

## ASPSKÄR ISLANDS

- Location:** 60° 16' N, 26° 25' E.  
The islands are situated in the eastern part of the Gulf of Finland, in the province of Southern Finland and in the municipality of Pernaja.
- Area:** 727 ha, comprising 691 ha of water and 36 ha of land.
- Protection status:** The islands are in private ownership and have been protected as a nature conservation area since 1923. The area is already included in the Ramsar Convention sites and in the Natura 2000 network of protected areas.
- Site description:** The area includes the island group of Aspskär with the nearby islets and the surrounding waters. The site is in outer archipelago. Haverören Island west of Aspskär is included in the site. Islands are for the most part treeless; some Alder (*Alnus glutinosa*) wood and coniferous forest grow on the main islands.
- International and national importance:**  
Breeding bird fauna is abundant and diverse. In 1993 there were altogether 1 600 pairs of breeding birds in the area. Bird fauna includes (1993) e.g. Eider (*Somateria mollissima*) with 57 pairs, Tufted Duck (*Aythya fuligula*) 11 pairs, Common Scoter (*Melanitta fusca*) 5 pairs, Redshank (*Tringa totanus*) 6 pairs, Turnstone (*Arenaria interpres*) 10 pairs, Great Black-backed Gull (*Larus marinus*) 7 pairs, Herring Gull (*L. argentatus*) 526 pairs, Common Gull (*L. canus*) 245 pairs, Arctic Tern (*Sterna paradisaea*) 36 pairs, Razorbill (*Alca torda*) 400 pairs, Guillemot (*Uria aalge*) 26 pairs and Black Guillemot (*Cepphus grylle*) 138 pairs.
- Protection criteria:** 2b and 3b.
- Changes in ecological character:**  
The vegetation in the area is becoming more diverse and this has created new breeding places available for the birds.
- Management measures:**  
Capture of American Minks (*Mustela vison*) has been intensified
- Possible threats:** Oil accidents are possible because of nearby busy fairways. The increasing American Mink (*Mustela vison*) population may cause great damages.
- Research:** The Finnish Game and Fisheries Research Institute monitors annually the development of archipelago bird populations.

**References:**

Haapanen & Rassi 1980, Hilden & Hario 1993, The Archives of the Finnish Game and Fisheries Research Institute 1980-1989, Finnish Legislative Collection 44/76, Rautavaara 1975, Weckman 1993.