



City of Helsinki

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Nature and green areas

A natural meadow surrounded by the sea

Kallahdenniemi has no large areas of rock and post-glacial rebound. Along its beach is a natural meadow which was protected in 1993, and which – thanks to the post-glacial rebound – has risen out of the sea over the last couple of hundred years. It is less than a metre above sea level, and often remains underwater in autumn and winter. Autumn storms and ice floes brought by the high water have prevented trees from taking hold of the central part of the meadow.

Flora of Kallahti



Bird's foot trefoil, purple-loosestrife and dotted loosestrife

At the edge of the water is a band of common reeds, whilst the drier part of the meadow is home to lower-growing plants. The shrubs along the meadow's edge provide nesting locations for the common whitethroat and the red-backed shrike. The yellow cinquefoils and bird's foot trefoils, purple-loosestrifes, and white valeriana sambucifolia give the meadow an array of colours.

Beach rose

The edges of the meadow are home to an abundant beach rose population. Originally from Asia, and easily invasive, the beach rose is classified as one of the most harmful alien species, so the population in Kallahdenniemi has been monitored closely.



Adder's tongue fern

Belonging to the fern family, the one-leaved adder's tongue fern is one of the meadow's specialities.



Beach Pea

Spread through the sand, the sea sandwort and beach pea are halophytes, or plants that require the salinity of seawater.



The villa Åsa, belonging to the family of Torolf Lassenius – who wrote a book on Kallahti, was constructed in 1908.

Take a look in the direction of a common goldeneye

The rocks at the outer tip of the peninsular are a popular spot for those looking for the common goldeneye, and with a bit of luck and a good eye you might be able to see the white-tailed eagle and the ruddy turnstone from there too. During the migratory season the common goldeneye, tufted duck, greater scaup and smew gather in the shallow waters nearby. In the autumn flocks of swans linger in the shallows.

Old villas and the countryside of a bygone era

Fishermen's crofts were the oldest settlements on Kallahdeniemi. Several of these were later converted to be used as villas. The first villa was built in 1885. On the shore in the central part of the peninsular dozens of beautiful villas belonging to the nobility sprung up from the beginning of the 1900s all the way through to the 1960s. Several of these are inhabited year-round these days. Some beautiful villas were constructed in sand pits, which were reworked to become gardens.

In 1939 legendary runner Paavo Nurmi commissioned a villa and a beach sauna on the small island of Porsassaari, on the northern shore of Kallahdeniemi, with its own separate bridge.

Until the Second World War, transport to the villas was by steamboat from Helsinki's Northern Harbour. The area was countryside, lying far outside Helsinki right up until the 1950s.

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Layout and map: Mainostoimisto RED, 2016*

Experience
Helsinki Nature!

Kallahdenniemi

Kallahden-
niemi

A pine esker and
a sandy beach



Helsinki's most impressive esker

Kallahdenniemi is a grand esker peninsular jutting out from Vuosaari. Due to its sandy soil, it features a rugged, bright pine forest atypical for Helsinki. The beaches on the peninsular are wide, beautiful, and sandy. The esker continues into the sea as an underwater sandbank.

The whole peninsular is part of a national conservation programme for eskers. The peaceful esker has been protected as a separate nature reserve, as has the meadow created by post-glacial rebound at the tip of the peninsular. Both nature reserves and the water area surrounding the peninsular are included in the European Union's Natura 2000 network of valuable natural sites.

During migratory periods, water birds and waders gather in the sandy shallows. When water levels are low, large areas of the sandy beach are left exposed. At these times it is possible to walk to the nearby islets without even getting your feet wet.

Getting about in Kallahti

When the ground is not frozen, the only way to move around the nature reserve is via the paths and the causeway running across the meadow. The causeway goes to the tip of the peninsular, which was once a separate island. Its name, Kuningatar (Queen), is the Finnish translation of the old Swedish place name Drottningholmen. In the 19th century the island was home to a fishing croft, which was rented out as a villa by Carl-Gustav Estlander. In the 1960s the City of Helsinki's Place Name Committee christened two neighbouring islands Prinsessa (Princess) and Prinssi (Prince). Voirasia (butter tub) was the old place name.

Please note! The gardens of the villas at the tip of the peninsular are private areas.

During icy winters the sea area surrounding the peninsular is popular with skiers. The underwater esker forms shallows in the open sea, where the ice – due to the current – can remain weak. One particularly dangerous spot is the southern end of the island of Santinen.

Literature: *Torolf Lassenius, Elämää Vuosaaren Kallahdessa [Life in Vuosaari's Kallahti]. Helsinki City Museum 1997.*



The following activities are permitted in the area

- Relaxing and fishing at the tip of the peninsular on the rocks of Kuningatar
- Picking berries and mushrooms
- Using the campfire shelter at the beach, with your own wood or barbecue charcoal
- Walking about in areas of the peninsular other than the beach with a dog on a lead

The following activities are prohibited in the area

- Walking outside the marked paths in the nature reserve
- Walking through the villas' gardens
- Making fires anywhere other than in the campfire sites on the beach

Connections and services

From the tip of the peninsular Meri-Rastila and Vuosaari metro stations are approximately three kilometres away. The area is easily reachable by bike.

At the base of the peninsular, in the western inlet, is Iso Kallahti beach, which is supervised from June to the beginning of August. Next to the beach is the summer restaurant Maininki, which is housed in an old noble villa. The tiny café Villa Ullas, which operates out of an old fishing cabin, can be found by the beach on the eastern base of the peninsular. The café is open year round.

There is a parking area by Kallahdenniemi beach. The beach is supervised and there is a summer café next to the beach. There is also a grilling shelter and toilet at the site.



Protected esker

The esker was protected and became a nature reserve in 1973. The pines are a century and a half old, as tall as columns and knot-free. Many of them feature old black woodpecker nesting holes, which are now home to stock doves and common gold-eyes. The stock dove coos can be heard throughout the summer from the heights of the crowns.

Back down on the ground the rugged habitat is covered by sprigs, bearberries, crowberries and lingonberries.

Tall pines

Kallahti esker opens Kallahdenniemi, with the tall esker home to an old pine forest and falling away to open sea along both sides. The area is known as Helsinki's Punkaharju (an area of eastern Finland home to some of Finland's tallest trees).

Sand was taken from the esker's beaches at the end of the 19th century to help with Helsinki's construction needs. Transportation in those days was by water. The sites from which the sand was removed now have growing stock and are covered by vegetation, but they can be identified from the shape of the terrain. Between 1937 and 1978 the large Saseka cement factory was in operation on the eastern site of the peninsular. A new housing area for Vuosaari has been built on the old factory site.