



# SPAWNING OF SALMON-LIKE FISH IN GAUJA NATIONAL PARK



Fish ladder in Līgatne



Grūbas waterfall



Gauja

Photo: Baltic Pictures and Juris Smajlinskis



The “central artery” of Gauja National Park is the River Gauja with many tributaries. Many of these are rapid and swift, with clean, unpolluted water enriched with water coming from many springs, and therefore they are suitable for spawning of salmon-like fish — the Atlantic salmon (*Salmo salar*), brown trout (*Salmo trutta*), and stream trout (*Salmo trutta fario*). After a longer trip, the salmon-like fish travel in autumn to their birth places, and thus this is the time best suitable not only to watch the fish, but also enjoy what is happening on the riverside. A salmon watcher is a sort of a ranger, who has come to study the natural environment and create a positive effect from the presence of a human being.



## Best time to go

Late October, beginning of November.



## Route

We recommend picking one or two of the listed places, and create your own sequence.



## Distance

The places to watch salmon-like fish are mostly individual sites except for the River Strīķupe (Vaidava), where a section of several kilometres can be covered. If you travel by car, you can get to several sites during one trip, since each place might result in different success level in watching the fish.



## Difficulty level. Easy.



## Worth knowing!

Follow the news of Nature Preservation

Agency ([www.daba.gov.lv](http://www.daba.gov.lv)), since environmental guides from this authority tend to organise salmon watching events! The activity is at one's own risk. Emergency services: 112.



## Take care of nature!

**Never leave garbage in the woods but always deliver them to the closest town. We wish that the visitors of this park care for its future!**



## Enter Gauja mobile application



GooglePlay



AppStore

## SERVICE

**i | Pārgauja Tourism Information Point** “Ezeriņi”, Stalbe, Stalbe rural territory, Pārgauja Municipality, +371 26620422, [turisms@pargaujasnovads.lv](mailto:turisms@pargaujasnovads.lv), [www.pargaujasnovads.lv](http://www.pargaujasnovads.lv)

**i | Sigulda County Tourism Information Centre** Sigulda, Ausekļa Street 6, +371 67971335, [info@sigulda.lv](mailto:info@sigulda.lv), [www.tourism.sigulda.lv](http://www.tourism.sigulda.lv)

**i | Līgatne Municipality Tourism Information Centre** Līgatne, Sprīņu Street 2, +371 64153169, +371 29189707, [info@visitligatne.lv](mailto:info@visitligatne.lv), [www.visitligatne.lv](http://www.visitligatne.lv)

**i | Amata Municipality Tourism Information Point** Āraiši, Drabeši rural territory, Amata municipality, +371 25669935, +371 28681083, [turisms@and.lv](mailto:turisms@and.lv), [www.amata.lv](http://www.amata.lv)

**i | Cēsis Tourism Information Center** Cēsis, Baznīcas Square 1, +371 28318318, [info@cesis.lv](mailto:info@cesis.lv), [www.visit.cesis.lv](http://www.visit.cesis.lv)

**i | Valmiera Tourism Information Centre** Valmiera, Rīgas Street 10, +371 26332213, [tic@valmiera.lv](mailto:tic@valmiera.lv), [www.visit.valmiera.lv](http://www.visit.valmiera.lv)

**i | Valmiermuiža Tourism Information Point**, Dzirnau Street 2, Valmiermuiža, Valmiera rural territory, Burtnieki Municipality, +371 29135438, [info@valmiermuiza.lv](mailto:info@valmiermuiza.lv), [www.valmiermuiza.lv](http://www.valmiermuiza.lv)

**🚶 | Leisure Park “Rāmkalni”**, “Vītiņkalni”, Inčukalns rural territory, Inčukalns Municipality, +371 29100280, [info@ramkalni.lv](mailto:info@ramkalni.lv), [www.ramkalni.lv](http://www.ramkalni.lv)

**🏰 | Bīriņi Castle** Bīriņi, Vidriži rural territory, Limbaži Municipality, +371 64024033, +371 29416661, [hotel@birinupils.lv](mailto:hotel@birinupils.lv), [www.birinupils.lv](http://www.birinupils.lv)

**🚶 | Leisure park & camping “Ozolkalns”** “Saulkrasti”, Drabeši rural territory, Amata Municipality, +371 26400200, [info@ozolkalns.lv](mailto:info@ozolkalns.lv), [www.ozolkalns.lv](http://www.ozolkalns.lv)

**🏞️ | Recreation Complex “Mežnoras”**, Pārgauja Municipality, Straupe rural territory, “Mežnoras”, +371 26566575, [edijsh@gmail.com](mailto:edijsh@gmail.com)

**🏠 | Camping “Apaļkalns”** Raiskuma rural territory, Pārgauja Municipality, +371 29448188, [apalkalns@inbox.lv](mailto:apalkalns@inbox.lv), [www.apalkalns.lv](http://www.apalkalns.lv)

**🏠 | Hotel “Karlamuiza Country Hotel”**, Kārļi, Drabeši rural territory, Amata Municipality, +371 26165298, [info@karlamuiza.lv](mailto:info@karlamuiza.lv), [www.karlamuiza.lv](http://www.karlamuiza.lv) (catering to be announced in advance)

**🏠 | Guest House “Jaunlīdumnieki”** Mālpils rural territory, Jaunlīdumnieki +371 29295796, [elsanta@inbox.lv](mailto:elsanta@inbox.lv), [www.jaunlidumnieki.wordpress.com](http://www.jaunlidumnieki.wordpress.com)

**🏠 | Valmiermuiža Craft Brewery and Beer Kitchen** Dzirnau Street 2, Valmiermuiža, Valmiera rural territory, Burtnieki Municipality, +371 20264269 (tours in the brewery), [info@valmiermuiza.lv](mailto:info@valmiermuiza.lv), [www.valmiermuiza.lv](http://www.valmiermuiza.lv)

**G | AdventureRide** Pērle 1, Alderi, +371 29269559, [info@adventureride.eu](mailto:info@adventureride.eu), [www.adventureride.eu](http://www.adventureride.eu)

## WATCHING SPOTS

### 1 | Bridge over the River Gauja in Sigulda

57.16562, 24.84098

A site easy to access — approximately 2 km from the centre of Sigulda. A popular place to watch salmon. However, the high bridge clearance might affect spotting the fish very good, but this can be compensated with a 8 x 30 or 10 x 50 binocular.

### 2 | Pedestrian bridge over the River Gauja in Sigulda

57.14917, 24.80707

The walk to the bridge (2 km from Kaķīši in Sigulda) can be combined with a walk along the banks of the primeval valley of the River Gauja. The river is shallow at the bridge, therefore its sandy bed is well visible on sunny days.

### 3 | Trail aimed at watching fish spawning in Līgatne

57.23119, 25.04263

Established in 2011 with the support of the European Fisheries Fund in the centre of Līgatne, between **Ānfabrika Cliffs** and **Lustūzis** (opposite of Līgatne Tourism Information Centre); around 500 m long. **Fish ladder** is constructed at the former mill dam in Līgatne.

### 4 | Kārļi Dam

57.23325, 25.21002

On the River Amata. Fish ladder is established next to it. The dam can be reached by road leading from Kārļi or Ieriķi, or on foot along the Amata trail.

### 5 | Nature trail of the River Ieriķupīte

57.20829, 25.16896

The small River Grūba (Ieriķupīte, Melderupīte) flows into a deep ravine behind the road A2, where on a short section of the river **four waterfalls** are located — 2.3 m, 0.5 m, 1.7 m, and 0.8 m high, which consist of dolomite rock outcrops from Pļaviņas suite. There are plankways, small bridges, and viewing platforms on the banks of the river. The total length of the trail is roughly 500 m, which suits families with children. End of October–early November offers breath-taking sights when the migrating salmon try overcoming obstacles! In winter 2013, an illuminated park was opened, with lights illuminating the trail and its nearby vicinity in the autumn and winter evenings.

### 6 | River Strīķupīte

57.36038, 25.23794

Around 3 km long section of the river between Jenči–Jāņmuiža road and the mouth of the River Strīķupīte with the River Gauja. Beautiful coniferous forests cover the riverside of the rapid and curvy river, and combined with the forest road it is ideal for walks, picking mushrooms, and watching salmon-like fish during their migration period.

### 7 | Bridge over the River Gauja in Cēsis

57.31300, 25.22704

3.5 km off the centre of Cēsis.

### 8 | Bridge over the River Gauja in Rāmnieki

57.35794, 25.30195

Easy accessible from Cēsis. The river is shallow in this place and fish might be clearly spotted under suitable circumstances.

### 9 | River Vaive

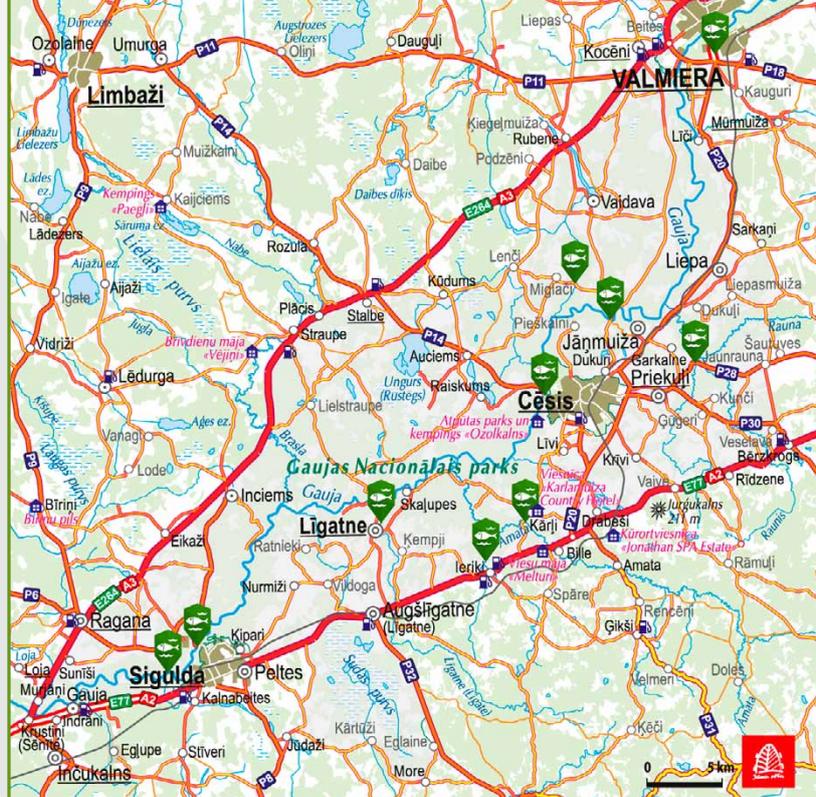
57.33057, 25.39214

The best places to watch salmon are downstream — in the section where the river mouths the River Rauna till Vaive Mill Dam. In this section, the River Vaive flows through a 2 km wide primeval valley with a maximum depth of 60 m. There are some scenic sandstone outcrops on the river as well.

### 10 | Bridge over the River Gauja in Valmiera

57.53607, 25.42412

Located in the centre of the city (Cēsu iela), near Vidzeme University College. Suitable place to watch salmon-like fish migration, since the river is shallow on both sides of the bridge and the sandy riverbed is seen (provided it has not rained heavily) from above.



### Other places

Salmon migration can be watched also from the banks of the River Amata and its tributaries, as well as other small rivers — Raunis, Rauna, Jumara; rules of private property and Gauja National Park shall be observed.

### MIGRATION OF SALMON AND BROWN TROUTS

Migration of salmon-like fish to their spawning places commences in late October and continues until November. One of the factors affecting the successful migration is the water temperature, which has to be around 2–6 degrees.

### BEST PLACES TO WATCH FISH

The success of spotting salmon-like fish depends on the water table in rivers, the clarity of water, and weather conditions. If there was heavy rain prior to or during the migration, the water in Gauja and its tributaries will be mixed up with sand and loam particles which will make it dark and non-transparent. It will be hard to see the fish in such case. Other more suitable places might be an option — natural or man-made obstacles: rapids, waterfalls, low dams, or fish ladder, which the salmon-like fish have to pass by jumping over these!

### DRESS CODE AND TOOLS:

- suitable clothes for various weather conditions;
- if you will walk along the small rivers — suitable trekking footwear or rubber boots;
- binocular (to watch the fish from bridges);
- photo camera.

### ECO-FRIENDLY WATCHING OF SALMON

- Salmon shall be watched from a distance that does not affect their natural processes.
- To take photos of the fish, zooming function shall be used.
- The more nature watchers on the riverside during autumn, the less opportunities for bad people violating the law. This means your presence on the riverside contributes to preservation of our nature values.

**Nature Conservation Agency** maintaining most of infrastructure in Gauja NP. If you see something wrong, tell the Agency at **+37164107230**; **+37167509545** or **vidzeme@daba.gov.lv**