



SPAWNING OF SALMON-LIKE FISH IN GAUJA NATIONAL PARK



Zivju ceļš Līgatnē



Grūbas ūdenskritums



Gauja

Foto: Baltic Pictures un Juris Smajņinskis

i Maršruts

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), since environmental guides from this authority tend to organise salmon watching events! The activity is at one's own risk. Emergency services: 112.

SERVICE

i | Pārgauja Tourism Information Point

"Ezeriņi", Stalbe, Stalbe rural territory, Pārgauja Municipality, +371 26620422, turisms@pargaujasnovads.lv, www.pargaujasnovads.lv

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 Centre

Kumadas Street 2, Ieriķi, Amata Municipality, +371 64119024, +371 28681083, turisms@and.lv, www.amata.lv

i | Cēsis Tourism Information Centre

Cēsis, Pils Square 9, +371 64121815, +371 28318318, info@cesis.lv, www.tourism.cesis.lv

i | Valmiera Tourism Information Centre

Valmiera, Rīgas Street 10, +371 64207177, tic@valmiera.lv, <http://visit.valmiera.lv/>

i | Leisure Park "Rāmkalni"

"Vītiņkalni", Inčukalns rural territory, Inčukalns Municipality, +371 29100280, info@ramkalni.lv, www.ramkalni.lv

i | Bīriņi Castle

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

i | Leisure park & camping

"Ozolkalns" "Saulkrasti", Drabeši rural territory, Amata Municipality, +371 26400200, info@ozolkalns.lv, www.ozolkalns.lv

i | Hotel "Karlumuiza Country Hotel"

Kārļi, Drabeši rural territory, Amata Municipality, +371 26165298, info@karlamuiza.lv, www.karlamuiza.lv (catering to be announced in advance)

i | Hotel "Melturi"

Melturi, Drabeši rural territory, Amata Municipality, +371 64129467, +371 29267224, melturihotel@gmail.com

i | Resort hotel "Jonathan SPA Estate"

Amatciems, Amata Municipality, +371 25606066, reception@jonathanhotel.com, www.jonathanspahotel.com

i | Brewery "Valmiermuizas alus" and Beer Kitchen

Dzirnavu Street 2, Valmiermuiza, Valmiera rural territory, Burtnieki Municipality, +371 20264269 (tours in the brewery), ciemoss@valmiermuiza.lv, www.valmiermuiza.lv

G | Baltic Wildlife

+371 28808440, laura@balticwildlife.eu, www.balticwildlife.eu

G | AdventureRide

Pērle 1, Alderi, +371 29269559, info@adventureride.eu, www.adventureride.eu

WATCHING SPOTS

1 | Bridge over the River Gauja in Sigulda 24.84098, 57.16562

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 24.80707, 57.14917

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 25.04263, 57.23119

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 25.21002, 57.23325

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 25.16896, 57.20829

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 salmons 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 Strīkupīte 25.23794, 57.36038

Around 3 km long section of the river between Jenči–Jāņmuiža road and the mouth of the River Strīkupīte 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 25.22704, 57.31300
3.5 km off the centre of Cēsis.

8 | Bridge over the River Gauja in Rāmnieki 25.30195, 57.35794

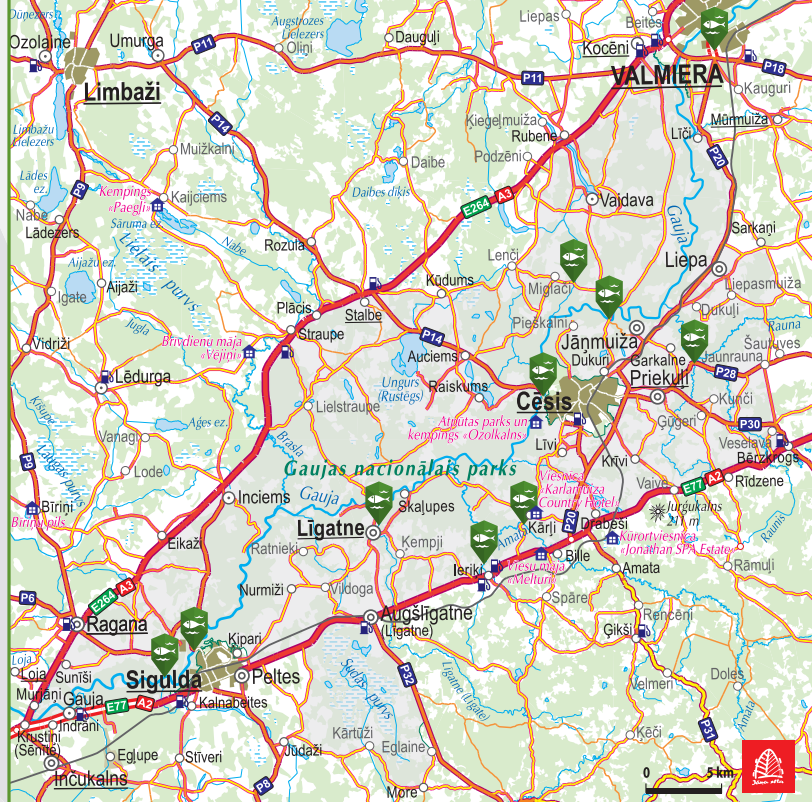
Easy accessible from Cēsis. The river is shallow in this place and fish might be clearly spotted under suitable circumstances.

9 | River Vaive 25.39214, 57.33057

The best places to watch salmons 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 25.42412, 57.53607

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;
- phone to call a ranger should you see anything illegal.

ECO-FRIENDLY WATCHING OF SALMON

- Salmons 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.