

# EU, Peatland & Birds

EOÜ (BirdLife Estonia) view on the  
EU member status in relation to bird  
conservation



Mati Kose,  
Member of the EOÜ Bird Conservation Commission  
EOÜ EU accession officer in 2000-2001

# Wetter is always better!



Bog waders need lot of high quality space  
– like Estonians used to 😊  
(Kuresoo, Hüpasaare, Soomaa NP)

# EU Accession and MS status:

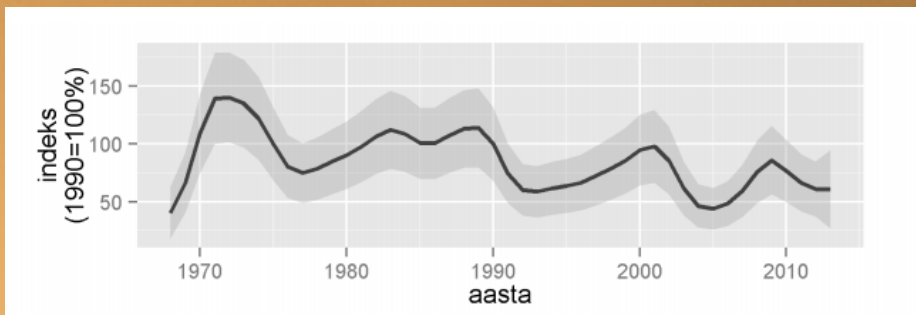
- Bird and Habitat Directives – new and powerful tools for saving the key peatland bird habitats
- Pretty successful and timely implementation of the EU BD and HD and designation of the Natura 2000 areas
- EU monitoring and reporting on the conservation status of
- EU Funds for peatland conservation and restoration
- Fair share of BD Annex I species popul. is covered with SPA-s
- More info on bird values – update of IBA/SPA-s is needed

# Peatland waders as ideal indicators

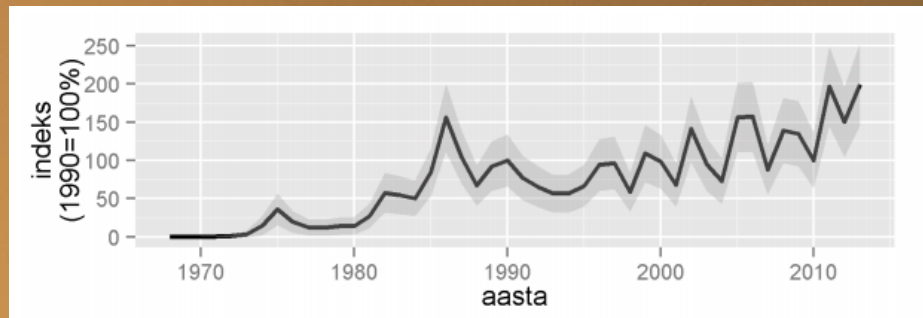


- Long term past drainage, peat mining and land use change effects (80% of peatlands affected, 90% of fens lost!)
- Extremely sensitive on water regime changes
- Very sensitive on open habitat overgrowth (drainage, air pollution, climate change)
- Sensitive on climate change due to changing feeding, breeding, migration, predation and other conditions

# Peatland waders as alarming indicators



Nigula NR: Composite trend index of bog waders: PLUAPR, TRIGLA; NUMPHA



Nigula NR: Composite trend index of dedrophilic songbirds: PHYLUS, ANTTRI, FRICOE

# Bog margins and grouses



- Majority of bog margins affected by drainage
- Large-scale degradation of the grouse habitats
- Capercaillie and Black Grouse population crashes
- Hydrology- and habitat restoration is only starting slowly

# EIA system and peatland birds

The background of the slide features a photograph of two peatland birds, likely grebes, on a body of water. The bird in the foreground is in sharp focus, showing its dark body and a prominent, spiky crest of white and black feathers. The second bird is visible in the background, slightly out of focus. The water is calm, and the overall lighting is soft, suggesting a dawn or dusk setting.

- EIA is not independent audit, but developer expect to pay and buy the favorable opinion
- Lack of high-quality and professional experts, lack of a quantitative risk assessments and data
- Natura assessments are frequently formal, incompetent
- The EIA results not reach into permitting decisions/conditions
- Lack of mitigation and compensation measures
- No natural habitat recovery plans and/or fiscal resources

# Problems of the peat harvesting:

The decision making on the list of peat harvesting areas has not been open and transparent process – conflicts with (bird) conservation and other public interests

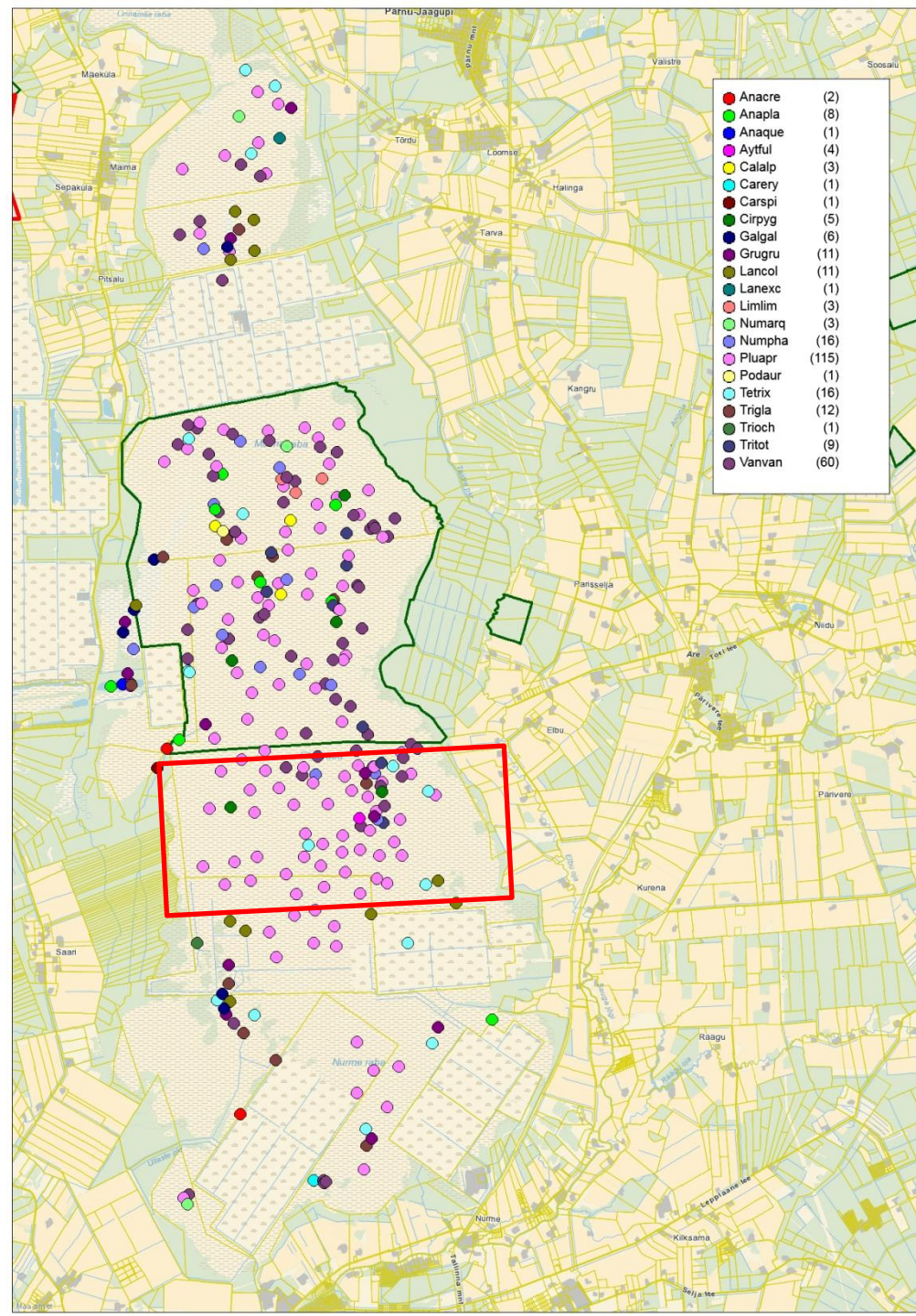
- Drainage of peat fields and surrounding wetland
- Large areas left exposed and unnatural for long period
- Good peatland bird habitat restoration is not part of the closure
- Large abandoned areas from the past not yet restored
- Post-Paris need of peat industry and the government to change:
  - Greening the peat industry (wet peat mining, peatland use innovation)
  - Effective and sustainable use of peat reserves and habitat restoration
  - High need for complex solutions for the complicated problems



# Elbu bog complex:

According the new bird survey:

- One of the best wader populations
- Qualifying as IBA/SPA
- Baltic Dunlin and Black-tailed Godwit,
- EOÜ made proposal for nature reserve for the remained natural area
- MoE has cancelled the reserve designation and will to create smaller temporary protection zone (green)
- Strong mining pressure and drainage effects
- Unsustainable peatland use
- The proposed peat mining expansion (red),
- Shall endanger the whole bird population due to large habitat loss and hydrology
- No restoration plans for existing peatfileds

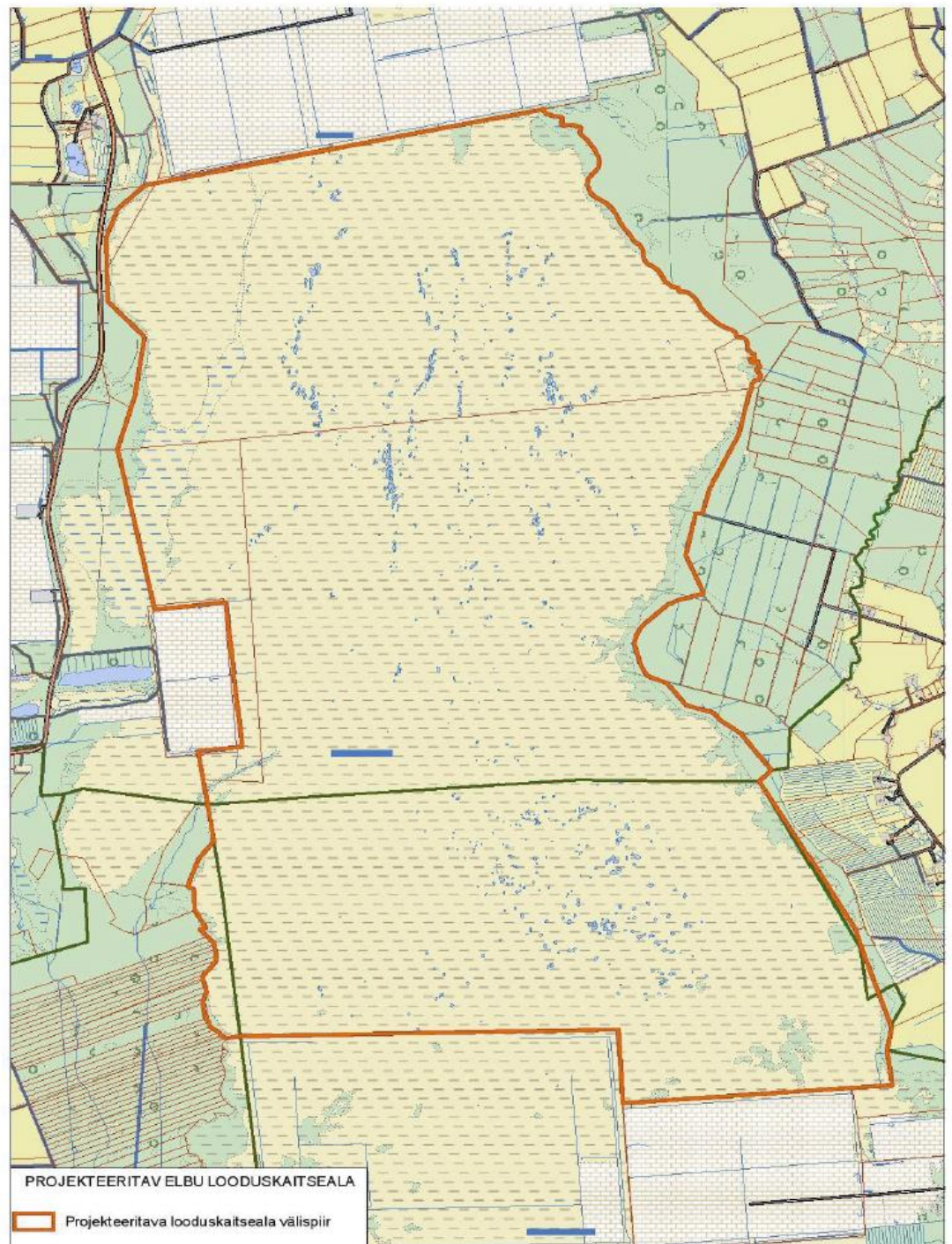


# Elbu bog

Expert recommendation on the  
reserve boundaries (red line)

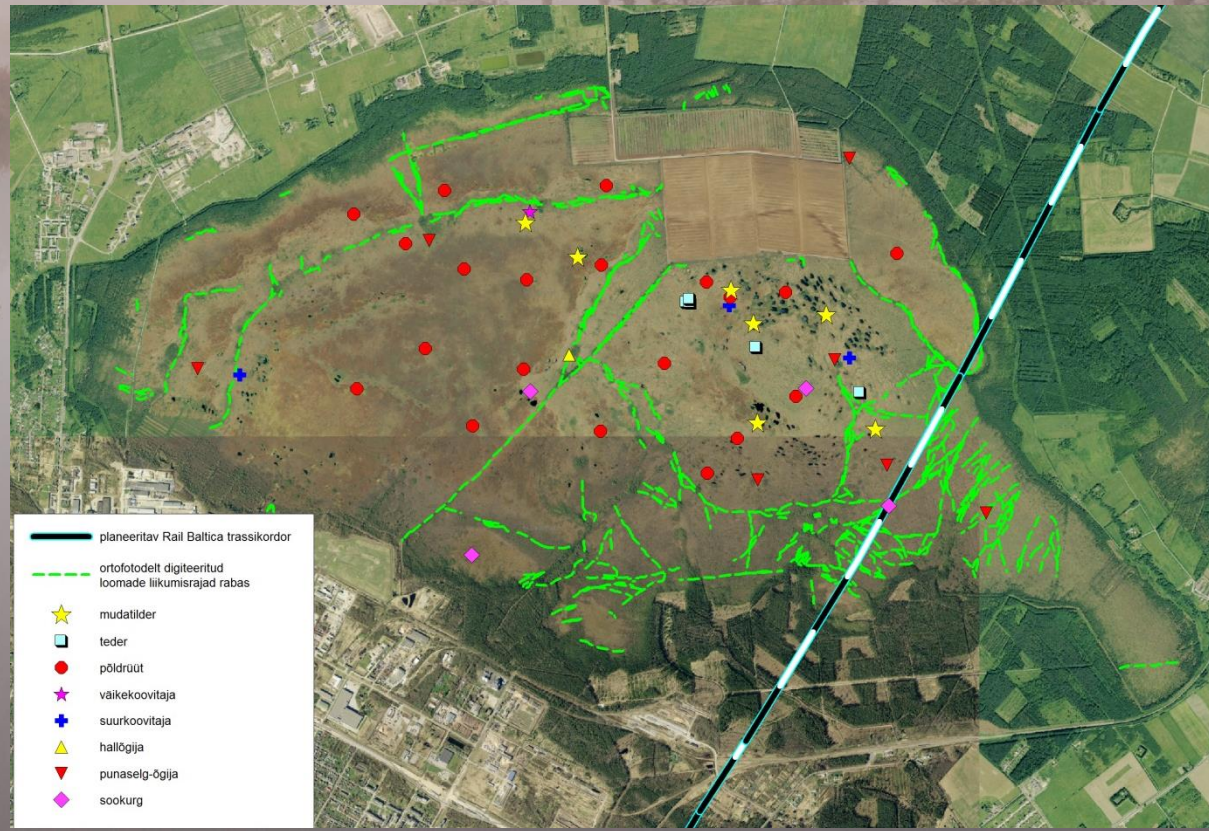
Vs.

MoE option  
(above the green line)



# Infrastructure development and peatlands

- Paikuse waste landfill near Kõrsa bog = predator attraction
- Harku-Lihula Sindi 330 Kv power line (Tuhu, Marimetsa)
- Wind farms proposed in Tootsi, Lavasaare, Elbu old peatfields
- Rail Baltica (Tootsi, Rääma, Venemurru, and others)



# Oilshale mining

Puhatu Natura 2000 area!

- Oilshale mining is threatening and degrading some of the most bird-rich peatland complexes in NE Estonia (Puhatu and others)
- Peat is removed and wasted, habitat is irreversibly destroyed

# Caution with tourism development is needed!



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mati.kose@gmail.com  
<http://matikose.photoshelter.com/>

Viru bog nature trail, lahemaa NP

Thank you for the attention!

