



The Meenikunno Nature Park was formed in 1981 as a bog protection area with the aim of protecting the Meenikunno bog, Lakes Must and Valge bordering it to the east and the undulating landscape around them.

The nature park is in Veriora municipality on Ilumetsa forest district land. While marshes in Estonia generally formed when the thousands of lakes left by the last ice age became overgrown, Meenikunno mostly came about as a result of the swamping of the dry, sandy land, beginning in the boreal climatic period more than 8000 years ago. The bog's peat layers are saturated with water with only a partial layer of sand beneath them, giving the impression of it 'hanging in the air.' What this means is that the groundwater is deep and there is a dry layer under the bog.

The process of forming the bog has lasted thousand of years and continues very actively to this day, with hollows and 3 bog lakes having been produced, a bog pool in the making, and large numbers of islands – the largest of which are Pikksaar and Pähk-lisaar.

Local stories say that the Swedes built a wooden pathway through Meenikunno during the Northern War.



Worthy of attention are Nohipalu's two lakes, Must and Valge, to the east of the bog, surrounded by picturesque pine forests and deserving of their names: the light green waters of Lake Valge (which means 'white') are low in minerals, while half a kilometre to the south you have the reddish-brown opaque waters of Lake Must (which means 'black'). According to current information, Lake Valge is one of the lowest in nutrients in Estonia, and subsequently one of the clearest. There is even very little aquatic life in the lake, but some uncommon species of algae and plankton have been found in its waters, which are slightly acidic. Lake Black on the other hand is very acidic, reddish-brown and largely opaque, and rich in organic life. It is home to a lot of rare plankton.

The lakes are of little or no importance when it comes to fishing. The two lakes are surrounded by the hilly landscape of Nohipalu, of whose bumps and ridges the best known are Kamarus Hill and the Tuudipalu 'mountains.' The low abraded terraces on the slopes of these hills are of great scientific interest, as they are indicative of small, late ice age ice dam lakes.

The nature park's rich bird life makes it a reserve of international importance – it is part of the European 'natura' network. The bog lakes on the eastern side of the landscape are temporary homes for various migrating water and marsh birds. The species you may find here include cranes, whooper swans, merlins, horned grebes and varieties of bean geese and white-fronted geese. The area is a pairing place for capercaillie, which are a Category II protected species and whose habitats must be maintained and protected. The capercaillie in fact is like a living monument to nature – a relic of the late ice age and a reminder of a time when taiga forests grew in Estonia.

As ways of introducing the nature park to people there is an information hut with a display near Lake Valge and a wooden path through the bog from the Liipsaare hiking hut and viewing tower to Kamarus Hill, where you will find the "Sunset House" resting place.



Meenikunno

MEENIKUNNO LANDSCAPE PROTECTION AREA



Visitors should keep in mind that:

- Lake Valge and Lake Must must be kept clean, with swimming recommended only in Lake Black
- you must not use soap or shampoo in the lakes
- picking and collecting berries, mushrooms and medicinal plants is allowed in the nature park
- fires may be set and tents pitched only in the designated areas
- visits with groups of more than 50 people must be coordinated with the park ranger

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