



City of Helsinki

www.hel.fi/en

> Housing and environment >
Nature and green areas

Birds of Lauttasaari

Tufted duck

The small tufted duck nests on the islets amongst the seagull colonies. During the migration season they descent by the flock onto the southern shore of Lauttasaari.



Arctic tern

The Arctic tern nests on the islets of Helsinki's inner archipelago. They nest both on the sea shore and in Lapland. Their migratory journeys are the longest in the bird world, with the birds spending their winters in Antarctica.



Common tern

The common tern has a black tip on its beak, whilst the Arctic tern has a fully red beak. It spends its winter in tropical oceans, and common terns with rings fitted in Finland have been found as far away as Australia.



Lesser black-backed gull

The lesser black-backed gull has a beautiful dark back, and is the only one of our gulls to go as far away as Africa. Many of Helsinki's lesser black-backed gulls build their nests on the roofs of houses, but the majority nest on islets.



Great black-backed gull

The great black-backed gull nowadays also nests in Helsinki's inner archipelago, and in Lauttasaari they have also nested on the roofs of houses. Previously it was a timid bird that stuck to the barren outer islets. This larger gull has flesh-coloured feet, whilst the lesser black-backed gull is more slender and has yellow feet.



Goosander

The goosander is an early nester, and its young are often swimming about and fishing by May. They build their nests under summer cottages, in holes between stones, and in boxes.



Great cormorant

This big, dark fisher perches on the rocks in an upright position, often drying off its wings. Young great cormorants spend time on Helsinki's shores, but the species does not nest here.



Text and photos: Eero Haapanen
Illustrations: Vappu Ormio
Layout and map: Mainostoimisto RED, 2016

History

Lauttasaari became a part of Helsinki in 1946. Before that it was an independent municipality, and a part of Huopalahti. 'Laru', as it is known, is fairly built up, but is 50s green, with plenty of space for trees between buildings. There are only a few of the old wooden houses left. The main building of Lauttasaari manor, which lies beside the new metro station, dates back to 1837, with the annex dating back even further to 1791.

Lauttasaari bridge was constructed in 1935. For a long time it was Finland's longest bridge. The original 0.6 km bridge was made of steel. The two current bridges were completed in 1965. For many people Lauttasaari is 'Kauttasaari', or 'through-island' in Finnish, thanks to Länsiväylä, which is Finland's busiest road.

The background of the island's original, Swedish name – Drumsö – which dates back to the 16th century is thought to be connected to the islander nickname Drumber, which means slow oaf. The name Lauttasaari came about when ferry ('Lautta' in Finnish) transportation to the island began at the start of the 1900s. The City of Helsinki regarded the area as unnecessary and declined the offer when the island's owner, Commercial Counsellor Julius Tallberg, offered the island for sale in 1912. So Tallberg founded a villa community and the beach at Hevosenkälahti, with its casino. In those days there was a horse-drawn tram link on the island. The tiny Mutterikahvila, or Cafe Mutteri, at the base of Lauttasaari bridge is a left over from the days of the ferry connection.

Lauttasaari's southern shore was fortified in the mid 19th century, with the fortification lasting until the First World War. At the end of the 1920s these military sites were transferred to the ownership of the City of Helsinki, and became used as folk parks complete with camping sites.



Experience
Helsinki Nature!

Lauttasaari

Lautta-
saari

To the sea by metro

Picture on the front page: A jellyfish by the beach



Leisurely Lauttasaari

Lauttasaari is a lively and distinctive maritime district. One of its attractions is its wonderful natural beaches. The southern shore features glaciated rock, wide shallows and rocky islets which can be reached by foot. Dotted around there are also meadows and lush common alder groves. It is possible to walk round the entire island along pathways running along the shore. From the northern shore it is possible to see Seurasaarenselkä's inner archipelago. Lauttasaari bridge is known as a Baltic herring fishing spot.

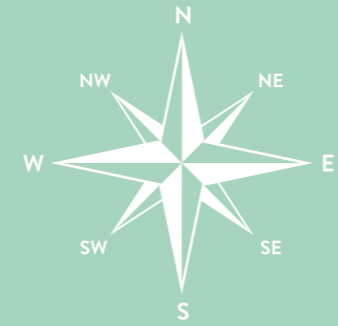
Vattuniemi, also known as Ryssänkärki

The open sea expands out in the most spectacular way at Lauttasaari's southern point. The location's old established unofficial name is Ryssänkärki. A fortification rampart built from earth and stone winds through the interior of the forest, having been constructed during the Crimean War era. The wall is now a popular digging site among Helsinki's rabbit population. The flora of the area includes Russian newcomers allysum and Turkish wartycabbage. ww

At the eastern end of the fortification wall is an anti-aircraft cannon, the likes of which were in place during the last war. Next to this is an old wooden swimming facility which is used by a swimming society. From the 1920s Eteläranta was a popular folk park among Helsinki residents, particularly as a camping destination. Later on a number of small summer huts began to appear, which are still in use today.

In front of Ryssänkärki is the island of Sisä-Hattu (Inner Hat). The island can be accessed by land when sea levels are 30 centimetres below the average water height. At these times the island can be reached without rubber boots. When the pebbled isthmus of the sea bed, stretching around a hundred metres, is revealed, plenty of sea-lovers make their way to the island by foot. Over the decades love poems in several languages of the Baltic area have been scratched into the glaciated rock. Sisä-Hattu is a popular trout trolling spot, and it is also a great place to watch birds. In the late summer across Hattu's coastal meadow pretty red lesser centaury flowers bloom.

Closer to the shore are two small islets, one of which is usually accessible with no more in the way of equipment than shoes. Lyme-grass and sea sandwort grow in depressions in the rock. The shoreline features common alders slanted by the wind and sturdy old pines. The great cormorant is a common sight on the stones on the beach. Dozens of tufted ducks and goldeneyes can be spotted gathering in the shallows in front of the beach.



The following activities are permitted in Lauttasaari

- Walking along the hiking trails and paths along the shore, including in the summer hut areas
- Swimming in areas other than swimming beaches
- Angling from Lauttasaari bridge, which is a popular spot for hook fishing for Baltic herring. This kind of fishing rod (known as 'litka' in Finnish) has no bait and no float, and a float fishing rod with a reel can be used as the rod

The following activities are prohibited in Lauttasaari

- Letting dogs off the lead
- Making open fires. There are no public grilling spots in Lauttasaari

Connections

Buses 66A and 65A go along Melkonkatu and Itälahdenkatu (final stop), which is half a kilometre from Eteläranta. Bus 20 runs along Isokaari around Myllykallio to the north-west corner of Lauttasaari (final stop). The metro will arrive in Lauttasaari in Autumn 2016, with the station on Gyldenintie, which is half a kilometre from Myllykallio and Hevosenkälähti.

Myllykallio

Myllykallio has a bedrock forest at its peak. From the top it is possible to see the ancient shore from the times of the Littorina Sea. The summit also features a bird tower from where you can see far out to sea in all directions. During the migratory period the tower is busy with bird watchers armed with binoculars. Myllykallio is also home to anti-aircraft cannons from the last war. Isokaari, which runs adjacent, is Helsinki's only road lined with crab apple trees. Around Whit Sunday the roadside trees come into bloom with white and radiant red flowers.

Hevosenkälähti and Länsiulapanniemi

The water area from Hevosenkälähti all the way to Länsiulapanniemi is also very flat and attracts water birds. Wading in the waters close to the beach in the late summer you may come across jellyfish. Hevosenkälähti beach is home to Lauttasaari sports park, which features plenty of activity equipment and games areas. It is free and open year round.

In keeping with its name, Tiiraluoto ('Tern Islet') became Helsinki's first protected nature reserve in 1948. Next to Tiiraluoto, on the island of Nahkahousut, there is a still-functional wooden boat dock dating from the 1920s. Länsiulapanniemi features the area's most extensive summer hut area. Mighty pines twisted by the winds grow in the sandy fortress ramparts on the shore. On the glaciated rock on the beach is a small but beautifully shaped giant's kettle, amongst the roots of a small fir tree, close to the sauna beach of the police summer house.