



# 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						Rutting time	
Stag	Fields, meadows						Rutting time	
Roe deer	Fields, meadows							
Wild boar	Fields, meadows, riversides							
Fox	Fields, meadows							
Wolf	Open areas							
Lynx	Fringes of forests							
Badger	Fields, meadows							
Otter	Rivers, brooks							
Beaver	Water courses, oxbow lakes							
Bats	Riversides, banks of water bodies, old parks, margins of forests, open areas, single farmsteads							

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. If you need a guide, contact the Enter Gauja team at [info@entergauja.com](mailto:info@entergauja.com).

## 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!

In Gauja National Park there are Līgatne nature trails with the Pauguri Nature Education Center. In the Līgatne Nature Trails it is possible to observe the animals in the fences and visit the animal exhibition in the nature education center.

[www.ligatnesdabastakas.lv](http://www.ligatnesdabastakas.lv)

## 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](mailto:vidzeme@daba.gov.lv)

## SERVICE

### 📍 | 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)

### 📍 | Sigulda County Tourism Information Centre "Gūtmaņala", Sigulda, Turaidas iela 2a, +371 61303030

[info.gutmanala@sigulda.lv](mailto:info.gutmanala@sigulda.lv), [www.tourism.sigulda.lv](http://www.tourism.sigulda.lv)

### 📍 | Līgatne Municipality Tourism Information Centre

Līgatne, Sprinģu Street 2, **+371 64153169**, **+371 29189707**, [info@visitligatne.lv](mailto:info@visitligatne.lv), [www.visitligatne.lv](http://www.visitligatne.lv)



### 📍 | 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)

### 📍 | Cēsis Tourism Information Centre

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

### 📍 | 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)

### 📍 | Pārgauja Tourism Information Point

"Pīķiera namiņš", Straupe, Pārgauja Municipality, **+371 26620422**, [turisms@pargaujasnovads.lv](mailto:turisms@pargaujasnovads.lv), [www.pargaujasnovads.lv](http://www.pargaujasnovads.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)

### 🍷 | H.E. Vanadžiņš North Restaurant, Cēsis, Rīgas street 15, +371 24771771

🚶 | Cecīli Nature Trail  
Amata municipality, Drabeši rural territory, Lerīķi, Kumadas street 2, **+371 26544763** [cecilutaka@gmail.com](mailto:cecilutaka@gmail.com) [www.cecilutaka.lv](http://www.cecilutaka.lv)

### 🍷 | Valmiermuiža Craft Brewery and Beer Kitchen

Dzirnavu Street 2, Valmiermuiža, Valmiera rural territory, Burtnieki Municipality, **+371 20264269** (tours in the brewery), [info@valmiermuiža.lv](mailto:info@valmiermuiža.lv), [www.valmiermuiža.lv](http://www.valmiermuiža.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)

### 🏨 | Hotel "Karlmuiza Country Hotel",

Kārļi, Drabeši rural territory, Amata Municipality, **+371 26165298**, [info@karlmuiza.lv](mailto:info@karlmuiza.lv), [www.karlmuiza.lv](http://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](mailto:ligatne.info@gmail.com), [www.rehcentrsligatne.lv](http://www.rehcentrsligatne.lv)

### 🏨 | Hotel "Wolmar"

Valmiera, Tērbatas street 16A, **+371 64207301**, [info@wolmar.lv](mailto:info@wolmar.lv), [www.hotelwolmar.lv](http://www.hotelwolmar.lv)

### 🏞️ | Vienkoču Park

Līgatne rural territory, Līgatne municipality, "Asaras", **+371 29329065**, [info@vienkoci.lv](mailto:info@vienkoci.lv), [www.vienkoci.lv](http://www.vienkoci.lv)

### 🏠 | Guest house "Liepas muīža" (Lindenhoff)

Priekule Municipality, Liepas rural territory, Liepas muīža, **+371 28490600**, [booking@liepasmuiza.lv](mailto:booking@liepasmuiza.lv)

### 🏠 | Recreation Complex "Mežnoras"

Pārgauja Municipality, Straupe rural territory, "Mežnoras", **+371 26566575** [edijsh@gmail.com](mailto:edijsh@gmail.com)

### G | AdventureRide

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