection 1 of § 61 of this Act.
- [RT I, 18.04.2013, 1 – entry into force 01.05.2013]

(4<sup>1</sup>) The Environmental Board makes a decision to grant or refuse to grant the nature conservation subsidy and to pay or recover the subsidy.  
[RT I, 05.04.2016, 2 – entry into force 15.04.2016]

(5) Payment of nature conservation subsidy is based on a contract entered into between the manager of the protected natural object and the person performing the work, and the instrument of delivery and receipt concerning work performed in conformance with the requirements of such contract.  
[RT I 2009, 3, 15 – entry into force 01.02.2009]

(6) If after payment of the nature conservation subsidy it becomes evident that the subsidy was not used for the intended purpose or circumstances that would have resulted in refusal to grant the application become evident or if, following the payment of the nature conservation subsidy, the beneficiary has not ensured the maintenance of the area within five years, the Environmental Board may demand that the beneficiary repay the received subsidy to the extent of up to 100 per cent.  
[RT I, 05.04.2016, 2 – entry into force 15.04.2016]

#### **§ 19. [Repealed – RT I 2008, 34, 211 – entry into force 01.08.2008]**

#### **§ 20. Acquisition of immovable containing protected natural object**

(1) An immovable which contains a protected natural monument or is located, as a whole, within the territory of a protected area, limited-conservation area or species protection site and whose use for its intended purposes is significantly hindered by the protection regime may be acquired by the state upon agreement with the owner of the immovable for payment corresponding to the value of the immovable.  
[RT I 2008, 34, 211 – entry into force 01.08.2008]

(1<sup>1</sup>) The state will not acquire an immovable in accordance with the procedure provided for in this section if a person has acquired the immovable after it was placed under protection and the transfer transaction contained information concerning the natural object to be protected, unless:

- 1) the protection regime applicable regarding the immovable is made stricter;
- 2) the immovable was acquired by inheritance;
- 3) the immovable was acquired from a spouse, registered partner, descendant, parent or their descendant or grandparent or their descendant, and the person whose immovable is acquired was the owner of the immovable before it was placed under protection or before the protection regime was made stricter;

[RT I, 06.07.2023, 6 – entry into force 01.01.2024]

[RT I, 17.06.2023, 1 – entry into force 14.06.2023 – Resolution of the Constitutional Review Chamber of the Supreme Court declares unconstitutional and invalid clause 3 of subsection 1<sup>1</sup> of § 20 of the Nature Conservation Act to the extent that it does not allow the state to acquire an immovable containing a protected natural object, which was acquired from a spouse, descendant, parent or their descendant or grandparent or their descendant, where the person from whom the immovable was acquired became the owner of the immovable after it had been placed under protection or after the protection regime had been made stricter, but the transfer transaction did not contain any information concerning the natural object to be protected.]

4) the immovable was acquired by way of restitution of unlawfully expropriated property and the order of the local authority to return the land has been issued before 7 July 1996.  
[RT I, 05.04.2013, 2 – entry into force 15.04.2013]

(1<sup>2</sup>) If an immovable is not located, as a whole, within the territory of a protected area, limited-conservation area or species protection site or if its size exceeds the territory of the limited management zone of a protected natural monument, the part of the immovable located within the protected area, limited-conservation area or species protection site may be acquired by the state based on an agreement between the state and the owner of

the immovable. The division of the immovable will be organised by the owner of the immovable and the costs relating to the division will be borne by the person who initiated the acquisition.  
[RT 2009, 35, 232 – entry into force 01.07.2009]

(1<sup>3</sup>) Upon agreement with the owner of the immovable, the state may acquire the whole immovable if:

1) the part of the immovable located within the protected area or limited-conservation area is larger than two thirds of the total area of the immovable or

2) the immovable is partially located within the boundaries of a protection site of a species in the protected category I or a limited management zone of a protected natural monument.

[RT I 2008, 34, 211 – entry into force 01.08.2008]

(2) The acquisition of an immovable may be initiated by the owner of the immovable, the manager of a protected natural object or the minister in charge of the policy sector. The minister in charge of the policy sector decides the initiation of the acquisition and the acquisition of an immovable. The costs related to the acquisition of an immovable are borne by the state and the acquisition is financed within the limits of the amount allocated in the state budget for each budgetary year or from the budget of a profit-making state agency.

[RT I, 26.01.2018, 5 – entry into force 05.02.2018]

(2<sup>1</sup>) The value of an immovable, except the value of an immovable covered with forest, will be determined by the comparison of transactions. Upon determination of the value of an immovable, the real rights which due to their nature cannot be deleted from the land register (e.g. servitudes, neighbourhood rights) and restrictions on the immovable property ownership arising from Acts, except the protection regime which is the bases for the acquisition of the immovable, will be taken into account.

[RT I 2008, 34, 211 – entry into force 01.08.2008]

(2<sup>2</sup>) The value of an immovable covered with forest will be determined as the sum of the value of the plot of land and the crop standing on the plot of land. If, upon determination of the value of an immovable covered with forest, the value of the standing crop is not of material importance and, arising from the market situation, the assessed value of land does not reflect the market price of the region, a representative of the state may order an appraisal in order to determine the value of the immovable covered with forest.

[RT I 2008, 34, 211 – entry into force 01.08.2008]

(3) The procedure for the acquisition of immovables containing protected natural objects by the state and for proceedings regarding proposals and the criteria on the basis of which the use of an immovable for its intended purposes is deemed to be significantly hindered by the protection regime and the procedure and basis for determination of the value of an immovable will be established by a regulation of the Government of the Republic.

[RT I 2008, 34, 211 – entry into force 01.08.2008]

(4) The acquisition of an immovable will be decided in the order of receipt of the applications for acquisition, unless there is good reasons for extension of the proceedings. If there is a good reason, an application will be resolved after the good reason has ceased to exist. Information on the order of receipt of the applications for acquisition will be published on the website of the Ministry of the Environment.

[RT I, 05.04.2013, 2 – entry into force 15.04.2013]

(5) If an immovable regarding which the Minister of Climate has decided to initiate acquisition is encumbered with a mortgage in favour of the Republic of Estonia, the owner of the immovable will have the right to request that the mortgagee suspend the payment of scheduled payments. If the owner of the immovable has any overdue mortgage payments, the suspension of the payments is allowed, provided that a payment schedule has been concluded for the settlement of the debt before the suspension of the payments and the debt is being settled on the basis of the payment schedule.

[RT I, 30.06.2023, 1 – entry into force 01.07.2023]

(6) The suspension of payment of the scheduled payments specified in subsection 5 of this section terminates as of the conclusion of a contract of acquisition of the immovable by the state, the making of a decision to refuse to acquire or the transfer of the immovable to a third party.

[RT I, 18.04.2017, 2 – entry into force 28.04.2017]

(7) In the event of suspension of the scheduled payments specified in subsection 5 of this section, no interest is charged. If the state does not acquire the immovable, the payment schedule will be extended by the period of suspension.

[RT I, 18.04.2017, 2 – entry into force 28.04.2017]

**§ 20<sup>1</sup>. [Repealed – RT I, 05.04.2013, 2 – entry into force 15.04.2013]**

**§ 20<sup>2</sup>. [Repealed – RT I, 05.04.2013, 2 – entry into force 15.04.2013]**

## **§ 21. Manager of protected natural objects**

(1) The manager of a protected area, limited-conservation area, species protection site and protective zone of a protected natural monument will be the Environmental Board (hereinafter *administrative authority*).

(2) The local authority which decided on placing a natural object specified in subsection 7 of § 4 of this Act under protection, or a rural municipality or city agency authorised by the local authority to administer the object will act as the manager of such object.  
[RT I 2009, 3, 15 – entry into force 01.02.2009]

## § 22. Administration of protected natural objects

Administration of a protected natural object must include:

1) deciding the granting of a permit for use of the environment determined by this Act and the protection rules, and establishing conditions of use of the environment;

[RT I, 08.07.2014, 3 – entry into force 01.08.2014]

2) participation in the strategic assessment of the environmental impact of a plan liable to affect the protected natural object, participating in the proceedings of assessment of the environmental impact of a planned activity, and establishing conditions for the planned activity or the plan liable to affect the protected natural object;

[RT I, 08.07.2014, 3 – entry into force 01.08.2014]

3) organisation of activities arising from the protection rules or management plan;

4) monitoring of compliance with the requirements provided by this Act and the protection rules.

[RT I, 10.07.2020, 2 – entry into force 01.01.2021]

## § 23. Marking of protected natural objects

(1) A protected area, limited-conservation area, protected natural monument or natural object protected at the local government level will be marked such that the location of the protected natural object could be reasonably understandable at the site.

(2) The marking of a protected natural object will be organised by the manager of the natural object.

[RT I, 08.07.2014, 3 – entry into force 01.08.2014]

(3) The procedure for marking protected natural objects and the markings to be used will be established by a regulation of the minister in charge of the policy sector.

## § 24. Protection obligation notice

(1) A protection obligation notice is a document issued for information purposes to the owner of an immovable that contains a brown bear hibernation site or the habitat of a species belonging to the protected category I, or whose immovable is located within such area, or to the possessor of such an area concerning whom a corresponding entry has been made in the land register, an administrator of state assets or an authorised authority (hereinafter jointly referred to as *possessor*).

[RT I, 18.04.2013, 1 – entry into force 01.05.2013]

(2) A protection obligation notice must contain:

1) information concerning the protected natural object, the name of the authority that placed it under protection and the date of placing it under protection;

2) the objective for placing the natural object under protection;

3) information concerning the manager of the natural object;

[RT I, 18.04.2013, 1 – entry into force 01.05.2013]

4) a list of restrictions provided by this Act and legislation issued on the basis thereof.

[RT I 2007, 25, 131 – entry into force 01.04.2007]

(3) The Environmental Board will issue a protection obligation notice immediately after learning of the whereabouts of a brown bear hibernation site or a habitat of a species belonging to protection category I.

[RT I, 18.04.2013, 1 – entry into force 01.05.2013]

(4) A protection obligation notice will be delivered against signature, sent by registered mail or electronically, provided that the issuer of the notice knows the electronic mail address. In the event of electronic delivery, the person is required to immediately confirm the receipt of the notice by electronic mail. If the person has not confirmed the receipt of the notice, it will be delivered to them by registered mail.

[RT I, 05.04.2016, 2 – entry into force 15.04.2016]

(4<sup>1</sup>) A protection obligation notice will not be delivered to the State Forest Management Centre.

[RT I, 18.04.2013, 1 – entry into force 01.05.2013]

(5) [Repealed – RT I, 18.04.2013, 1 – entry into force 01.05.2013]

(6) [Repealed – RT I, 18.04.2013, 1 – entry into force 01.05.2013]

(7) [Repealed – RT I 2009, 3, 15 – entry into force 01.02.2009]

(8) The possessor of an immovable will immediately inform third parties who, by an order of the possessor of the immovable, are authorised to stay at the immovable or perform the work or provide services commissioned by the possessor of the immovable about restrictions in force at the protected natural object.

[RT I 2010, 43, 255 – entry into force 17.07.2010]

### **§ 25. Management plan**

(1) For the purpose of organising the protection of a protected natural object, a management plan may be drawn up.

[RT I, 08.07.2014, 3 – entry into force 01.08.2014]

(2) The procedure for the preparation and approval of the management plan will be established and the person approving the management plan will be determined by the minister in charge of the policy sector. Information regarding approval of the management plan will be published on the website of the Environmental Board.

[RT I 2009, 3, 15 – entry into force 01.02.2009]

### **§ 25<sup>1</sup>. Habitat action plan**

(1) A habitat action plan is drawn up for ensuring a favourable condition of the habitat if the results of a scientific stock-taking indicate that the measures taken thus far do not ensure it or if it is required by an international obligation.

(2) The minister in charge of the policy sector will appoint a person authorised to approve a habitat action plan.

[RT I, 05.04.2016, 2 – entry into force 15.04.2016]

(3) A habitat action plan will be published on the website of the Ministry of the Environment.

[RT I, 08.07.2014, 3 – entry into force 01.08.2014]

## **Chapter 4 PROTECTED AREAS**

### **§ 26. National park**

(1) A national park is a protected area prescribed for the preservation, protection, restoration, research and introduction of the natural environment, landscapes, cultural heritage and balanced use of the environment of the protected area.

(2) The following are national parks of Estonia:

1) Lahemaa National Park, intended for the protection of the natural and cultural heritage of the coastal landscapes of Northern Estonia;

2) Karula National Park, intended for the protection of the natural and cultural heritage of the hilly moraine landscapes of Southern Estonia;

3) Soomaa National Park, intended for the protection of the natural and cultural heritage of the mire landscapes and floodplain landscapes of transition zone of Estonia (*Estonia intermedia*);

4) Vilsandi National Park, intended for the protection of the natural and cultural heritage of the coastal landscapes of the Western Estonian archipelago;

5) Matsalu National Park, intended for the protection of the characteristic biotic communities of Western Estonia and of the natural and cultural heritage of the Väinameri Sea region;

6) Alutaguse, intended for the protection of the natural and cultural heritage of the typical and rare mire, forest and coastal landscapes of Eastern Estonia.

[RT I, 14.11.2018, 4 – entry into force 24.11.2018]

(3) A national park may include strict nature reserves, conservation zones and limited management zones.

### **§ 27. Nature reserve**

(1) A nature reserve is a protected area prescribed for the preservation, protection, restoration, research and introduction of the natural environment.

(2) The zones possible in a nature reserve are the strict nature reserve, conservation zone and limited management zone.

### **§ 28. Landscape protection area (nature park)**

(1) A landscape protection area is an area prescribed for the preservation, protection, restoration, research, introduction and regulation of use of landscapes of the protected area.

(2) A park, arboretum or forest stand is a special type of landscape protection area.

(3) The zones possible in a landscape protection area are the conservation zone and limited management zone.

## § 29. Strict nature reserve

(1) A strict nature reserve is a land or water area of a protected area whose natural status is unaffected by direct human activity and where the preservation and development of natural biotic communities is ensured only through natural processes.

(2) All types of human activity is prohibited within a strict nature reserve, and persons are prohibited from staying in such reserves, except in events specified in subsections 3 and 4 of this section.

(3) Persons may stay in a strict nature reserve only for the purposes of supervision, rescue work or administration and organisation of the protection of the natural object.  
[RT I 2007, 25, 131 – entry into force 01.04.2007]

(4) People may stay in a strict nature reserve for the purpose of monitoring and assessment of the status of the natural object only with the consent of the manager of the protected area.  
[RT I 2009, 3, 15 – entry into force 01.02.2009]

## § 30. Conservation zone

(1) A conservation zone is a land or water area of a protected area prescribed for the preservation of natural and semi-natural biotic communities established or to be developed therein. Mineral resources present within a conservation zone are not deemed to be resources intended for exploitation.

(2) Unless otherwise provided by the protection rules, the following will be prohibited within a conservation zone:

- 1) economic activities;
- 2) use of natural resources;
- 3) erection of new construction works;
- 4) staying of persons in the habitats of protected species and staging areas of migratory birds;
- 5) driving motor vehicles, off-road vehicles or floating vessels;
- 6) camping, building fires and organising public events.

(3) The prohibition established in clause 4 of subsection 2 of this section does not extend to supervision and rescue work, activities related to organisation of the protection and administration of the natural object, research carried out with the consent of the manager of the protected natural object, national wildlife monitoring as well as wildlife surveys and inventories organised by the manager of the protected natural object.  
[RT I, 22.12.2023, 3 – entry into force 01.01.2024]

(3<sup>1</sup>) The prohibition established in clause 5 of subsection 2 of this section does not extend to supervision and rescue work, activities related to organisation of the protection and administration of the natural object, and to research carried out with the consent of the manager of the protected natural object.  
[RT I, 22.12.2023, 3 – entry into force 01.01.2024]

(3<sup>2</sup>) In order to contain a disease spread by game, the manager of a protected natural object may permit hunting in a conservation zone and, for this purpose, staying in the case specified in clause 4 of subsection 2 of this section and driving a means of transport specified in clause 5 of subsection 2.  
[RT I, 28.01.2026, 1 – entry into force 07.02.2026]

(4) The following may be permitted by the protection rules in the conservation zone as activities necessary for the preservation of the object or activities that do not harm the object:

- 1) maintenance work on existing land improvement systems and restoration of the water regime;
- 2) development of biotic communities in adherence to the objective of protection;
- 3) gathering of berries, fungi and other forest by-products;
- 4) hunting activities;
- 5) fishing activities;
- 6) construction of a road, a utility works or a non-production construction works for an immovable located within a protected area or for a protected area or for national defence purposes, and maintenance of existing construction works;

[RT I, 05.04.2016, 2 – entry into force 15.04.2016]

- 7) activities necessary for guaranteeing the preservation of the characteristic features and species composition of semi-natural biotic communities, and activities for preservation of the living conditions of protected species;
- 8) gathering of reed and seaweed.

(5) [Repealed – RT I 2009, 3, 15 – entry into force 01.02.2009]

### § 31. Limited management zone

(1) A limited management zone is a land or water area of a protected area where economic activities are permitted, taking account of the restrictions provided by this Act.

(2) Unless otherwise provided by the protection rules, the following will be prohibited within a limited management zone:

- 1) construction of new land improvement systems;
- 2) altering the water levels and shorelines of bodies of water;  
[RT I 2007, 25, 131 – entry into force 01.04.2007]
- 3) extraction of mineral resources;  
[RT I 2007, 25, 131 – entry into force 01.04.2007]
- 4) design of pure stands and planting of energy forests;
- 5) regeneration cutting;
- 6) training of crowns of trees and bushes, planting and cutting woody plants in parks, arboreta and forest stands under protection as special types of landscape protection areas and in the limited management zones of protected areas aimed at protecting park, arboreta and forest stands without the consent of the manager of the protected area;  
[RT I, 18.04.2013, 1 – entry into force 01.05.2013]
- 7) use of biocides, plant protection products and fertilizers;  
[RT I 2007, 25, 131 – entry into force 01.04.2007]
- 8) erection of construction works, including temporary construction works, and altering the exterior structure of construction works located in a national park;
- 9) hunting and fishing activities;
- 10) driving motor vehicles, off-road vehicles or floating vessels, except for the performance of work necessary for the maintenance of line facilities, and for forestry work or agricultural work in profit-yielding land;
- 11) camping, building fires and organisation of public events unless the location is prepared for such purposes and marked as such with the consent of the manager of the protected area;  
[RT I, 22.12.2023, 3 – entry into force 01.01.2024]
- 12) gathering of reed on unfrozen ground.

(2<sup>1</sup>) In order to contain a disease spread by game, the manager of a protected natural object may permit hunting in a limited management zone and, for this purpose, driving a means of transport specified in clause 10 of subsection 2 of this section.

[RT I, 28.01.2026, 1 – entry into force 07.02.2026]

(3) An obligation to preserve natural balance and the species and age diversity within biotic communities and a prohibition on haulage and transportation of timber out of the zone if the ground is not frozen may be established by the protection rules. If the protection rules prohibit the haulage and transport of timber when the ground is not frozen, the manager of the protected area may allow it when the ground permits it.

[RT I, 18.04.2013, 1 – entry into force 01.05.2013]

(4) Restrictions different than those provided for in the Forest Act as well as time limits for cutting may be established by the protection rules with regard to the size and form of cutting areas and the age composition of a forest within a limited management zone, provided that the restrictions and limits are necessary for the preservation of a biotic community or a protected species within the community and for the improvement of the living conditions.

[RT I, 08.07.2014, 3 – entry into force 01.08.2014]

(5) [Repealed – RT I 2009, 3, 15 – entry into force 01.02.2009]

## Chapter 5 LIMITED-CONSERVATION AREAS

### § 32. Limited-conservation area

(1) A limited-conservation area is established with the aim to ensure the favourable conservation status of wild fauna, flora and fungi unless it has been ensured by any other method provided by this Act.

(2) Destruction or harming of the habitats for the protection of which a limited-conservation area was formed, significantly disturbing the protected species, and all activities which are likely to endanger the favourable conservation status of the habitats and protected species are prohibited within a limited-conservation area.

(3) Logging activities are prohibited within a limited-conservation area if such activities are likely to harm the structure and functions of the protected habitats or endanger the preservation of species typical to the habitats.

(4) The objective of establishment of a limited-conservation area will be taken account of upon the processing of forest in compliance with the Forest Act. The manager of a limited-conservation area may impose an obligation to:

- 1) perform planned logging at a determined time,

2) use designated technologies for performance of planned logging.

(4<sup>1</sup>) If a planned regeneration cutting is in compliance with subsections 2 and 3 of this section, the size of a clear-cut area within a limited-conservation area must not exceed two hectares and its width must not exceed 30 metres and the area of a shelterwood cutting area must not exceed five hectares.

[RT I 2009, 53, 359 – entry into force 21.11.2009]

(5) The impact of proposed activities in a limited-conservation area on the status of habitats and species is evaluated in the course of environmental impact assessment or in accordance with the procedure provided in § 33 or Chapter 10 of this Act.

[RT I, 06.07.2023, 2 – entry into force 16.07.2023]

### **§ 33. Notification concerning limited-conservation area**

(1) The possessor of an immovable located within the boundaries of a limited-conservation area will submit a notification to the manager of the limited-conservation area if the following activities are planned:

- 1) construction of a road;
- 2) removal of a natural rock or soil;
- 3) altering the water levels and shorelines of bodies of water;
- 4) use of biocides and plant protection products;
- 5) cultivation and fertilising of natural and semi-natural grasslands and polders;
- 6) cutting of trees located within areas that have the characteristics of a wooded meadow;
- 7) construction and reconstruction of land improvement systems;
- 8) collection of reed.

[RT I, 08.07.2014, 3 – entry into force 01.08.2014]

(2) The notification must include the description, volume and schedule of the planned work, and a map of the area where the work is to be performed.

(3) The notification will be submitted to the manager of the limited-conservation area at least one month before commencement of the work in one of the following manners:

- 1) personal delivery;
- 2) sending by post by registered mail;
- 3) by electronic message bearing a digital signature.

(4) A notification is deemed to be submitted as of the date of sending thereof or the date of registration thereof by the manager of the limited-conservation area on the basis of the date stamp or time stamp, correspondingly.

(5) The manager of the limited-conservation area will evaluate the compliance of the planned activities with the requirements provided in § 32 of this Act within one month after the date of submission of the notification. The manager of the limited-conservation area will:

- 1) approve the notification and return it to the person who submitted it, if the administrative authority permits the performance of the planned work;
- 2) inform the person who submitted the notification of the conditions in adherence to which the work must be performed, or
- 3) prohibit any work that endangers the preservation of the favourable conservation status of the protected species or habitats present within the limited-conservation area for the guarantee of which the limited-conservation area was established.

(6) The format of notifications concerning limited-conservation areas, and the procedure for approval, review and return thereof will be established by a regulation of the minister in charge of the policy sector.

(7) In a special conservation area, the obligation to submit the notification provided in subsection 1 of this section does not apply with regard to work performed in the yard of an existing residential building.

[RT I, 08.07.2014, 3 – entry into force 01.08.2014]

## **Chapter 6 SHORES AND BANKS**

### **§ 34. Objective of protection of shores and banks**

The objective of protection of shores and banks is to preserve the natural biotic communities present on the shores and banks, to curb the harmful impact of human activity, to promote human settlement systems

which consider the specific character of the shores and banks, and to ensure unrestricted movement within and unrestricted access to the territories thereof.

### **§ 35. Restrictions on use of shores and banks**

(1) The following are zones within the area of a shore or bank:

- 1) the limited management zone of the shore or bank;
- 2) the building exclusion zone of the shore or bank;
- 3) the water protection zone of the shore or bank.

(2) The baseline for calculating the width of the zones specified in clauses 1 and 2 of subsection 1 of this section is, in accordance with the Spatial Data Act, the boundary of the water-body indicated on the base map of the Estonian topographic database.

[RT I, 22.02.2019, 1 – entry into force 01.10.2019]

(2<sup>1</sup>) Where a ditch that constitutes the artificial recipient of a land improvement system has been indicated on the base map of the Estonian topographic database as a linear object, the baseline for calculating the width of the zones specified in clauses 1 and 2 of subsection 1 of this section is the edge of the depression.

[RT I, 22.02.2019, 1 – entry into force 01.10.2019]

(2<sup>2</sup>) The baseline for calculating the width of the water protection zone is calculated in accordance with the procedure provided for in the Water Act.

[RT I, 22.02.2019, 1 – entry into force 01.10.2019]

(3) With respect to internal bodies of water with extended areas of potential flooding, the high water boundary will be determined in accordance with the procedure established by a regulation of the minister in charge of the policy sector. The list of internal bodies of water with extended areas of potential flooding will be established by a regulation of the minister in charge of the policy sector.

[RT I 2007, 25, 131 – entry into force 01.04.2007]

(3<sup>1</sup>) The border of a repeatedly flooded area on a sea shore is set in the comprehensive plan. Where the border of a repeatedly flooded area has not been set, it is deemed that the border of the repeatedly flooded area is one meter from the height value of the shore line.

[RT I, 22.02.2019, 1 – entry into force 01.10.2019]

(4) The limited management zone, water protection zone and building exclusion zone of the shore or bank of a body of water with areas of repeated flooding consist of the flooded area and the width of the zone provided in §§ 37 to 39 of this Act.

(5) On shore or bank terraces higher than five meters and located less than 200 meters from the water boundary indicated on the base map of the Estonian topographic database, the limited management zone, water protection zone and building exclusion zone of the shore or bank consist of the area below the terrace extending to the water boundary and the width of the zone provided for in §§ 37–39 of this Act.

[RT I, 22.02.2019, 1 – entry into force 01.10.2019]

### **§ 36. Guarantee of unrestricted passage and access**

[Repealed – RT I, 08.07.2014, 3 – entry into force 01.08.2014]

### **§ 37. Limited management zones of shores and banks**

(1) The width of limited management zones of shores and banks will be:

- 1) 200 meters on the shores of the Baltic Sea, Lake Peipus, Lake Lämmijärv, Lake Pskov and Lake Võrtsjärv;
- 2) 100 meters on the banks of lakes and artificial lakes with an area of more than ten hectares, and on rivers, brooks and artificial recipients of land improvement systems with a catchment area of more than 25 square kilometres;

[RT I, 22.02.2019, 1 – entry into force 01.10.2019]

- 3) 50 metres in the event of springs and on the banks of lakes and artificial lakes with an area of up to ten hectares, and on rivers and brooks with a catchment area of up to 25 square kilometres;

[RT I, 22.02.2019, 1 – entry into force 01.10.2019]

- 4) 50 metres on the open artificial recipient of a land improvement system with a catchment area of 10–25 square kilometres.

[RT I, 22.02.2019, 1 – entry into force 01.10.2019]

(2) The purpose of protection of forests located in the limited management zone of shores and banks is to protect water and soil and preserve recreational conditions. Clear cutting in the limited management zone of the shore is prohibited. In the limited management zone of the bank, the size of the cutting area may not exceed two hectares, except upon management of land improvement systems in the water protection zone of the artificial recipient of the land improvement system. Upon selective cutting and shelterwood cutting in the shore and bank limited management zone, the conditions provided for in this Annex to the Act must be taken into account.

[RT I, 06.07.2017, 1 – entry into force 01.09.2017]

(3) The following is prohibited within the limited management zones of shores and banks:

- 1) land treatment by sewage sludge;
- 2) establishment of burial sites;
- 3) construction and expansion of facilities prescribed for waste processing or storage, except in the territory of ports;

4) [Repealed – RT I 2007, 25, 131 – entry into force 01.04.2007]

5) extraction of mineral resources;

[RT I 2007, 25, 131 – entry into force 01.04.2007]

6) driving a power-driven vehicle outside designated roads and driving an all-terrain vehicle, except for state monitoring, work related to the management of a protected natural object or the performance of maintenance work in a green zone of a densely populated area, transportation of watercraft needed for fishing activities by a person holding the right to fish as a professional activity or for recreation, for collecting reed and gathering seaweed, and for forestry work and agricultural work on profit-yielding land as well as, with the consent of the Environmental Board, for carrying out military training specified in subsections 3 and 3<sup>1</sup> of § 69 of the Military Service Act or for the purposes of ensuring national defence.

[RT I, 17.04.2024, 1 – entry into force 01.05.2024]

(4) The restrictions provided for in clauses 5 and 6 of subsection 3 of this section do not extend to artificial bodies of water created as a result of excavation of mineral resources, which bodies of water are located at a mineral deposit, extracting permit area or in its service area, until the duty to recondition the excavated land has been performed in accordance with the procedure set out in the Earth's Crust Act.

[RT I, 10.11.2016, 1 – entry into force 01.01.2017]

(5) The excavation of a mineral resource and an earth material and the conducting of a geological survey is permitted in the shore and bank protection zone of an artificial water body created as a result of the excavation of the mineral resource or earth material after the obligation to fix up the excavated land has been declared as performed, provided that the issuer of the permit has granted the consent that forms a part of the mineral excavation or geological survey permit.

[RT I, 22.02.2019, 1 – entry into force 01.10.2019]

(6) The consent specified in subsection 5 of this section may be refused if the activity applied for is in conflict with the purposes specified in § 34 of this Act.

[RT I, 22.02.2019, 1 – entry into force 01.10.2019]

### **§ 38. Building exclusion zones of shores and banks**

(1) The width of building exclusion zones of shores and banks will be:

- 1) 200 meters on the sea coast within Narva-Jõesuu city limits, and on the sea-islands;
- 2) 100 meters on the sea coast, and the shores Lake Peipus, Lake Lämmijärv, Lake Pskov and Lake Võrtsjärv;
- 3) 50 meters on the banks of bodies of water within cities and towns, and built up areas of small towns and villages with clearly determined boundaries (hereinafter *densely populated areas*), except in the event provided in clause 5 of this subsection;

[RT I 2007, 25, 131 – entry into force 01.04.2007]

4) 50 meters on the banks of lakes and artificial lakes with an area of more than ten hectares, and on rivers, brooks and artificial recipients of land improvement systems with a catchment area of more than 25 square kilometres;

[RT I, 22.02.2019, 1 – entry into force 01.10.2019]

5) 25 meters on the banks of lakes and artificial lakes with an area of up to ten hectares, and on rivers, brooks and artificial recipients of land improvement systems with a catchment area of up to 25 square kilometres;

[RT I, 22.02.2019, 1 – entry into force 01.10.2019]

6) 25 metres on a land improvement system with an open catchment area of 10–25 square kilometres.

[RT I, 22.02.2019, 1 – entry into force 01.10.2019]

(2) On forest land of shores and of banks of lakes and rivers for the purposes of subsection 2 of § 3 of the Forest Act, the building exclusion zone extends to the boundary of the limited management zone of the shore or bank.

[RT I, 08.07.2014, 3 – entry into force 01.08.2014]

(3) Construction of new buildings and civil engineering works is prohibited within the building exclusion zones of shores and banks.

(4) The building ban does not extend to:

1) a new building to be constructed in the yard of an existing building in a low-density area, which is not located within the water protection zone;

[RT I, 08.07.2014, 3 – entry into force 01.08.2014]

1<sup>1</sup>) erection of new construction works in the building exclusion zones of densely populated areas in the direction of land from the established building line between existing construction works;

[RT I 2007, 25, 131 – entry into force 01.04.2007]

- 2) civil engineering works prescribed for fortification of banks;
- 3) civil engineering works necessary for servicing a bathing area;
- 4) land improvement systems, except for polders;
- 5) initial extension of existing construction works if the volume of the extension is less than one third of the cubature of the existing construction works;
- 6) boundary fences;
- 7) Border Guard facilities;  
[RT I, 08.07.2014, 3 – entry into force 01.08.2014]
- 8) underground cable line;
- 9) utility networks and utility works to be constructed for an existing residential building;  
[RT I, 05.04.2016, 2 – entry into force 15.04.2016]
- 10) construction works related to national defence with the consent of the Environmental Board.  
[RT I, 29.06.2022, 1 – entry into force 09.07.2022]

(5) The building ban does not extend to the following areas concerning which an adopted detailed plan or adopted comprehensive plan or an adopted municipal designated spatial plan envisaging a wind farm exists:

[RT I, 07.03.2023, 21 – entry into force 17.03.2023]

- 1) construction works related to surface water intakes;
- 2) construction works in ports and civil engineering works related to water traffic;
- 3) civil engineering works prescribed for fortification of shores,
- 4) construction works of hydrographical services and monitoring stations;
- 5) construction works in connection with fish farming;
- 6) construction works of national defence, border guard and rescue service authorities;

[RT I 2010, 29, 151 – entry into force 20.06.2010]

7) [Repealed – RT I 2007, 25, 131 – entry into force 01.04.2007]

8) utility networks and technical infrastructure;

9) bridges;

10) public roads;

[RT I, 08.07.2014, 3 – entry into force 01.08.2014]

11) railways;

12) ground under rotor blades in the building exclusion zone of banks of artificial recipients of land improvement systems, provided that the artificial recipient does not overlap with a natural body of water.

[RT I, 07.03.2023, 21 – entry into force 17.03.2023]

(5<sup>1</sup>) The building ban does not extend to construction works planned under a special national plan.

[RT I, 23.03.2015, 3 – entry into force 01.07.2015]

(6) A landing place and a boat landing may be built on a shore or bank where it is not in conflict with the purposes of protection of the shore or bank.

[RT I, 22.02.2019, 1 – entry into force 01.10.2019]

(7) Unless otherwise provided by the protection rules, the provisions of this Act apply to construction within protected areas.

[RT I 2007, 25, 131 – entry into force 01.04.2007]

(8) Construction within limited-conservation areas is regulated, in addition to the provisions of this Act concerning special protected areas, also by this Chapter.

(9) If a local authority allows building within the building exclusion zone of a shore or bank contrary to the provisions of this section, then in accordance with the provisions of the Administrative Procedure Act, the person who was issued the building permit or in whose interest the building is performed has no legitimate expectation as to the legality of the building.

### **§ 39. Water protection zones of shores and banks**

The extent of and restrictions to water protection zones of shores and banks are provided by the Water Act.

### **§ 40. Extension and reduction of building exclusion zones of shores and banks**

(1) Considering the objectives for protection of a shore or bank and based on the flora, relief, boundaries of land parcels and immovables, existing road and utility networks and established patterns of settlement, the building exclusion zone of a shore or bank may be extended or reduced.

(2) Local authorities may extend the building exclusion zone of a shore or bank by a comprehensive plan.

(3) Building exclusion zones will be reduced with the consent of the Environmental Board.

[RT I 2009, 3, 15 – entry into force 01.02.2009]

(4) For reduction of a building exclusion zone, the local authority will submit to the Environmental Board an application together with:

[RT I 2009, 3, 15 – entry into force 01.02.2009]

- 1) the comprehensive plan adopted in accordance with the Planning Act;

2) an adopted detailed plan including a proposal to amend the comprehensive plan adopted in accordance with the Planning Act;

3) a detailed plan adopted in accordance with the Planning Act, in the absence of an adopted comprehensive plan;

4) an adopted municipal designated spatial plan envisaging a wind farm.

[RT I, 07.03.2023, 21 – entry into force 17.03.2023]

(5) The Environmental Board will assess the compliance of the reduction of the building exclusion zone with the objectives for protection of the bank or shore, and with the provisions of subsection 1 of this section.

[RT I 2009, 3, 15 – entry into force 01.02.2009]

(6) Extension or reduction of a building exclusion zone enters into force upon entry into force of the adopted comprehensive plan, detailed plan or municipal designated spatial plan envisaging a wind farm.

[RT I, 07.03.2023, 21 – entry into force 17.03.2023]

#### **§ 41. Formation of new densely populated areas and expansion of existing densely populated areas**

(1) It is prohibited to form new densely populated areas within the building exclusion zones of shores and banks. Exceptions to the above may be made by the Government of the Republic on proposal of a local authority.

(2) Existing densely populated areas situated on shores or banks will be expanded on the basis of existing comprehensive plans.

(3) A local authority wishing to form a new densely populated area will organise the public display of the corresponding general plan and, if the plan passes the public display, will submit an application to this effect together with the opinion of the person exercising supervision over the plan, after which permission for formation of a new densely populated area may be granted to the local authority in accordance with the Planning Act. The Ministry of the Environment will forward the application of the local authority to the Government of the Republic together with the opinion of the Ministry on the matter.

(4) In granting of permission or refusal to grant permission, the objectives for protection of the shore or bank will be taken into consideration.

(5) Densely populated areas situated in building exclusion zones of small towns or villages will be expanded only on the basis of adopted comprehensive plans.

#### **§ 42. Use of shores and banks as bathing areas**

(1) A bathing area is an area determined by the comprehensive plan situated by a body of water established with the main objective of provision of recreational activities to persons.

(2) No fees will be charged for staying in a bathing area.

(3) The procedure for use and maintenance of bathing areas will be established by the local authority.

(4) The character and location of civil engineering works servicing a bathing area will be building design criteria.

[RT I, 23.03.2015, 3 – entry into force 01.07.2015]

(5) Bathing areas have no water protection areas.

## **Chapter 7**

# **NATURE CONSERVATION AT LOCAL GOVERNMENT LEVEL**

#### **§ 43. Nature conservation on local government level**

The objective for nature conservation at the local government level is the determination by local authorities of the conditions for the protection and use of valuable landscapes representing the specific character of the natural and cultural environment, settlement patterns or land use, or individual features of such landscapes.

#### **§ 44. Protection regime**

(1) The protection regime provided by § 31 of this Act which may also be mitigated by the protection rules or a plan applies to lands placed under local protection.

(2) A protected zone extending to the distance of 50 meters from an individual feature of a landscape will be formed around the feature unless a smaller area has been provided upon placing the feature under protection. The protection regime provided in § 31 of this Act which may also be mitigated by the protection rules or a plan applies to the protected zone.

#### **§ 45. Cutting of trees in densely populated areas**

Single trees growing within a densely populated area, except for forests as defined by the Forest Act, will only be cut based on a permission of the local authority. The conditions and procedure for granting permission will be established by the local authority.

## **Chapter 8 SPECIES**

#### **§ 46. Protected categories of species**

(1) The following will be included in the protected category I:

- 1) species that are rare in Estonia, are located within restricted geographical areas, in few habitats, in isolation or whose population is thinly scattered over a more extensive range;
- 2) species which are in danger of disappearance, whose population been reduced as a result of human activity, whose habitats have been damaged to a critical point and whose extinction in the Estonian wild is likely if the adverse impact of the danger factors continue.

(2) The following will be included in the protected category II:

- 1) species that are in danger due to their small or reducing populations and whose range in Estonia is reducing due to overexploitation, destruction or damaging of habitats;
- 2) species that are likely to exposed to danger of being destroyed if the existing environmental factors continue operating.

(3) The following will be included in the protected category III:

- 1) species whose population is endangered by the destruction or damaging of habitats and has been reduced to a point where they are believed to move into the endangered category if the causal factors continue operating;
- 2) species that were included in the protected category I or II but that, due to application of necessary protective measures, do not experience a danger of destruction.

#### **§ 47. Definition of specimen**

(1) For the purposes of this Act, 'specimen' means an animal, plant or fungus of any stage of development, or any identifiable part of an animal, plant or fungus.  
[RT I, 08.07.2014, 3 – entry into force 01.08.2014]

(2) For the purposes of § 59 of this Act, a specimen means an animal, plant or fungus of any stage of development, or any identifiable part of a plant or fungus as well as derivatives and any other goods which appear, from an accompanying document, the packaging or a mark or label, or from any other circumstances, to be parts or derivatives of animals, plants or fungi of a species included in a protected category.

#### **§ 48. Ensuring favourable conservation status of species**

(1) The protection of all known habitats of species in the protected category I will be ensured by formation of protected areas and limited-conservation areas or determination of species protection sites.

(2) The protection of at least 50 per cent of known habitats of the protected category II entered in the Estonian nature information system will be ensured by formation of protected areas and limited-conservation areas or determination of species protection sites based on the representativity of the areas and sites.  
[RT I, 27.05.2022, 1 – entry into force 06.06.2022]

(3) The protection of at least 10 per cent of known habitats of the protected category III entered in the Estonian nature information system will be ensured by formation of protected areas and limited-conservation areas or determination species protection sites based on the representativity of the areas and sites.  
[RT I, 27.05.2022, 1 – entry into force 06.06.2022]

(4) In habitats of species in the protected categories II and III that have not been differentiated, individual specimens of such species will be protected.

#### **§ 49. Action plan for conservation and management of species**

(1) An action plan will be prepared for:

- 1) organisation of protection of a species in the protected category I;
- 2) ensuring the favourable conservation status of a species, if the results of the species inventory indicate that the current measures fail to do so, or if prescribed by an international obligation;

[RT I 2007, 25, 131 – entry into force 01.04.2007]

3) management of a species if the results of the species inventory indicate a significant negative impact to the environment caused by the increase in the population of the species, or a danger to the health or property of persons.

(2) An action plan includes:

- 1) biological data, population dynamics data and information on the range of the species;
- 2) conditions for guaranteeing the favourable conservation status of an endangered species;
- 3) risk factors to the species;
- 4) the objective for conservation or management;
- 5) the priority of measures for achieving a favourable conservation status or management of the species, and a schedule for application thereof;
- 6) the budget for organisation of conservation or management.

(3) The action plan for the conservation and management of a species will be established by the minister in charge of the policy sector.

[RT I, 05.04.2016, 2 – entry into force 15.04.2016]

(4) The action plan will be published on the website of the Ministry of the Environment.

### **§ 50. Protection of species protection sites**

(1) The protection regime provided in § 30 or § 31 of this Act determined in accordance with subsection 2 of § 10 of this Act applies in species protection sites.

(2) Unless a site of a protected species specified in this section, except for unoccupied artificial nests, has been determined in accordance with subsection 2 of § 10 of this Act, the following will be deemed to be a species protection site:

- 1) nesting tree of a flying squirrel, and the surrounding area within the radius of 25 meters;
- 2) nesting tree of a white-tailed eagle, short-toed eagle or osprey, and the surrounding area within the radius of 200 meters;
- 3) nesting tree of a greater spotted eagle or black stork, and the surrounding area within the radius of 250 meters;
- 4) nesting tree of a lesser spotted eagle, and the surrounding area within the radius of 100 meters;
- 5) nesting tree of a golden eagle, and the surrounding area within the radius of 500 meters;
- 6) nesting tree of a mixed couple of a greater spotted eagle and lesser spotted eagle, and the surrounding area within the radius of 250 meters.

(3) A person who finds a nesting tree is required to inform the Environmental Board within three twenty-four-hour periods after the finding.

[RT I 2009, 3, 15 – entry into force 01.02.2009]

(4) If the protection regime of a species specified in this section has not been determined in accordance with subsection 2 of § 10 of this Act, then the protection regime provided in § 30 of this Act applies to the species protection site of a flying squirrel, golden eagle, white-tailed eagle, short-toed eagle, osprey, greater spotted eagle, lesser spotted eagle or black stork as of the time of finding the nesting tree.

(5) If the site of a protected species specified in this section has not been determined in accordance with subsection 2 of § 10 of this Act, persons are prohibited to stay within the species protection site of a golden eagle or white-tailed eagle from February 15 to July 31, and within the site of the species protection site of a short-toed eagle, osprey, greater spotted eagle, lesser spotted eagle or black stork from March 15 to August 31.

(5<sup>1</sup>) If the species protection site of a species specified in this section has not been placed under protection in accordance with subsection 2 of § 10 of this Act, the following is, regardless of the restrictions specified in subsection 4 and the time limits specified in subsection 5 of this section, permitted at the species protection site:

- 1) collection of berries, mushrooms and other forest by-products;
- 2) hunting;
- 3) fishing;
- 4) with the consent of the manager of the species protection site, the cultivation of the biotic community in accordance with the purpose of conservation, an activity required for preserving the living conditions of the species and the maintenance of an existing building.

[RT I, 08.07.2014, 3 – entry into force 01.08.2014]

(6) The restrictions relating to a species protection site provided for in subsections 4 and 5 do not apply to an area that is under cultivation, to the yard of an existing residential building to a public road or to the maintenance of a natural grassland.

[RT I, 08.07.2014, 3 – entry into force 01.08.2014]

(7) Persons are allowed to stay within a species protection site during the time of the ban on movement for educational or research-related filming, photography or audio recording activities with the permission of the Environmental Board provided that such activity does not pose a danger to a specimen of the protected species. [RT I 2009, 3, 15 – entry into force 01.02.2009]

(8) The manager of a species protection site has the right to organise work in accordance with the protection regime or action plan based on a contract entered into with the local authority, land owner or another person. [RT I 2009, 3, 15 – entry into force 01.02.2009]

(9) The supplementary feeding of wild boar is prohibited at the protection site of capercaillie. [RT I 2007, 25, 131 – entry into force 01.04.2007]

### **§ 51. Protection of spawning area**

(1) On bodies of water approved as spawning areas or habitats of salmon, brown trout, salmon trout or grayling, or sections of such bodies of water, it is prohibited to reconstruct existing dams to the extent which would raise the level of water, to build new dams and to alter the natural bed or water regime of the body of water. [RT I 2007, 25, 131 – entry into force 01.04.2007]

(1<sup>1</sup>) It is permitted to alter the water regime and level of water upon reconstruction of dams on bodies of water or sections of such bodies of water specified in subsection 1 of this section only if the spawning possibilities of fish are improved thereby. [RT I 2007, 25, 131 – entry into force 01.04.2007]

(2) The list of spawning areas or habitats of salmon, brown trout, salmon trout or grayling will be established by a regulation of the minister in charge of the policy sector.

### **§ 51<sup>1</sup>. Protection of hibernation site of brown bear**

(1) The hibernation site of brown bear is a site where a bear hibernates and the surrounding area within the radius of 300 meters. [RT I 2007, 25, 131 – entry into force 01.04.2007]

(2) A person who finds a hibernation site is required to inform the Environmental Board within three working days of the finding and the Board will, as soon as possible, suspend activities permitted by a forest notification and activities determined by a permit in proof of the right to use the hunting district at the hibernation site of brown bear until the end of the period of hibernation. [RT I 2009, 3, 15 – entry into force 01.02.2009]

(3) Activities determined by a permit in proof of the right to use a hunting district and activities related to forest management and use are prohibited at the hibernation site of brown bear. [RT I 2007, 25, 131 – entry into force 01.04.2007]

(4) The protection regime for the hibernation site of brown bear is valid as of finding of the hibernation site until 15 April of the same period of hibernation. [RT I 2007, 25, 131 – entry into force 01.04.2007]

### **§ 51<sup>2</sup>. Requirements of European Union for protection of species**

It is prohibited to destroy and harm clearly delineated breeding sites and resting places of the specimens of the species specified in point a of Annex IV to Council Directive 92/43/EEC. [RT I, 05.04.2016, 2 – entry into force 15.04.2016]

### **§ 52. Protection of migratory routes**

(1) Upon construction work, living and moving conditions that are as safe as possible will be ensured to the specimens of protected species.

(2) In order to protect the migratory routes of animals, the minister in charge of the policy sector has the right to establish temporary restrictions of traffic on the proposal of the minister in charge of the policy sector. [RT I, 29.06.2014, 109 – entry into force 01.07.2014, based on subsection 4 of § 107<sup>3</sup> of the Government of the Republic Act the words "Minister of Economic Affairs and Communications" at the beginning of the sentence and "Minister of the Environment" in the middle of the sentence have been replaced with words "minister in charge of the policy sector".]

### **§ 53. Disclosure of information**

(1) It is prohibited to disclose the specific location of the habitats of specimens of species in the protected categories I and II in the media.

(2) The specific location of a species protection site will not be disclosed in the notice published in the *Riigi Teataja* concerning the placing under protection of the species protection site.

#### **§ 54. Improvement of living conditions of species**

The intended improvement of the living conditions of specimens of protected species is permitted only based on the action plan specified in § 49 of this Act or based on the management plan specified in § 25 of this Act.

#### **§ 55. Killing, damaging or disturbing specimens**

(1) Intentional killing of a specimen of a protected species, except for the purposes of euthanasia, is prohibited. [RT I 2007, 25, 131 – entry into force 01.04.2007]

(2) Killing of a specimen of an animal species in the class *Mammalia* in the protected category I is permitted:

- 1) if the animal directly endangers the life or health of a person and the attack cannot be prevented or controlled in any other manner;
- 2) in the interests of public safety.

(3) Killing of a specimen of an animal species in the protected category II or III is permitted:

- 1) if the animal directly endangers the life or health of a person and the attack cannot be prevented or controlled in any other manner;
- 2) in the interests of public safety;
- 3) in the interests of air safety;
- 4) if it is necessary to prevent damage to important agricultural crops or farm animals, fish farming or other important assets;
- 5) educational or research purposes.

(3<sup>1</sup>) The minister in charge of the policy sector will, by a regulation, establish a list of such animal species the killing of the live specimens of which is permitted in accordance with Annexes A to D of Council Regulation No 338/97/EC on the protection of species of wild fauna and flora by regulating trade therein (OJ L 061, 03.03.1997, pp. 1-69). [RT I 2008, 34, 211 – entry into force 01.08.2008]

(4) In the event specified in clause 1 of subsection 3 of this section, the Environmental Board will be informed in writing of the killing of an animal within one working day. [RT I, 10.07.2020, 2 – entry into force 01.01.2021]

(5) In the events specified in subsection 1, clause 2 of subsection 2 and clauses 2–5 of subsection 3 of this section, an animal will be killed based on a permit issued by the Environmental Board. [RT I 2009, 3, 15 – entry into force 01.02.2009]

(5<sup>1</sup>) A permit specified in subsection 5 and clauses 1 and 2 of subsection 6<sup>1</sup> of this section may be issued if no other alternative measures which do less harm to the fauna and birds exist to resolve the situation. The permit must set out the following:

- 1) the species and specimens regarding which the permit is issued;
- 2) the permitted devices, equipment or methods;
- 3) the conditions of danger and risk under which and the period during which such activities may be carried out;
- 4) the recipient of the permit;
- 5) the means of observation or other means for the monitoring and verification of results.

[RT I 2008, 34, 211 – entry into force 01.08.2008]

(6) It is prohibited to capture or intentionally disturb a specimen of a protected animal species during the breeding, brood rearing, wintering or migration season, except in the events specified in subsections 4 and 5 of § 58 and § 58<sup>2</sup> of this Act. [RT I, 08.07.2014, 3 – entry into force 01.08.2014]

(6<sup>1</sup>) In the event of wild birds, it is prohibited to:

- 1) intentionally destroy or damage their nests and eggs or eliminate their nests, except in the events provided for in clauses 2–5 of subsection 3 of this section on the basis of a permit issued by the Environmental Board; [RT I 2009, 3, 15 – entry into force 01.02.2009]
- 2) to intentionally disturb them during nesting and brood rearing, except in the event specified in clause 1 of subsection 3 of this section when the Environmental Board must be notified of disturbing not later than one working day after the disturbing, except in the events provided for in clauses 2–5 of subsection 3 of this section on the basis of a permit issued by the Environmental Board and except in the event provided for in subsection 7 of § 58 of this Act. [RT I 2009, 3, 15 – entry into force 01.02.2009]

(7) The harming of plants and fungi included in protected categories I and II, including gathering or destroying thereof, is prohibited. Implementation of the measures of the action plan specified in § 49 of this Act is not deemed as deliberating harming and, an activity in populations of little representativity of plants and fungi of protected category II with the consent of the Environmental Board does not need to be deemed as deliberate harming.

[RT I, 05.04.2016, 2 – entry into force 15.04.2016]

(8) It is prohibited to destroy or gather from the nature the wild plants, fungi and invertebrate animals in the protected category III to the extent that is likely to pose a danger to the preservation of the species in the habitat.

(9) The list of animal species in the protected category III, specimens of which may be killed outside of areas delimited for the purpose of protection of the species, will be established by a regulation of the minister in charge of the policy sector.

(10) Specimens of animal species which do not belong to a protected species or wild game and which cause damage to property or health such as rodents, insects, snails or mites may be killed for property or health protection purposes.

#### **§ 56. Transactions with specimens of species**

[RT I 2008, 34, 211 – entry into force 01.08.2008]

(1) For the purposes of this Act, a transaction with a specimen of a species means purchase, bidding, acquisition with the aim to receive income, sale, keeping at a place of sale, storage facilities or warehouses of the place of sale and other premises linked to the place of sale, transportation with the aim to sell, offer to sell or any other manner of use for the purposes of receiving income.

[RT I 2008, 34, 211 – entry into force 01.08.2008]

(2) Transactions with specimens of species in the protected categories I, II and III, except their brood reared in artificial conditions, are prohibited.

(2<sup>1</sup>) Transactions with the following specimens, except for their offspring born in artificial conditions or if the specimens have been killed or removed from the wild in a legal manner, are prohibited:

- 1) wild bird species and their clearly distinguishable body parts or products manufactured therefrom;
- 2) living or dead specimens of the fauna specified in point a of Annex IX and of the flora specified in point b of Annex IV to Council Directive 92/43/EEC, and their clearly distinguishable body parts or products manufactured therefrom.

[RT I, 05.04.2016, 2 – entry into force 15.04.2016]

(3) [Repealed – RT I, 27.05.2022, 1 – entry into force 06.06.2022]

(4) [Repealed – RT I, 27.05.2022, 1 – entry into force 06.06.2022]

(5) The seller must issue a document certifying origin regarding specimens of species entered in Annexes A and B to Council Regulation (EC) No 338/97, except in the event of sale of foodstuffs, cosmetics products and medicinal products, and the document must set out the following:

[RT I, 18.04.2013, 1 – entry into force 01.05.2013]

- 1) the scientific name of the species;
- 2) proof of the legal origin of the specimen (wild, artificially propagated or captive-bred etc.);
- 3) in the event of specimens imported into the European Union, the special permit in accordance with the specified Regulation;
- 4) in the event of the live specimens of animal species, information regarding the previous owner and information enabling identification (marking, photo, description etc.).

[RT I 2007, 25, 131 – entry into force 01.04.2007]

(6) Transactions with seal products that do not comply with the conditions established in Regulation (EC) No 1007/2009 of the European Parliament and of the Council on trade in seal products (OJ L 286, 31.10.2009, pp. 36-39) and in Commission Regulation (EU) No 737/2010 laying down detailed rules for the implementation of Regulation (EC) No 1007/2009 of the European Parliament and of the Council on trade in seal products (OJ L 216, 17.08.2010, pp. 1-10) are prohibited.

[RT I, 18.04.2013, 1 – entry into force 01.05.2013]

#### **§ 57. Non-native species**

(1) It is prohibited to introduce live specimens of non-native species in the wild, and to plant or sow non-native plants in the wild, except for the planting and sowing of alien tree species the cultivation of which as forest trees is permitted in accordance with the Forest Act.

[RT I 2007, 25, 131 – entry into force 01.04.2007]

(2) A list of non-native species likely to disrupt natural balance, live specimens of which will not be brought into Estonia and transactions with live specimens of which will not be conducted, will be established by a regulation of the minister in charge of the policy sector.

[RT I 2008, 34, 211 – entry into force 01.08.2008]

(3) Controlling the abundance of a non-native species accidentally released into the wild will be organised by the Environmental Board.

[RT I 2009, 3, 15 – entry into force 01.02.2009]

(4) Specimens of non-native species kept in artificial conditions may be relocated for keeping in artificial conditions in another location only with the permission of the Environmental Board. The restrictions do not apply to household pets within the meaning of subsection 3 of § 2 of the Animal Protection Act.

[RT I 2009, 3, 15 – entry into force 01.02.2009]

(5) It is prohibited to rear specimens of non-native species which are likely to disrupt natural balance in artificial conditions or conduct transactions with the live specimens of such species, except in events which can be justified from a scientific point of view with the permission of the Environmental Board.

[RT I 2009, 3, 15 – entry into force 01.02.2009]

(6) [Repealed - RT I, 16.06.2021, 1 - entry into force 01.01.2026]

(7) [Repealed - RT I, 16.06.2021, 1 - entry into force 01.01.2026]

(8) The procedure for the exchange of information related to the introduction of specimens of the non-native bird species in the wild and for consultations with the European Commission will be established by a regulation of the minister in charge of the policy sector.

[RT I 2008, 34, 211 – entry into force 01.08.2008]

(9) The competent authority specified in Article 5 of Council Regulation (EC) No 708/2007 concerning use of alien and locally absent species in aquaculture (OJ L 168, 28.06.2007, pp. 1-17) is the Environmental Board.

[RT I, 18.04.2013, 1 – entry into force 01.05.2013]

(10) Steps taken with non-native species, which do not comply with the requirements established in Regulation (EC) No 1143/2014 of the European Parliament and of the Council on the prevention and management of the introduction and spread of invasive alien species (OJ L 317, 04.11.2014, pp. 35–55), are prohibited.

[RT I, 05.04.2016, 2 – entry into force 15.04.2016]

(11) The Environmental Board is the competent authority specified in Articles 8(2) and (5) of Regulation (EC) No 1143/2014 of the European Parliament and of the Council.

[RT I, 05.04.2016, 2 – entry into force 15.04.2016]

#### **§ 57<sup>1</sup>. Object of inspection of farm activity licence**

[Repealed - RT I, 16.06.2021, 1 - entry into force 01.01.2026]

#### **§ 57<sup>2</sup>. Requirements for keeping minks and raccoon dogs in artificial conditions and procedure for granting farm activity licence**

[Repealed - RT I, 16.06.2021, 1 - entry into force 01.01.2026]

#### **§ 58. Introduction to and removal from wild of native species**

(1) It is prohibited to release live specimens of native species brought in from other countries in the wild, except in the event of scientifically justified reintroduction with the permission of the Environmental Board.

[RT I 2009, 3, 15 – entry into force 01.02.2009]

(2) Animals of native species may be relocated with the permission of the Environmental Board.

[RT I 2009, 3, 15 – entry into force 01.02.2009]

(2<sup>1</sup>) Animals of native species may be removed from the wild:

- 1) for treating an injury or illness and for raising an abandoned young animal;
- 2) for establishing or supplementing collections of animals for research, training or commercial purposes;
- 3) for supplementing the local population;
- 4) for establishment or supplementing of animal farms for commercial purposes.

[RT I, 16.05.2013, 2 – entry into force 01.06.2013]

(2<sup>2</sup>) In the events specified in clause 1 of subsection 2<sup>1</sup> of this section, an animal may be removed from the wild without permission by a person acting in official capacity. If the manner of removal of an animal from the wild differs from the manners permitted in the Hunting Act, authorisation will be requested from the Environmental Board.

[RT I, 16.05.2013, 2 – entry into force 01.06.2013]

(2<sup>3</sup>) The taking of wild game to an artificial environment will be coordinated with the Agriculture and Food Board.  
[RT I, 01.07.2020, 1 – entry into force 01.01.2021]

(2<sup>4</sup>) For the purposes specified in clauses 3 and 4 of subsection 2<sup>1</sup> of this section, a wild game may be removed from the wild if the place of keeping the wild game in the artificial environment has been registered with the Environmental Board.  
[RT I, 16.05.2013, 2 – entry into force 01.06.2013]

(2<sup>5</sup>) The procedure for submission, review and registration of application for keeping wild game in an artificial environment will be established by a regulation of the minister in charge of the policy sector.  
[RT I, 16.05.2013, 2 – entry into force 01.06.2013]

(2<sup>6</sup>) The registration of a place for keeping wild game in an artificial environment will be refused if it does not prevent the release of the wild game into the wild or the spread of an illness or does not comply with the requirements of the Animal Protection Act.  
[RT I, 16.05.2013, 2 – entry into force 01.06.2013]

(3) Release to the wild of specimens of native species of animals kept in an artificial environment will be carried out only on the basis of the action plan specified in § 49 of this Act, except in the event of release to the wild of specimens kept in an artificial environment for the purpose of treatment of injuries or restoration of the vitality thereof.

(4) Removal (incl. keeping and breeding) of specimens of protected species, including of the fauna specified in point a of Annex IX and of the flora specified in point b of Annex IV to Council Directive 92/43/EEC is prohibited, except for treatment of injuries and in the events specified in subsection 5 of this section.  
[RT I, 05.04.2016, 2 – entry into force 15.04.2016]

(5) Specimens of protected species may be removed from the wild for educational, medicinal or research purposes, or for reintroduction thereof with the permission of the Environmental Board, or for relocation thereof only if this does not compromise the favourable conservation status of the species.  
[RT I 2009, 3, 15 – entry into force 01.02.2009]

(6) Relocation of protected species will be carried out in accordance with the procedure established by the Government of the Republic.

(7) [Repealed – RT I, 16.05.2013, 2 – entry into force 01.06.2013]

(8) With the aim to regulate the abundance of a species, the Environmental Board may permit the gathering and damaging of eggs of birds, except for eggs of protected species of birds, or the shooting or capturing of birds included in the list of wild game throughout the year, if this is necessary:

- 1) in the interests of public safety;
  - 2) in the interests of air safety;
  - 3) for prevention of damage to field crops, farm animals and fish farming, or to prevent other significant material damage;
  - 4) the conservation of wild flora and fauna and of natural habitats.
- [RT I 2007, 25, 131 – entry into force 01.04.2007]

### **§ 58<sup>1</sup>. Bat and bird ringing permit**

(1) A person holding a bat and bird ringing permit (hereinafter *permit*) may ring bats and birds. The ringer must have the permit with them during ringing.

(2) A person who is at least 16 years of age and licensed as a bird and/or bat ringer may apply for a ringing permit.

(3) A permit will be issued for up to ten years.

(4) A permit must contain at least the following information:

- 1) the name, personal identification code and address of the ringer;
- 2) the object to be ringed (species, group of species, age group);
- 3) the right to use capturing devices and the type of the used capturing devices;
- 4) the type of the ring (metal ring, coloured plastic ring, radio transmitter, microchip);
- 5) the beginning and end of the term of the permit.

(5) On the basis of an application, the issuer of permits may extend the validity of the permit for a further ten years if the ringer:

- 1) is a licensed bird and/or bat ringer;
- 2) has performed ringing of specimens of species and submitted reports as required.

(6) The issuer of permits must issue the metal rings and coloured plastic rings necessary for ringing to the ringer free of charge.

(7) The ringer is required to submit reports on ringing to the issuer of permits.

(8) The requirements for the ringing of bats and birds and the procedure for the submission of reports will be established by a regulation of the minister in charge of the policy sector.

(9) The issuer of permits may refuse to issue a permit or to extend the term thereof if:

- 1) the applicant for the permit fails to comply with the requirements provided for in subsection 2 of this section or the licensing requirements for bird and/or bat ringers;
- 2) the applicant for the permit has submitted false information upon application for the permit;
- 3) the applicant for the permit has failed to submit the reports specified in subsection 8 of this section for two consecutive terms for submission;
- 4) a penalty for misdemeanour or a criminal penalty has been imposed on the applicant for the permit for the commission of a prohibited act respect of an animal and the penalty is in force.

(10) The procedure for application for bat and bird ringing permits, for the evaluation of applicants, and the procedure for the issue and extension of permits and the standard format of permits will be established by a regulation of the minister in charge of the policy sector. A person evaluated must:

- 1) be able to determine species which are to be ringed, their age and gender;
- 2) be familiar with the marking techniques and the capturing devices applied for;
- 3) know how to handle the captured specimens without causing them injury or death;
- 4) know how to record information and prepare reports;
- 5) be familiar with the safety requirements upon ringing specimens;
- 6) be familiar with the legislation concerning nature conservation currently in force.

(11) It is prohibited to transfer a licence to another person.

(12) The issuer of permits may revoke a permit if the ringer:

- 1) has submitted false information upon application for the permit;
- 2) no longer complies with the licensing requirements for bird and/or bat ringers;
- 3) materially or repeatedly violates the requirements for ringing;
- 4) submits an application to revoke the permit.

(13) Violation of the requirements for ringing are deemed to be material if the death of an animal arising from the violation may bring about damage to the environment in the amount of at least 32 euros.

[RT I 2010, 22, 108 – entry into force 01.01.2011]

(14) In the event of revocation of a permit on the bases provided for in clause 1 or 3 of subsection 12 of this section, a new permit may be issued to the applicant at the earliest five years as of the date on which the permit was revoked.

(15) The copy of the decision on the revocation of the permit will be delivered to the ringer against a signature or delivered by registered letter with advice of delivery not later than on the next working day as of the decision being made.

[RT I 2008, 34, 211 – entry into force 01.08.2008]

## **§ 58<sup>2</sup>. Tracking, killing, catching and marking animals for research purposes**

(1) Permission to track, kill, catch or mark an individual of an animal species for research purposes will be granted by the Environmental Board.

(2) The marking of an individual of an animal species for the purposes of this Act means the catching of the animal and provision of the animal with a mark, including a radio transmitter or a chip, for research purposes.

[RT I, 16.05.2013, 2 – entry into force 01.06.2013]

## **§ 59. Regulation of trans-national trade in endangered species of wild fauna and flora**

(1) Transactions and acts (import, export, re-exportation, transit, acquisition with the objective to receive income, demonstration to the public, exploitation, sale, offer for sale, keeping for sale and transportation for sale) performed with the species set out in the Annexes A to D of Council Regulation 338/97/EC on the protection of species of wild fauna and flora by regulating trade therein are permitted under the conditions provided by the Regulation.

(2) The Ministry of the Environment has the competence of the management authority provided by the Regulation specified in subsection 1 of this section.

(3) The minister in charge of the policy sector will:

- 1) appoint the scientific authority provided by the Regulation specified in subsection 1 of this section;
- 2) establish, where necessary, stricter measures with respect to the areas specified in articles 3 and 8 of the Regulation specified in subsection 1 of this section.

(4) The Government of the Republic will by a regulation specify the customs authorities where the conformity of the export and import of specimens of the species entered in the Annexes of the regulation specified in subsection 1 of this section is carried out, and appoint the customs authorities adapted to handle live specimens.  
[RT I, 08.07.2014, 3 – entry into force 01.08.2014]

### **§ 59<sup>1</sup>. Caviar handling**

(1) For the purposes of this Act ‘caviar handling’ means the (re)packaging or processing of caviar for export, re-export or intra-community trade.

(2) A caviar handler must meet the following criteria:

- 1) the person has been approved as a food business operator;
- 2) the person keeps sufficient records of imported, exported, re-exported, processed-on-site, stored or marketed caviar and, using the prescribed report form, submits annual reports on the quantity, origin and labelling of the imported, exported, re-exported, processed-on-site, stored or marketed caviar;
- 3) the person labels packaged caviar, including repackaged caviar and processed caviar packaging in accordance with the established procedure;
- 4) the legal person has appointed a person who is liable for the processing, packaging and marketing of caviar in the enterprise;
- 5) the person has not violated the requirements for trading in endangered species in the last three years.

(3) To handle caviar, a person must submit an notice of economic activity.

(4) The procedure for labelling caviar packaging and the form of the report submitted by a caviar handler will be established by a regulation of the minister in charge of the policy sector.  
[RT I, 29.06.2014, 1 – entry into force 01.07.2014]

### **§ 60. Protection of property against animals**

(1) All means of protection which do not cause the injury or death of an animal and which are safe for persons may be used in order to protect property against animals.

(2) Where the possessor of property has not applied measures to protect the property against possible animal attacks, the possessor has no right to kill an animal, obtain permission for killing an animal or receive compensation for damage caused by an animal.

### **§ 61. Compensation of damage caused by animals and payment of compensation**

(1) Damages caused by grey seals, marbled seals, brown bears, wolves, lynxes, European minks, white-tailed eagles, ospreys and migrating cranes, swans, geese and barnacle geese, and the costs of application of measures to prevent damages will be compensated in part.  
[RT I, 08.07.2014, 3 – entry into force 01.08.2014]

(2) The methodology for assessment of the damages specified in subsection 1 of this section, the specific extent for compensation of damages, the procedure for compensation, and the specific extent of and procedure for compensating the costs of application of preventive measures will be established by a regulation of the minister in charge of the policy sector.

(3) The damages specified in subsection 1 of this section will be compensated according to the application of the injured party to the following extent:

- 1) damage caused by grey seals or marbled seals to traps to the extent of the costs needed to replace the traps on the basis of a cost calculation but not exceeding 30 per cent of the sales price of a new equivalent trap in the year during which damage was caused;
- 2) damage caused by grey seals and marbled seals to gillnets and entangling nets to the extent of 70 per cent of the costs needed to replace the nets;
- 3) damage caused by seals to the extent of up to 320 euros per fishing gear set out in the fishing permit annually;

[RT I 2010, 22, 108 – entry into force 01.01.2011]

- 4) damage caused by migrating cranes, swans, geese and barnacle geese to the extent of 3200 euros to one person per one harvesting season;

[RT I, 08.07.2014, 3 – entry into force 01.08.2014]

- 5) damage caused by wolves, lynxes and brown bears to the extent of 100 per cent after deduction of the excess of the owner which may amount to 10–50 per cent of the total amount of damage;

[RT I, 22.12.2023, 3 – entry into force 01.01.2024]

- 6) damage caused by white-tailed eagles or ospreys to a fish farm according to the nesting success of the eagles and ospreys feeding in the fish farm on the basis of an expert assessment;

- 7) damage caused by European minks to the extent of 100 per cent on the basis of an expert assessment.

[RT I 2007, 25, 131 – entry into force 01.04.2007]

(3<sup>1</sup>) The damage specified in subsection 1 of this section is not compensated for if no funds have been allocated in the state budget for the current year to compensate for the damage caused by the animal which ranks lower in the priority list of applications.

[RT I, 22.12.2023, 3 – entry into force 01.01.2024]

(4) Reasonable expenses incurred for the damage prevention measures specified in subsection 1 of this section are reimbursed up to a maximum of 50 per cent of the amount, but the amount paid to one person shall not exceed 9600 euros per financial year.

[RT I, 22.12.2023, 3 – entry into force 01.01.2024]

(5) Compensation for any damage caused by animals will be organised by the Environmental Board.

[RT I 2009, 3, 15 – entry into force 01.02.2009]

#### **§ 62. Animals in helpless state**

(1) Removal of the circumstances which caused the helpless state of an animal and the transport of an animal in a helpless state or an injured animal and release of an animal back to the wild will be organised by the Rescue Board or the Environmental Board.

[RT I, 29.12.2011, 1 – entry into force 01.01.2012]

(2) Restoration of the vitality of a sick or injured animal will be organised by the Environmental Board.

[RT I 2009, 3, 15 – entry into force 01.02.2009]

#### **§ 63. Protected animal found dead**

(1) The person who finds a dead specimen of an animal species included in the protected category I or II must immediately inform the Environmental Board of the finding.

(2) The person who finds a dead specimen of an animal species included in the protected category I or II may keep the specimen in their possession with the permission of the Environmental Board.

(3) The Environmental Board may decline to grant permission if the specimen can be used for research or educational purposes.

(4) If the Environmental Board refuses to grant permission to the person who finds a dead specimen of an animal species included in the protected category I or II to keep the specimen in their possession or the person does not wish to take possession of the specimen, the specimen will be forwarded to the Environmental Board who organises the use of the specimen for scientific or educational purposes or destruction of the specimen if its use is not justified.

[RT I 2009, 3, 15 – entry into force 01.02.2009]

#### **§ 63<sup>1</sup>. Authority verifying and controlling trade in seal products**

The competent authority specified in Article 9(1) of Commission Regulation (EU) No 737/2010 is the Ministry of the Environment.

[RT I, 18.04.2013, 1 – entry into force 01.05.2013]

## **Chapter 9 FOSSILS AND NATURAL MONUMENTS**

[RT I, 08.07.2014, 3 - entry into force 01.08.2014]

#### **§ 64. Principles of protection of fossils**

[RT I, 08.07.2014, 3 – entry into force 01.08.2014]

(1) Fossils that are present in few places of finding and have a high scientific or commercial value will be included in the protected category I.

(2) The following will be included in the protected category II:

- 1) fossils whose places of finding are likely to be harmed by extensive collection;
- 2) fossils that are rarely found as whole specimens.

[RT I, 08.07.2014, 3 – entry into force 01.08.2014]

## **§ 65. Protection of fossils**

[RT I, 08.07.2014, 3 – entry into force 01.08.2014]

(1) Protected areas will be established for the protection of the most representative places of finding of a protected fossil or the places of finding will be placed under protection as protected natural monuments.

(2) At a natural place of finding of a protected fossil it is prohibited to engage in an activity that may destroy or harm the place of finding.

(3) The Environmental Board must be informed of the finding of places of finding of a protected fossil.

(4) A fossil of the protected category I may be removed from the natural state solely for a scientific purpose on the basis of a permit of the Environmental Board.

(5) The grant of a permit specified in subsection 4 of this section may be refused if:

1) the applicant does not ensure the permanent preservation of the fossil in an Estonian state or public museum or research institution;

2) the applicant has previously violated the requirements established by this Act for the protection of fossils and a conviction for a related offence has entered into force with regard to the applicant;

3) the applicant has knowingly given false information upon applying for the permit.

(6) Transactions with protected fossils may be carried out or fossils may be taken out of the country only on the basis of a permit granted by the Environmental Board. The permit is granted on the basis of an opinion of a palaeontology expert.

(7) The grant of a permit specified in subsection 6 of this section may be refused if:

1) the fossil is extraordinary and necessary for the Estonian research;

2) the fossil belongs to category I and is to be taken out of the country for a purpose other than research;

3) the fossil belongs to category I and the purpose of the contemplated transaction is not research;

4) the species has not been recorded to date;

5) the applicant has previously violated the requirements established by this Act for the protection of fossils and a conviction for a related offence has entered into force with regard to the applicant;

6) the applicant has knowingly given false information upon applying for the permit.

(8) It is prohibited to disclose the location of the finding place of a protected fossil in the media if it may put the finding place at risk.

[RT I, 08.07.2014, 3 – entry into force 01.08.2014]

## **§ 66. Protection of fossil of protected category I**

[Repealed – RT I, 08.07.2014, 3 – entry into force 01.08.2014]

## **§ 67. Protection of fossil of protected category II**

[Repealed – RT I, 08.07.2014, 3 – entry into force 01.08.2014]

## **§ 68. Protection of natural monuments**

(1) Upon entry into force of the decision to place a natural monument under protection, a limited management zone with the radius of 50 meters is formed around the object unless a smaller radius for the limited management zone is established by the decision to place the object under protection.

(2) The minister in charge of the policy sector has the right to establish protection rules for natural monuments or groups of natural monuments, which set out the extent to which the restrictions and requirements provided in § 31 of this Act apply to the areas designated for the protection of the natural objects.

(3) Upon entry into force of the decision to place a group of natural monuments under protection, a limited management zone with the width of 50 meters is formed around the objects unless a smaller radius for the limited management zone is established by the decision to place the monument under protection. The inner boundary of the limited management zone surrounding a group of natural monuments is an imaginary line connecting the outer limits of the monuments facing the edge of the group whereas the land under the group of monuments is also included in the limited management zone.

(4) Any activity in conflict with the protection rules of a protected natural monument placed as well as any activity likely to damage the state or characteristic features of the protected object are prohibited unless such activity is required for application of measures taken to preserve the object or prevent damage caused by the object.

# **Chapter 9<sup>1</sup>**

# IMPLEMENTATION OF NAGOYA PROTOCOL ON ACCESS TO GENETIC RESOURCES AND THE FAIR AND EQUITABLE SHARING OF BENEFITS ARISING FROM THEIR UTILIZATION TO THE CONVENTION ON BIOLOGICAL DIVERSITY

[RT I, 05.07.2017, 2 - entry into force 15.07.2017]

## § 68<sup>1</sup>. Implementation of Nagoya Protocol on Access to Genetic Resources and the Fair and Equitable Sharing of Benefits Arising from their Utilization to the Convention on Biological Diversity

Upon implementation of the Nagoya Protocol on Access to Genetic Resources and the Fair and Equitable Sharing of Benefits Arising from their Utilization to the Convention on Biological Diversity, Regulation (EU) No 511/2014 of the European Parliament and of the Council on compliance measures for users from the Nagoya Protocol on Access to Genetic Resources and the Fair and Equitable Sharing of Benefits Arising from their Utilization in the Union (OJ L 150, 20.05.2014, pp.59–71) must be followed.

[RT I, 05.07.2017, 2 – entry into force 15.07.2017]

## § 68<sup>2</sup>. Competent authorities

The competent authorities specified in Article 6(1) of Regulation (EU) No 511/2014 of the European Parliament and of the Council are the Ministry of Education and Research, the Ministry of the Environment and the Ministry of Rural Affairs.

[RT I, 05.07.2017, 2 – entry into force 15.07.2017]

## § 68<sup>3</sup>. Implementation of Article 5 of Regulation (EU) No 511/2014 of European Parliament and of Council

The implementation of Article 5 of Regulation (EU) No 511/2014 of the European Parliament and of the Council, which sets out the inclusion of collections in the register of collections within the Union, is arranged by:

- 1) [Repealed - RT I, 12.07.2025, 1 - entry into force 01.10.2025]
- 2) the Ministry of the Environment with regard to municipal collections, collections of legal persons in public law, and private collections;
- 3) the Ministry of Rural Affairs with regard to agricultural collections.

[RT I, 05.07.2017, 2 – entry into force 15.07.2017]

## Chapter 10 PROTECTION OF AREAS OF NATURA 2000 NETWORK OF EUROPEAN UNION

[RT I, 06.07.2023, 2 - entry into force 16.07.2023]

## § 69. Natura 2000 network of European Union and conservation objectives of its areas

[RT I, 06.07.2023, 2 – entry into force 16.07.2023]

(1) In Estonia, the Natura 2000 network of the European Union consists of:

1) areas hosting birds of which Estonia has informed the Commission in accordance with Directive 2009/147/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council;

[RT I, 05.04.2016, 2 – entry into force 15.04.2016]

2) areas which the Commission, in accordance with Council Directive 92/43/EEC, considers to be of common European importance.

[RT I, 05.04.2016, 2 – entry into force 15.04.2016]

(2) A Natura 2000 network area specified in clause 2 of subsection 1 of this section, which constitutes a protected area, limited-conservation area, species' protection site or individual protected natural object qualifies as a special area of conservation for the purposes of Council Directive 92/43/EEC.

[RT I, 05.04.2016, 2 – entry into force 15.04.2016]

(3) The conservation objective of the area specified in subsection 1 of this section (hereinafter *Natura 2000 area*) is determined based on the importance of the area in the preservation or restoration of the favourable

conservation status of the species of birds specified or migratory birds not specified in Annex I to Directive 2009/147/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council or of the natural or semi-natural types of habitats specified in Annex I or of the species specified in Annex II to Council Directive 92/43/EEC, and based on the need to achieve integrity of the Natura 2000 network and taking account of the danger of degradation and destruction of the area.

[RT I, 06.07.2023, 2 – entry into force 16.07.2023]

### **§ 69<sup>1</sup>. Protection of Natura 2000 area when permitting proposed activity and establishing strategic planning document**

(1) A proposed activity, including recurrent or continuous activity (hereinafter *proposed activity*) which, alone or in combination with other activities, does not exclude adverse effects on a Natura 2000 area on the basis of objective information, may be permitted and a strategic planning document within the meaning of § 31 of the Environmental Impact Assessment and Environmental Management System Act (hereinafter *strategic planning document*) may be adopted if it is clear that such activity and the implementation of the strategic planning document are permitted by the protection regime of the Natura 2000 area and do not adversely affect the integrity of that Natura 2000 area.

(2) Where a significant impact on a Natura 2000 area resulting from the implementation of the proposed activity or the strategic planning document cannot be excluded on the basis of objective information, the impact on a Natura 2000 area must be subject to an appropriate assessment (hereinafter *appropriate Natura assessment*) in accordance with the rules provided in this Chapter, unless the proposed activity or strategic planning document is directly related to or directly necessary for the management procedure of the area.

(3) If, despite the expected adverse impact on a Natura 2000 area resulting from the implementation of the proposed activity or the strategic planning document, the lack of alternative solutions makes that activity necessary for reasons of overriding public importance and exceptional urgency (hereinafter *Natura exception*), including those of a social or economic nature, and the adverse impact can be compensated for in accordance with § 70<sup>1</sup> of this Act, the activity may be permitted or the strategic planning document may be adopted with the consent of the Government of the Republic, which is formalised as an order.

(4) In the case specified in subsection 3 of this section, when an activity is permitted or a strategic planning document is adopted, the obligation to take compensatory measures must be imposed to ensure the overall coherence of the Natura 2000 network. The Ministry of Climate notifies the European Commission of the Natura exception implemented under subsection 3 of this section, the reasons for it and the adopted compensatory measures immediately after permitting an activity or adopting a strategic planning document. The proposed activity, including the activity proposed by the strategic planning document, must not commence until the compensatory measures have been taken.

(5) If a proposed activity or the implementation of a strategic planning document is expected to adversely impact a priority natural habitat type or priority species within the meaning of Council Directive 92/43/EEC present in a Natura 2000 area, the Government of the Republic may give the consent specified in subsection 3 of this section only if the proposed activity or the implementation of the strategic planning document is related to human health, the safety of the population or a significant beneficial impact on the state of the environment. For other reasons of overriding public importance and exceptional urgency, an activity may be permitted or a strategic planning document may be adopted only after obtaining the opinion of the European Commission. The proposed activity, including the activity proposed by the strategic planning document, must not commence until the compensatory measures have been taken.

(6) The Natura exception procedure provided in § 69<sup>7</sup> of this Act applies to the Natura exception provided in subsections 3 and 5 of this section.

(7) When permitting a proposed activity and when preparing and adopting a strategic planning document, the results of the Natura assessment must be adhered to.

(8) When an appropriate Natura assessment is initiated, the procedure for a permit for the proposed activity or the procedure for any other document on which such activity is based is extended, but not more than by the time required for the appropriate Natura assessment or, in the case of making a Natura exception, by the time required for the procedure.

(9) The procedural time limits provided in this Chapter may be extended in justified cases, such as the large volume of documents, the complexity of the proposed activity or strategic planning document, or difficulties in gathering information, by setting a new procedural time limit.

[RT I, 06.07.2023, 2 – entry into force 16.07.2023]

### **§ 69<sup>2</sup>. Necessity for appropriate Natura assessment and decision-maker**

(1) The necessity for an appropriate Natura assessment is assessed by the decision-maker. The decision-maker is the administrative body competent to permit the proposed activity, or the initiator of the preparation of a strategic planning document or, if the initiator and the organiser of the preparation of a strategic planning document are not the same person, the organiser of the preparation after the initiation of the preparation.

(2) The decision-maker makes a preliminary assessment of the necessity for an appropriate Natura assessment in accordance with the rules provided in § 69<sup>3</sup> of this Act, unless the absence of the necessity is obvious.  
[RT I, 06.07.2023, 2 – entry into force 16.07.2023]

### **§ 69<sup>3</sup>. Preliminary Natura assessment**

(1) When making a preliminary assessment, the decision-maker proceeds from the following information:

- 1) the characteristics (including conservation objectives) of the Natura 2000 area likely to be impacted;
- 2) whether the proposed activity is related to the management procedure;
- 3) the characteristics of the proposed activity;
- 4) the compliance of the proposed activity with the current plans;
- 5) other known activities with a significant impact in relation to the relevant Natura 2000 area;
- 6) the activities or circumstances that are expected to have an adverse impact, alone or in combination with other activities;
- 7) the impact on all Natura 2000 areas likely to be directly or indirectly impacted, taking into account their conservation objectives;
- 8) where justified, any other relevant information.

(2) Mitigation measures must not be taken into account in the preliminary assessment.

(3) A preliminary assessment includes, among others, the decision-maker's reasoned conclusion as to whether a significant impact on a Natura 2000 area is excluded on the basis of objective information.

(4) A preliminary assessment may be omitted and the initiation of an appropriate Natura assessment may be omitted if the potential impact of the proposed activity or the implementation of the strategic planning document on the Natura 2000 area has been previously assessed and the decision-maker has sufficient information, taking into account subsection 1 of § 69<sup>1</sup> of this Act.

(5) The decision-maker coordinates a preliminary assessment that no appropriate Natura assessment is necessary or the omission of providing a preliminary assessment as specified in subsection 4 of this section with the Environmental Board.

[RT I, 06.07.2023, 2 – entry into force 16.07.2023]

### **§ 69<sup>4</sup>. Initiation of appropriate Natura assessment**

(1) An appropriate Natura assessment is initiated by a reasoned decision of the decision-maker, taking into account the results of the preliminary assessment.

(2) The decision-maker makes a decision on whether to initiate an appropriate Natura assessment:

- 1) during the processing of the permit necessary for the proposed activity or another document on which such activity is based;
- 2) together with the decision to initiate the preparation of a strategic planning document or immediately during the preparation of it if the need arises.

(3) When initiating an appropriate Natura assessment or, if necessary, by a separate decision, the decision-maker, among others:

- 1) determines the assessment methodology and, where appropriate, the necessary studies;
- 2) appoints a person with specific expertise who prepares the assessment report (hereinafter *expert*), taking into account the requirements for the expert and, where appropriate, the proposal of the person interested in the proposed activity or the adoption of a strategic planning document;
- 3) determines other relevant guidance, including guidance on the involvement of the relevant authorities or on the collection of information necessary for the assessment.

(4) An appropriate Natura assessment initiated at the initiation or during the preparation of a strategic planning document is carried out at the same time as the preparation of the strategic planning document.

[RT I, 06.07.2023, 2 – entry into force 16.07.2023]

### **§ 69<sup>5</sup>. Natura assessment expert**

(1) For the purposes of this Chapter, expert means a person with specific expertise who has long-term experience in studying or assessing the impact on a protected species or habitat type of a Natura 2000 area and who is familiar with the principles of the Natura assessment procedure.

(2) In justified cases, a civil servant or employee of the decision-maker who meets the requirements of subsection 1 of this section may be appointed as an expert.

(3) The involvement of an expert is organised and the costs related thereto are covered by the person who has submitted the application which is the basis for initiating the appropriate Natura assessment or the person organising the preparation of the strategic planning document, unless otherwise provided by law.

(4) In the case provided in subsection 2 of this section, the costs of involving the expert are covered by the decision-maker.

[RT I, 06.07.2023, 2 – entry into force 16.07.2023]

### **§ 69<sup>6</sup>. Appropriate Natura assessment report**

(1) An appropriate Natura assessment assesses the impact of a proposed activity or the implementation of a strategic planning document on the species and habitat types serving as the conservation objective of the Natura 2000 area and the impact on the integrity of the area, taking also account of the activities taking place or planned outside the Natura 2000 area and the cumulative impact of the activities.

(2) As a result of an appropriate Natura assessment, the expert prepares a report which must contain at least the following information:

- 1) an outline of the proposed activity or strategic planning document;
- 2) an outline of the Natura 2000 area concerned, including the conservation objective of the area and an overview of the habitat types and species present on the area;
- 3) a clear assessment of the possibility of adverse impact on the integrity of the area due to the proposed activity or the implementation of the strategic planning document;
- 4) measures to mitigate the adverse impact specified in clause 3 of this subsection and an assessment of the efficiency of the measures;
- 5) an analysis of realistic alternatives;
- 6) an assessment of the initiation of the Natura exception procedure if adverse impact cannot be excluded by any of the realistic alternatives.

(3) The decision-maker forwards the appropriate Natura assessment report to the Environmental Board for approval. If the appropriate Natura assessment report contains the position specified in clause 6 of subsection 2 of this section, the decision-maker also forwards the report to the Ministry of Climate for approval.

(4) The Environmental Board and, where applicable, the Ministry of Climate approves or refuses to approve the appropriate Natura assessment report within 30 days of receipt of the report.

(5) The decision-maker verifies the compliance of the appropriate Natura assessment report with the requirements set out in subsection 2 of this section and its sufficiency to permit the proposed activity or to adopt the strategic planning document that served as the basis for initiating the appropriate Natura assessment.

(6) If the decision-maker determines that the appropriate Natura assessment report does not comply with the requirements provided in subsection 2 of this section or that the report is not sufficient to decide whether to permit the proposed activity or to adopt the strategic planning document on the basis of which the appropriate Natura assessment was initiated, the decision-maker sets a time limit for modifying the report.

(7) The decision-maker makes a decision on the compliance of the appropriate Natura assessment report within 30 days after receipt of the approval specified in subsection 4 or within the time limit set on the basis of subsection 6 of this section.

[RT I, 06.07.2023, 2 – entry into force 16.07.2023]

### **§ 69<sup>7</sup>. Procedure for granting Natura exception**

(1) Where the appropriate Natura assessment report shows that the proposed activity or the implementation of the strategic planning document is expected to have an adverse impact on the integrity of the Natura 2000 area, the decision-maker may, in the absence of alternative solutions and in the presence of overriding public importance and exceptional urgency, initiate a procedure for granting a Natura exception.

(2) When initiating a procedure for granting a Natura exception or, if necessary, by a separate decision, the decision-maker, among others:

- 1) determines the necessary studies, where relevant;
- 2) appoints an expert who prepares the assessment report, taking into account the requirements for the expert and, where appropriate, the proposal of the person interested in the proposed activity or the adoption of a strategic planning document;
- 3) determines other relevant guidance, including guidance on the involvement of the relevant authorities or on the collection of information necessary for the assessment.

(3) Before determining the circumstances specified in subsection 2 of this section, the decision-maker seeks the opinion of the relevant authorities.

(4) The expert prepares a report on granting a Natura exception which must contain at least the following information:

- 1) a description of the protected species and habitats of the area likely to be adversely impacted;
- 2) a description and extent of the adverse impact;

- 3) an analysis of other realistic alternatives and a reasoning for the lack of alternatives;
- 4) reasons of overriding public importance and exceptional urgency, including those of a social or economic nature, which outweigh the preservation of the integrity of the Natura 2000 area;
- 5) a description of the compensatory measures and an assessment of the efficiency of taking the measures.

(5) If, in the course of preparing the report on granting a Natura exception, it is concluded that there are no grounds for granting a Natura exception provided in subsection 3 or 5 of § 69<sup>1</sup> of this Act, the decision-maker terminates the procedure for granting a Natura exception.

(6) The decision-maker coordinates the report on granting a Natura exception with the Environmental Board and the Ministry of Climate and seeks the opinion of other relevant ministries. The Environmental Board and the Ministry of Climate approve or refuse to approve the report and other relevant ministries give their opinion within 30 days after receipt of the report.

(7) The decision-maker verifies the compliance of the report on granting a Natura exception with the requirements set out in subsection 4 of this section and the sufficiency of the report for the continuation of the procedure for granting a Natura exception.

(8) If the decision-maker establishes that the report on granting a Natura exception does not comply with the requirements set out in subsection 4 of this section or is not sufficient for the continuation of the procedure for granting a Natura exception, the decision-maker sets a time limit for supplementing the report.

(9) The decision-maker makes a decision on declaring the report on granting a Natura exception compliant with the requirements or a decision on terminating the procedure within 30 days after receipt of the approval specified in subsection 6 or within the time limit set on the basis of subsection 8 of this section.

(10) The decision-maker submits the report on granting a Natura exception that has been declared compliant with the requirements to the Ministry of Climate for obtaining the consent of the Government of the Republic provided in subsection 3 or 5 of § 69<sup>1</sup> of this Act or for seeking the opinion of the European Commission.

(11) The procedure for a Natura exception ends upon the receipt of the consent provided in subsection 3 or 5 of § 69<sup>1</sup> of this Act or upon the receipt of the opinion of the European Commission.

[RT I, 06.07.2023, 2 – entry into force 16.07.2023]

### **§ 69<sup>8</sup>. Involvement of parties to proceedings and of public**

(1) The appropriate Natura assessment and the report on granting a Natura exception are made available to the parties to the proceedings and to the public for consultation and for the submission of proposals and objections, to the same extent and in accordance with the same procedure as applicable to the making available of the application for a permit for, or another document necessary for the implementation of, the proposed activity, or the strategic planning document or to the submission of proposals thereon and objections thereto.

(2) The decision-maker publishes immediately a notice on the results of the appropriate Natura assessment and of the procedure for a Natura exception on its website or on another website and in the official publication *Ametlikud Teadaanded*, indicating how the results of the appropriate Natura assessment and of the procedure for a Natura exception can be consulted and how to submit proposals or objections. Where the decision-maker considers it appropriate to publish the notice also in a newspaper, the costs of publication are covered by the applicant for the activity permit or the person interested in the adoption of the strategic planning document.

(3) The notice specified in subsection 2 of this section must contain at least:

- 1) the name of the decision-maker and the name and details of the contact person of the decision-maker;
- 2) a brief description and purposes of the proposed activity;
- 3) the Natura 2000 area and the conservation objectives affected;
- 4) information on how to consult the appropriate Natura assessment report and the report on the Natura exception and how to submit proposals or objections;
- 5) in the case of a notice of the procedure for a Natura exception, also an explanation of the absence of alternatives and possible reasons of overriding public importance and exceptional urgency for granting the exception.

(4) Any person has the right to submit to the decision-maker proposals on or objections to the results of the appropriate Natura assessment and the procedure for a Natura exception during the period of the public display or another period specified by the decision-maker.

(5) Upon initiation of the procedure for a Natura exception, the report of the appropriate assessment is made public together with the draft decision to initiate the procedure for a Natura exception.

(6) If the granting of a permit or another document authorising the proposed activity or the strategic planning document is not subject to an open procedure, the decision-maker sets a time limit for the submission of proposals or objections which may not be shorter than ten working days or, in justified cases, shorter than five working days from the publication of the notice specified in subsection 2 of this section.

(7) If the Natura assessment ends with a preliminary assessment or in the case provided for in subsection 4 of § 69<sup>3</sup> of this Act, the decision-maker publishes the document authorising the activity, together with the preliminary assessment or the reasons for not carrying out a preliminary assessment, on its website or public information system.

[RT I, 06.07.2023, 2 – entry into force 16.07.2023]

### **§ 69<sup>9</sup>. Specifications of Natura assessment upon issue of design criteria**

(1) An appropriate Natura assessment and, where applicable, the procedure for granting a Natura exception may be initiated upon the issue of design criteria and these are conducted at the same time as the preparation of the building design documentation.

(2) The report on the appropriate Natura assessment initiated upon the issue of design criteria is accompanied by the building design documentation.

[RT I, 06.07.2023, 2 – entry into force 16.07.2023]

### **§ 70. Objective of protection in Natura 2000 areas**

[Repealed – RT I, 06.07.2023, 2 – entry into force 16.07.2023]

### **§ 70<sup>1</sup>. Application of compensatory measures**

(1) If, according to the report on granting a Natura exception, the environmental impact assessment report or the strategic environmental assessment report, the proposed activity is likely to adversely impact a Natura 2000 area and if, due to the lack of alternative solutions, the proposed activity is still necessary for reasons of overriding public importance, including those of a social or economic nature, the obligation to take compensatory measures prior to the implementation of the activity must be imposed as the secondary condition of the permit when issuing the permit for the activity or must be prescribed in the strategic planning document.

[RT I, 06.07.2023, 2 – entry into force 16.07.2023]

(2) The compensatory measures the purpose of which is to ensure the general cohesion of the Natura 2000 network are the following:

- 1) restoration of habitats;
- 2) creation of new habitats;
- 3) increase in the quality of the existent habitats;
- 4) other measures which help avoid further decrease in cohesion within the Natura 2000 network.

(3) The compensatory measures must:

1) be aimed at adversely affected habitats and species and their extent must be in proportion to the damage caused;

[RT I, 08.07.2014, 3 – entry into force 01.08.2014]

2) be implemented as close as possible to the adversely affected habitat;

[RT I, 08.07.2014, 3 – entry into force 01.08.2014]

3) ensure that the objectives equal to those of including the adversely affected area among areas of the Natura 2000 network are attained;

[RT I, 08.07.2014, 3 – entry into force 01.08.2014]

## **Chapter 10<sup>1</sup>** **STATE AND ADMINISTRATIVE SUPERVISION**

[RT I, 05.07.2017, 2 - entry into force 15.07.2017]

### **§ 70<sup>2</sup>. State and administrative supervision**

[RT I, 05.07.2017, 2 – entry into force 15.07.2017]

(1) Supervision over the fulfilment of the requirements arising from this Act and legislation established on the basis thereof is exercised by the Environmental Board.

[RT I, 10.07.2020, 2 – entry into force 01.01.2021]

(1<sup>1</sup>) The Environmental Board exercises administrative supervision over compliance with the requirements provided for in Regulation (EU) No 511/2014 of the European Parliament and of the Council.

[RT I, 10.07.2020, 2 – entry into force 01.01.2021]

(2) State supervision over the fulfilment of the requirements arising from this Act in the events provided for in § 6 of the Environmental Supervision Act is exercised by the local authority or an agency of the local authority.  
[RT I, 13.03.2014, 4 – entry into force 01.07.2014]

### **§ 70<sup>3</sup>. Special measures of state supervision**

(1) To exercise the state supervision provided for in this Act, the Environmental Board may take special measures of state supervision provided for in §§ 30, 31, 32, 45, 46, 49, 50, 51, 52 and 53 of the Law Enforcement Act on the grounds and in accordance with the procedure established in the Law Enforcement Act.  
[RT I, 10.07.2020, 2 – entry into force 01.01.2021]

(2) Upon exercising the state supervision provided for in this Act, the local authority or an agency of the local authority may take the special measures of state supervision provided for in §§ 30, 49, 50, 51 and 52 of the Law Enforcement Act on the grounds and in accordance with the procedure established in the Law Enforcement Act.  
[RT I, 13.03.2014, 4 – entry into force 01.07.2014]

### **§ 70<sup>4</sup>. Specifics of state supervision**

(1) The Environmental Board may enter a marked immovable without the presence of the possessor or another entitled person if:

[RT I, 10.07.2020, 2 – entry into force 01.01.2021]

- 1) it is necessary for identifying or combating a serious threat and the involvement of these persons would result in a delay that would jeopardise the attainment of the purpose of the application of the measure, or
- 2) the purpose of entering the possession is to ensure access to another immovable or a water body.

(2) The Environmental Board does not have to afterwards inform the possessor about the entry to the possession on the ground provided for in clause 2 of subsection 1 of this section if no supervisory or offence proceedings were conducted after the entry.

[RT I, 10.07.2020, 2 – entry into force 01.01.2021]

(3) The Environmental Board is authorised to remove unauthorised construction works that have been erected in a protected area, limited-conservation area, limited management zone of an individual protected natural object, species' protection site or building exclusion zone of the shore or bank. To apply substitutional performance to the removal of constructions works, the Environmental Board must give prior notice thereof to the respective local authority.

[RT I, 10.07.2020, 2 – entry into force 01.01.2021]

(4) For the purpose of exercising supervision, an official of the Environmental Board may, using a vehicle, including an off-road vehicle or a water craft, enter a land or water area even if legislation prohibits entry to and movement in such area for environmental protection purposes.

[RT I, 10.07.2020, 2 – entry into force 01.01.2021]

### **§ 70<sup>5</sup>. Use of direct coercion**

The Environmental Board is authorised to use physical force on the grounds and in accordance with the procedure established in the Law Enforcement Act.

[RT I, 10.07.2020, 2 – entry into force 01.01.2021]

### **§ 70<sup>6</sup>. Rate of non-compliance levy**

The maximum rate of the non-compliance levy imposed in accordance with the Substitutional Performance and Non-Compliance Levies Act in the event of failure to comply with a prescription is 32 000 euros.

[RT I, 13.03.2014, 4 – entry into force 01.07.2014]

## **Chapter 11 LIABILITY**

### **§ 71. Violation of protection requirements of protected natural objects**

(1) The penalty for violation of requirements for use or protection of protected natural objects is a fine of up to 300 fine units or by detention.

(2) The penalty for the same act committed by a legal person is a fine of up to 3200 euros.

[RT I 2010, 22, 108 – entry into force 01.01.2011]

**§ 72. [Repealed – RT I 2007, 25, 131 – entry into force 01.04.2007]**

**§ 73. Unlawful cutting of trees in densely populated areas**

(1) The penalty for unlawful cutting of a tree within a densely populated area is a fine of up to 300 fine units or by detention.

(2) The penalty for the same act committed by a legal person is a fine of up to 3200 euros.

**§ 74. Violation of requirements for use or protection of shores and banks of bodies of water**

(1) The penalty for violation of the requirements set for the use or protection of a shore or bank of a body of water is a fine of up to 300 fine units or by detention.

(2) The penalty for the same act committed by a legal person is a fine of up to 3200 euros.  
[RT I 2010, 22, 108 – entry into force 01.01.2011]

**§ 74<sup>1</sup>. Violation of requirements for use of non-native species**

[RT I 2008, 34, 211 – entry into force 01.08.2008]

(1) The penalty for violation of the requirements for the use of non-native species is a fine of up to 300 fine units or by detention.

[RT I 2008, 34, 211 – entry into force 01.08.2008]

(2) The penalty for the same act committed by a legal person is a fine of up to 32 000 euros.  
[RT I, 05.04.2016, 2 – entry into force 15.04.2016]

**§ 74<sup>2</sup>. Violation of requirements for handling caviar**

[RT I, 29.06.2014, 1 – entry into force 01.07.2014]

(1) [Repealed – RT I, 29.06.2014, 1 – entry into force 01.07.2014]

(2) [Repealed – RT I, 29.06.2014, 1 – entry into force 01.07.2014]

(3) The penalty for failure to submit a report which complies with the requirements, delayed submission of such report or knowing submission of incorrect information is a fine of up to 200 fine units.

(4) The penalty for the same act committed by a legal person is a fine of up to 1600 euros.  
[RT I 2010, 22, 108 – entry into force 01.01.2011]

(5) The penalty for violation of the requirements for marking is a fine of up to 200 fine units.

(6) The penalty for the same act committed by a legal person is a fine of up to 1600 euros.  
[RT I 2010, 22, 108 – entry into force 01.01.2011]

**§ 74<sup>3</sup>. Violation of protection requirements of wild bird and bat species**

(1) The penalty for intentional destruction or damaging of the nests and eggs of wild birds or elimination of their nests is a fine of up to 150 fine units.

(2) The penalty for the same act committed by a legal person is a fine of up to 1300 euros.  
[RT I 2010, 22, 108 – entry into force 01.01.2011]

(3) The penalty for intentional disturbing of specimens of wild bird species and violation of the ringing requirements of birds and bats is a fine of up to 100 fine units.

(4) The penalty for the same act committed by a legal person is a fine of up to 640 euros.  
[RT I 2010, 22, 108 – entry into force 01.01.2011]

(5) The penalty for the sale, transportation for sale, keeping for the purpose of sale and offer for sale of the living or dead specimens of wild bird species and their clearly distinguishable body parts or products manufactured therefrom is a fine of up to 150 fine units.

(6) The penalty for the same act committed by a legal person is a fine of up to 1300 euros.  
[RT I 2010, 22, 108 – entry into force 01.01.2011]

**§ 74<sup>4</sup>. Violation of conservation requirements for flora and fauna specified in points a and b of Annex IV to Council Directive 92/43/EEC**

[RT I, 05.04.2016, 2 – entry into force 15.04.2016]

(1) The penalty for destruction and harming of the clearly delineated breeding sites and resting places of the specimens of the species specified in point a of Annex IV to Council Directive 92/43/EEC is a fine of up to 150 fine units.

[RT I, 05.04.2016, 2 – entry into force 15.04.2016]

(2) The penalty for the same act committed by a legal person is a fine of up to 1300 euros.

[RT I 2010, 22, 108 – entry into force 01.01.2011]

(3) The penalty for sale, transportation for sale, keeping for sale and offering for sale of the living or dead specimens of the fauna listed in point a or the flora listed in point b of Annex IV of Council Directive 92/43/EEC or their clearly distinguishable body parts or products manufactured therefrom is a fine of up to 150 fine units.

[RT I, 05.04.2016, 2 – entry into force 15.04.2016]

(4) The penalty for the same act committed by a legal person is a fine of up to 1300 euros.

[RT I 2010, 22, 108 – entry into force 01.01.2011]

(5) The penalty for violation of the requirements for removal of the specimens of the fauna listed in point a or the flora listed in point b of Annex IV to Council Directive 92/43/EEC from the wild (incl. keeping and breeding) is a fine of up to 150 fine units.

[RT I, 05.04.2016, 2 – entry into force 15.04.2016]

(6) The penalty for the same act committed by a legal person is a fine of up to 1300 euros.

[RT I 2010, 22, 108 – entry into force 01.01.2011]

**§ 74<sup>5</sup>. Violation of requirements for transactions involving seal products**

(1) The penalty for violation of the requirements for placing seal products on the market or importing seal products regulated in Article 3 of Regulation (EC) No 1007/2009 of the European Parliament and of the Council and in Commission Regulation (EU) No 737/2010 is a fine of up to 300 fine units or an arrest.

(2) The penalty for the same act committed by a legal person is a fine of up to 6400 euros. [RT I, 18.04.2013, 1 – entry into force 01.05.2013]

**§ 74<sup>6</sup>. Failure to comply with requirements of Regulation (EU) No 511/2014 of European Parliament and of Council**

(1) The penalty for failure to comply with the requirements established in Articles 4 and 7 of Regulation (EU) No 511/2014 of the European Parliament and of the Council is a fine of up to 300 fine units.

(2) The penalty for the same act committed by a legal person is a fine of up to 32 000 euros.

[RT I, 05.07.2017, 2 – entry into force 15.07.2017]

**§ 75. Proceedings**

(1) [Repealed – RT I, 05.04.2016, 2 – entry into force 15.04.2016]

(2) The Environmental Board is the extra-judicial body that conducts proceedings in the misdemeanour cases provided for in §§ 71, 73, 74, 74<sup>2</sup>–74<sup>4</sup> and 74<sup>6</sup> of this Act.

[RT I, 10.07.2020, 2 – entry into force 01.01.2021]

(3) The rural municipality or city government is the extra-judicial body that conducts proceedings in the misdemeanours provided for in §§ 71, 73 and 74 of this Act.

(4) The Environmental Board or the Tax and Customs Board is the extra-judicial body that conducts proceedings in the misdemeanours provided for in § 74<sup>1</sup> and § 74<sup>5</sup> of this Act.

[RT I, 10.07.2020, 2 – entry into force 01.01.2021]

## **§ 75<sup>1</sup>. Confiscation**

(1) The Environmental Board and the court may confiscate the means of committing the misdemeanours specified in §§ 71 and 74<sup>1</sup>–74<sup>6</sup> of this Act and apply confiscation towards the individual and thing constituting the direct object of the misdemeanour in accordance with § 83 of the Penal Code.  
[RT I, 10.07.2020, 2 – entry into force 01.01.2021]

(2) The Ministry of the Environment will decide whether the confiscated individual or thing that belongs to protected species or alien species or trading in which is regulated by the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora will be without charge handed over to the authority designated by the Ministry of the Environment or whether it will be destroyed in accordance with the procedure provided for in § 206 of the Code of Misdemeanour Procedure.  
[RT I, 18.04.2013, 1 – entry into force 01.05.2013]

## **§ 76. Receipt of fines**

If a rural municipality or city government is the extra-judicial body which has imposed a cautionary fine or a fine for misdemeanours provided for in §§ 71, 73 and 74 of this Act, the cautionary fine or the fine will be transferred into the budget of the local authority which made the decision.

## **§ 77. Collection of damages caused to natural objects**

(1) The procedure for and rates of compensating the damage caused to the environment by destroying or damaging protected natural objects, and specimens of protected species, or of other species of animals, except for wild game, and by introduction of live specimens of non-native species in the wild will be established by a regulation of the Government of the Republic based on the limits specified in subsections 4–10<sup>1</sup> of this section and taking account of the level of risk to the protected natural objects.  
[RT I 2007, 25, 131 – entry into force 01.04.2007]

(2) The Environmental Board has the right to file a claim with a court for collection of damages caused to a protected natural object or a specimen of a species.  
[RT I, 10.07.2020, 2 – entry into force 01.01.2021]

(3) The following is deemed to be causing damage to a protected natural object:

- 1) cutting or deforestation of woody vegetation within the boundaries of a protected natural object during a time when such activities are prohibited, or at a place where the type of cutting or deforestation is prohibited, or cutting or deforestation in violation of requirements set therefore;
- 2) unlawful damaging of the soil vegetation within the boundaries of a protected natural object;
- 3) causing the burning of woody or herbaceous vegetation within the boundaries of a protected natural object, except in the event of controlled burning of the landscape;  
[RT I, 30.12.2020, 2 – entry into force 01.03.2021]
- 4) unlawful littering or polluting the area of a protected natural object;
- 5) destroying or damaging a protected natural monument, a species protection site or finding place of protected fossils;  
[RT I 2007, 25, 131 – entry into force 01.04.2007]
- 6) unlawful destroying of a specimen of a species, rendering a specimen in-viable by injury, or unlawful removing a specimen from the wild;
- 7) violation of rules established by or on the basis of Council Regulation 338/97/EC.

(4) For specimens in the protected category I:

- 1) environmental damages in the amount of 96-1280 euros per specimen will be calculated in the event of unlawful destruction, rendering in-viable by injury or unlawful removal from the species protection site;
- 2) environmental damages in the amount of 16-510 euros per specimen will be calculated in the event of causing damage thereto.

[RT I 2010, 22, 108 – entry into force 01.01.2011]

(5) For specimens in the protected category II:

- 1) environmental damages in the amount of 64-960 euros per specimen or 3.20-13 euros per each gram of the specimen's mass will be calculated for the unlawful destruction, rendering in-viable by injury or unlawful removal from the species protection site;
- 2) environmental damages in the amount of 6-320 euros per specimen or 1.30-6.40 euros per each gram of the specimen's mass will be calculated in the event of causing damage thereto.

[RT I 2010, 22, 108 – entry into force 01.01.2011]

(6) For specimens in the protected category III:

- 1) environmental damages in the amount of 32-640 euros per specimen or 1.30-6.40 euros per each gram of the specimen's mass will be calculated for the unlawful destruction, rendering in-viable by injury or unlawful removal from the species protection site;
- 2) environmental damages in the amount of 6-64 euros per specimen or 0.64-3.20 euros per each gram of the specimen's mass will be calculated in the event of causing damage thereto.

[RT I 2010, 22, 108 – entry into force 01.01.2011]

(7) For species protection sites:

- 1) environmental damages in the amount of 128-9600 euros will be calculated upon destruction thereof;
  - 2) environmental damages in the amount of 32-3200 euros will be calculated upon damage thereto.
- [RT I 2010, 22, 108 – entry into force 01.01.2011]

(8) For protected natural monuments:

- 1) environmental damages in the amount of 320-3200 euros will be calculated upon destruction thereof;
  - 2) environmental damages in the amount of 192-1600 euros will be calculated upon damage thereto.
- [RT I 2010, 22, 108 – entry into force 01.01.2011]

(9) In the event of violation of rules established by and on the basis of Council Regulation 338/97/EC for transactions and activities involving specimens of species set out in Annexes A to D thereto, environmental damages in the amount of 13-127 820 euros will be calculated depending on the extent of danger to the species and the market value of a specimen.

[RT I 2010, 22, 108 – entry into force 01.01.2011]

(10) In the event of destruction, rendering in-viable by injury, removal from the wild, intentional disturbing, intentional destruction of nests and eggs or elimination of nests of a species which is not protected, except for illegal acts performed with specimens of wild game, or in the event of transactions with specimens and their clearly distinguishable body parts or products manufactured therefrom, environmental damages in the amount of 32-320 euros per specimen will be calculated.

[RT I 2010, 22, 108 – entry into force 01.01.2011]

(10<sup>1</sup>) Environmental damages in the amount of 12.80-6400 euros per specimen of a non-native species will be calculated upon introduction of live specimens of the non-native species in the wild.

[RT I 2010, 22, 108 – entry into force 01.01.2011]

(11) Compensation received for damages caused to natural objects will be used for the purpose and in accordance with the procedure provided by law.

## **Chapter 12**

### **FINAL PROVISIONS**

§ 78.–§ 90.[Omitted from this text.]

#### **§ 91. Implementation of Act**

(1) The protection rules and protection regimes established for the protection of protected areas and individual natural objects prior to the entry into force of this Act will remain in force until the entry into force of the protection rules established on the basis of this Act, or until protection is revoked, but not for longer than until 1 May 2023.

[RT I, 05.04.2016, 2 – entry into force 15.04.2016]

(2) The temporary restrictions established on the basis of subsection 14 of § 5 of the Protected Natural Objects Act apply until placement of an area under protection or revocation of the restrictions but not for longer than until 1 May 2007.

(3) Until the approval of the protection rules of a protected area or protected natural monument provided by this Act, the minister in charge of the policy sector will authorise the Environmental Board to administer the protected area or protected natural monument.

[RT I 2009, 3, 15 – entry into force 01.02.2009]

(4) Activities provided for in subsection 2 of § 13 of this Act are permitted on a protected area formed prior to the entry into force of this Act with the permission of the administrative authority unless otherwise provided for in the protection regime.

[RT I 2007, 25, 131 – entry into force 01.04.2007]

(5) The management plan of a species approved prior to the entry into force of this Act applies until the date specified therein and is deemed to be equal to the action plan specified in § 49 of this Act.

(6) The list of areas included in the Natura 2000 network to be submitted to the European Commission will be approved by an order of the Government of the Republic. The areas included in the Natura 2000 network will be designated in adherence to the requirements set out in Articles 4(1) and (2) of Directive 2009/147/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council and Article 4(1) of Council Directive 92/43/EEC.

[RT I, 05.04.2016, 2 – entry into force 15.04.2016]

(7) The proceedings for establishment of protection rules initiated prior to the entry into force of this Act will be completed in accordance with the Acts in force at the time of initiation thereof but not later than by 1 May 2007. For the purposes of this section, initiation means publication of a notice in the official publication *Ametlikud Teadaanded* in accordance with subsection 11 of § 5 of the Protected Natural Objects Act, or obtaining an opinion concerning the draft of the protection rules from a county government, local authority, land owner or person concerned.

(8) The prohibition on the use of fertilizers provided for in clause 7 of subsection 2 of § 31 of this Act applies to protected areas the protection rules of which are established after the entry into force of this subsection.  
[RT I 2007, 25, 131 – entry into force 01.04.2007]

(9) [Repealed – RT I, 05.04.2013, 2 – entry into force 15.04.2013]

(10) Proceedings for the exchange of an immovable regarding which a decision to exchange has not been made by the entry into force of this subsection will be completed without proceedings for the acquisition of the immovable prescribed in § 20 of this Act and the submitted applications for the exchange of an immovable are deemed to be proposals to acquire the immovable.  
[RT I 2008, 34, 211 – entry into force 01.08.2008]

(11) Proceedings regarding placement of a protected natural object under protection which have been initiated before the entry into force of this provision are deemed to have been initiated:

- 1) after publication of the notice in the official publication *Ametlikud Teadaanded*, in the event of protected areas, limited-conservation areas and natural monuments;
- 2) as of issue of a directive regarding the initiation or after the first letter has been served on participants in the proceedings, in the event of species protection sites.

[RT I 2008, 34, 211 – entry into force 01.08.2008]

(12) The permits for the ringing of birds and bats issued before the entry into force of § 58<sup>1</sup> of this Act are valid until the expiry of the term indicated in the permit, but not for longer than until 31 December 2010.  
[RT I 2008, 34, 211 – entry into force 01.08.2008]

(12<sup>1</sup>) Licences issued before 1 July 2014 for keeping minks and raccoon dogs in artificial conditions will remain in force until 30 June 2019.  
[RT I, 29.06.2014, 1 – entry into force 01.07.2014]

(13) Unless otherwise provided for in the protection rules, the area of a clear cut area must not exceed two hectares and its width must not exceed 30 metres and the area of a shelterwood cutting area must not exceed five hectares in the limited management zone of a protected area or species protection site in the event of protection rules established before the entry into force of this subsection.  
[RT I 2009, 53, 359 – entry into force 21.11.2009]

(14) Immovable offsetting proceedings in the course of which an offsetting application has been submitted by the time of entry into force of this subsection will be finalised on the previous grounds and in accordance with the previous procedure.  
[RT I, 05.04.2013, 2 – entry into force 15.04.2013]

(15) Proceedings of applications that were submitted before the entry into force of this subsection for the acquisition of an immovable acquired after it was taken under protection, whereby the transfer transaction contained information about a protected natural object not subject to the exceptions set out in clauses 1–4 of subsection 1<sup>1</sup> of § 20 of this Act, and that were entered in the list of received applications will be finalised in the order of receipt of the applications following the acquisition by the state of the immovables that were acquired before placing them under protection or that are subject to the exceptions set out in clauses 1–4 of subsection 1<sup>1</sup> of § 20 of this Act.  
[RT I, 05.04.2013, 2 – entry into force 15.04.2013]

(16) If the proceedings of making an administrative decision have been suspended on the basis of subsection 6 of § 8 of this Act before 1 May 2013, the proceedings will be deemed as suspended until the natural object has been placed under protection or until a decision to refuse to place it under protection has been made, but not for more than 28 months as of 1 May 2013.  
[RT I, 18.04.2013, 1 – entry into force 01.05.2013]

(17) Proceedings regarding placing a natural object under protection, which have been initiated before 1 May 2013, will be continued in accordance with the requirements in force as of 1 May 2013.  
[RT I, 18.04.2013, 1 – entry into force 01.05.2013]

(18) In pending proceedings initiated on the basis of subsection 1 of § 9 of this Act regarding placing a natural object under protection and whereby a public display was organised more than two years before 1 May 2013 or if the circumstances have changed in the course of the proceedings, a new public display will be organised in accordance with the procedure provided for in subsections 7–9 of § 9 of this Act. The authority conducting the proceedings will publish a notice on the public display on the website of the Environmental Board, in the official

publication *Ametlikud Teadaanded* and in at least one national newspaper and in the local newspaper, specifying the information prescribed by subsection 4 of § 9 of this Act.

[RT I, 18.04.2013, 1 – entry into force 01.05.2013]

(19) The boundaries and protection procedure of the nature conservation areas of Puhatu, Agusalu, Muraka and Selisoo, landscape protection areas of Kurtna, Smolnitsa, Jõuga, Struuga and Mäetaguse, conservation area of the headwaters of River Narva, and forest park of Iisaku are effective in the national park specified clause 6 of subsection 2 of § 26 of this Act until the rules of protection of the national park enter into force, but not for longer than until 1 January 2021.

[RT I, 14.11.2018, 4 – entry into force 24.11.2018]

(20) During the emergency situation, where justified by the actual need and it is not practical to use the ordinary ways of sending or these are not available, a notice, document or decision specified in § 9, 112, 24 or 581 of this Act may be sent to the person by regular mail.

[RT I, 06.05.2020, 1 – entry into force 07.05.2020]

(21) Licences issued before 1 July 2021 for keeping minks and raccoon dogs in artificial conditions will remain in force until 31 December 2025.

[RT I, 16.06.2021, 1 – entry into force 01.07.2021]

(22) In decisions to place natural objects under protection and in protection rules, the drafting notes state that a map can be examined in the environmental register. After entry into force of this subsection, the maps of protected natural objects can be examined in the environmental portal.

[RT I, 27.05.2022, 1 – entry into force 06.06.2022]

(23) In decisions on placing natural objects under protection, their repeal, exclusion from protection and establishment of boundaries of natural objects and in protection rules, the drafting notes state that the letter of explanation of the relevant regulation can be viewed on the website of the Ministry of the Environment [www.envir.ee](http://www.envir.ee) and that a map of the area reflecting the external boundaries and the boundaries of internal zones can be viewed at the Ministry of the Environment. After the entry into force of this subsection, the letter of explanation can be viewed on the website of the Ministry of Climate and the map of the area reflecting the external boundaries and the boundaries of internal zones can be viewed at the Ministry of Climate.

[RT I, 30.06.2023, 1 – entry into force 01.07.2023]

(24) Sections 69<sup>1</sup>–69<sup>9</sup> of this Act apply only if the sole purpose of the proposed activity or strategic planning document is to ensure national security.

[RT I, 06.07.2023, 2 – entry into force 16.07.2023]

(25) A reference to the land information system with the domain name [www.maaamet.ee](http://www.maaamet.ee) in a decision made on the basis of subsection 1 or 6 of § 10 this Act before 1 January 2025 is deemed a reference to the land information system with the domain name [www.maaruum.ee](http://www.maaruum.ee).

[RT I, 04.12.2024, 1 – entry into force 01.01.2025]

<sup>1</sup>Council Directive 92/43/EEC on the conservation of natural habitats and of wild fauna and flora (OJ L 206, 22.07.1992, pp. 7–50); Directive 2009/147/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council on the conservation of wild birds (OJ L 20, 26.10.2010, pp. 7–25); Council Directive 90/313/EEC on the freedom of access to information on the environment (OJ L 158, 23.06.1990, pp. 56–58). [RT I, 18.04.2013, 1 – entry into force 01.05.2013]

[Annex](#) Conditions of Selective Cutting and Shelterwood Cutting in Limited Management Zone of Protected Natural Objects and Shores and Banks

[RT I, 06.07.2017, 1 - entry into force 01.09.2017]