



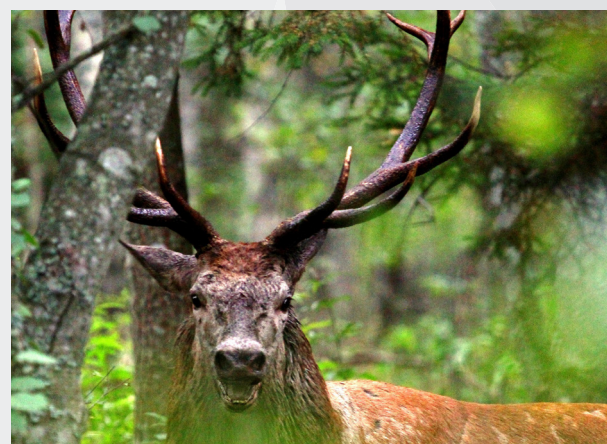
# ANIMAL-WATCHING IN GAUJA NATIONAL PARK



Fox (*Vulpes vulpes*)



Roe Deer (*Capreolus capreolus*)



Red deer (*Cervus elaphus*)

Photo: Vilnis Skuja

## WHY GAUJA NATIONAL PARK IS A SUITABLE PLACE TO WATCH ANIMALS?

In total, 52 out of the slightly above 60 animal (mammals) species of Latvia have been registered in the territory of the park. There is a dense network of hiking, cycling, and canoeing routes in the park, thus creating access to nearly every spot in the park, except for the nature reserve zones. Due to agriculture activities, here are quiet many open areas to spot the animals more easily. And they are drawn there by the products grown in the farms. Sometimes you do not have to walk deep into a forest, as animals can be seen on roadsides.

## WHAT ANIMALS CAN BE SEEN IN GAUJA NATIONAL PARK?

Most of the animal species live a reserved lifestyle and are hard to spot. But not all. **Roe deer** is often seen looking for fodder on the fields, as well as hunting **foxes** are found in the Gauja National Park. Drivers often see **elks** walking over the roads. Although there are many **stags** in the park, these are infrequently seen. Anglers, canoe paddlers, and individual hikers might come across beavers on the riversides and other water bodies. Even a less careful watcher cannot walk by the traces of **beavers** – gnawed off trees, trampled paths, beaver dams, and branches with traces by woodpeckers. However, no one can promise animals will be met for sure. You might be lucky and come across **otters** while paddling on smaller rivers or walking quietly along the riverside. The “big three” – **bear**, **lynx**, and **wolf** are sometimes observed in the park, but you might rather see the footprints of lynx and wolf. The twelve **bat** species registered in the park spend the winter in caves and basements. Bats are best spotted in the evenings in late summer when they are feeding on insects close to ponds or other water bodies. Bats appreciate presence of old and large trees, which is their natural habitat. They are observed not only in manor parks, but also in urban environments, such as the vicinity of Cīrulīši in town Cēsis. There is a 100% guarantee you will see the works by **wild boar**. And the wild pigs, as well, since there is a large number of them living in the National Park and beyond.

## TRACES OF ANIMALS APPROVE THE PRESENCE OF THEM!

Patient and careful nature watchers should look for footprints and traces of animal activities. A careful watcher will spot bushes and young deciduous trees, coniferous trees gnawed by **deer** and **elks**, as well as their droppings. **Wild boar** dug-ups are seen both on fields and in the forest. The wild pigs are looking for acorns, plant roots, and sometimes underground mushrooms! Animal droppings are seen on roads, paths, and trails, and thinner ground covers. Some droppings of mammals reveal not only species, but also gender, age, health conditions, and even their menu! A true world of footprints is seen in winter – try identifying the animals! It is often the case the animals have made a true road instead of a small path leading to the food storage places, particularly haylage, of farmers. Pen-like gnawed tree trunks, beaver houses, and caves give proof of the presence of **beavers**.

## BEST TIME TO WATCH ANIMALS

Species	Place to be watched	IV	V	VI	VII	VIII	IX	X
Elk	Glades	Yellow	Yellow	Yellow	Yellow	Yellow	Rutting time	Yellow
Stag	Fields, meadows	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Rutting time	Green
Roe deer	Fields, meadows	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green
Wild boar	Fields, meadows, riversides	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green
Fox	Fields, meadows	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green
Wolf	Open areas	Yellow	Yellow	Yellow	Yellow	Yellow	Yellow	Yellow
Lynx	Fringes of forests	Yellow	Yellow	Yellow	Yellow	Yellow	Yellow	Yellow
Badger	Fields, meadows	Yellow	Yellow	Yellow	Yellow	Yellow	Yellow	Yellow
Otter	Rivers, brooks	Yellow	Yellow	Yellow	Yellow	Yellow	Yellow	Yellow
Beaver	Water courses, oxbow lakes	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green
Bats	Riversides, banks of water bodies, old parks, margins of forests, open areas, single farmsteads	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green

Yellow colour – chance of seeing an animal is low.

Green colour – chance of seeing an animal is higher in a suitable location.

## HOW TO WATCH ANIMALS?

One shall be patient and attentive. Loud and careless watchers will miss a lot. Animals and traces of them should be looked for in smaller guided groups. The guide will show you things, signs, and small traces, which you will pass by unnoticed. To watch animals, you will need water-proof, comfortable footwear, warm and modest clothing that does not rustle thus scaring the animals away before you might even have the chance to see them.

## MAKE USE OF LOCAL GUIDES TO WATCH ANIMALS!

Animal-watching is best undertaken together with a local ranger or nature guide, who are well informed of the animal "habits", their "agenda", and places of gathering, feeding, and breeding. The use of services of these persons will be beneficial both to the nature-watchers and the animals, who will not feel disturbed.

## RECOMMENDATION!

There are two Nature Education Centres (NEC) in the Gauja National Park:

NEC "Pauguri", Līgatne rural territory, Līgatne Nature Trails, Mrs Anda Andrušaitė, +371 26433668. Located on Līgatne Nature Trails, where the exposition "Hide-and-seek" focused on adjustment of animals can be visited.

NEC "Vecupītes", Kocēni rural territory, Kocēni Municipality, Mrs Baiba Līviņa, +371 29433353. Services: visitors can try and guess footprints of animals, and hiking on the nature trail.

## SERVICE

**i** | Sigulda Municipality Tourism Information Centre  
Sigulda, Ausekļa Street 6,  
+371 67971335, info@sigulda.lv,  
www.tourism.sigulda.lv

**i** | Līgatne Municipality Tourism Information Centre  
Līgatne, Sprīņu Street 2,  
+371 64153169, +371 29189707,  
info@visitligatne.lv,  
www.visitligatne.lv



**i** | Amata Municipality Tourism Information Point  
Āraiši, Drabeši rural territory, Amata municipality,  
+371 25669935, +371 28681083,  
turisms@and.lv, www.amata.lv

**i** | Cēsis Tourism Information Centre  
Cēsis, Baznīcas Square 1,  
+371 28318318,  
info@cesis.lv,  
www.tourism.cesis.lv

**i** | Valmiera Tourism Information Centre  
Valmiera, Rīgas Street 10,  
+371 26332213,  
tic@valmiera.lv,  
www.visit.valmiera.lv

**i** | Pārgauja Tourism Information Point  
"Ezeriņi", Stalbe, Stalbe rural territory, Pārgauja Municipality,  
+371 26620422,  
turisms@pargaujasnovads.lv,  
www.pargaujasnovads.lv

**i** | Bīriņi Castle Bīriņi, Vidriži rural territory, Limbaži Municipality, +371 64024033, +371 29416661, hotel@birinupils.lv, www.birinupils.lv

**🏠** | Holiday house "Vējiņi", "Vējiņi", Straupe rural territory, Pārgauja Municipality, +371 29354189, pazemesezeri@gmail.com, www.pazemesezeri.lv (also camping "Paegli")

**🍺** | Brewery "Valmiermuižas alus" and Beer Kitchen  
Dzirnavu Street 2, Valmiermuiža, Valmiera rural territory, Burtņieki Municipality, +371 20264269 (tours in the brewery), info@valmiermuiža.lv, www.valmiermuiža.lv

**🏠** | Leisure park & camping "Ozolkalns" "Saulkrasti", Drabeši rural territory, Amata Municipality, +371 26400200, info@ozolkalns.lv, www.ozolkalns.lv

**🏠** | Hotel "Karlmuiza Country Hotel", Kārļi, Drabeši rural territory, Amata Municipality, +371 26165298, info@karlmuiza.lv, www.karlmuiza.lv (catering to be announced in advance)

**🏠** | Rehabilitation Center "Līgatne" Skaļupes, Līgatne rural territory, Līgatne municipality, +371 64161915, +371 26467747, ligatne.info@gmail.com, www.rehcentrsligatne.lv

**🏠** | Resort hotel "Jonathan SPA Estate" Amatciems, Amata Municipality, +371 25606066, info@jonathanspahotel.com, www.jonathanspahotel.com

**🏠** | Vienkoču Park Līgatne rural territory, Līgatne municipality, "Asaras", +371 29329065, info@vienkoci.lv, www.vienkoci.lv

**🏠** | Camping, boat rental "Žagarkalns" Cēsis, 12 Mūrlejas street, +371 26266266, info@zagarkalns.lv, www.zagarkalns.lv

**G** | AdventureRide Pērle 1, Alderi, +371 29269559, info@adventureride.eu, www.adventureride.eu