

VEGETATION

The forests in the area consist mainly of Norway spruce (*Picea abies*) growing on fresh and grove-like upland sites. Verdant groves can also be found along the streams running into Lake Pielinen and at the foot of steep cliffs. Less fertile sites (dry and dryish upland sites) are located on the tops and western slopes of the hills. There is not very much wetland in the area, the main sites being the rocky gorges and lower parts of the slopes. The birch (*Betula* spp.) stands, clearings and natural meadows, relicts from the time of slash-and-burn agriculture, bring considerable variety to the nature in the area.

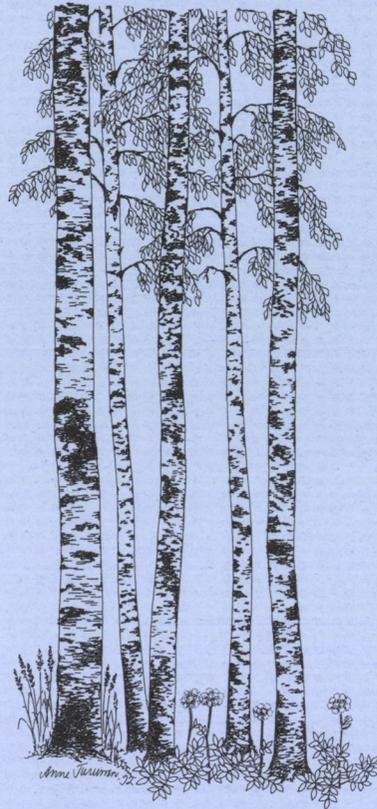
The Koli National Park is an area where many threatened plants are growing. The most important of them are to be found in groves and fertile fens.

FAUNA

The fauna in the park is typical of northern Karelia. The bird species to be found in the greatest numbers are chaffinch (*Fringilla coelebs*), willow warbler (*Phylloscopus trochilus*), robin (*Erithacus rubecula*) and wood warbler (*Phylloscopus sibilatrix*). Wood grouse (*Tetrao urogallus*), greenish warbler (*Phylloscopus trochiloides*), wren (*Troglodytes troglodytes*) and the three-toed woodpecker (*Picoides tridactylus*), which is a threatened species, all thrive in old forest. Water birds are represented by divers (*Gavia* spp.) and many species of duck and gull.

Mammals regularly sighted in the park are elk (*Alces alces*), fox (*Vulpes vulpes*), pine marten (*Martes martes*), lynx (*Lynx lynx*) and hare (*Lepus*). Bears (*Ursus arctos*) also occasionally move through the area. A threatened species of mammal that lives in the park is the Russian flying squirrel (*Pteromys volans*), whose natural habitat is old mixed forest with aspen (*Populus tremula*) hollowed out by woodpeckers.

The most important, extremely threatened invertebrate species in the Koli area are *Bulgarica cana*, which is only known in Finland from Koli, and *Solva interrupta* which has only been found in one other place in Finland.



SETTLEMENT AND CULTURAL HISTORY

Settlements based on slash-and-burn agriculture appeared in the Pielinen area at the end of the 15th century. However, the Koli hill region was for long nothing but uninhabited backwoods, and was regarded as a frightening place suitable for sacrificial rites. Settlements were finally established on the edges of the hills in the 18th century. Slash-and-burn agriculture and forest grazing continued right up until the beginning of this century.

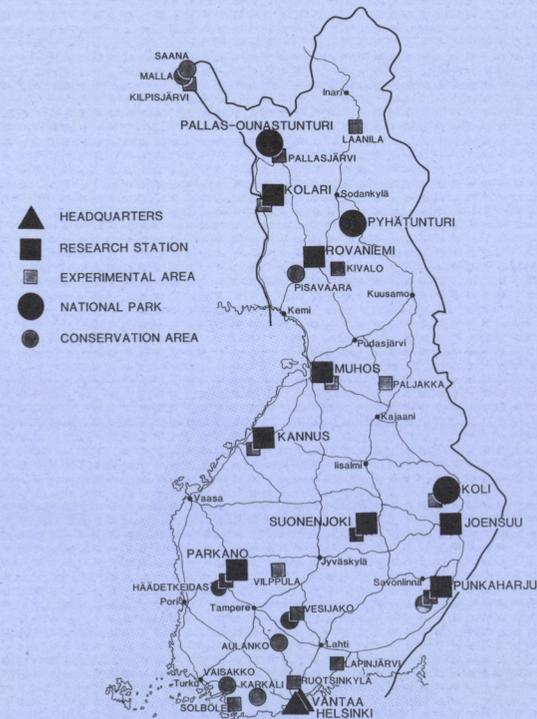
At the turn of the century the rise of national romanticism resulted in a strong Karelian movement, and the Koli landscape provided many famous writers, artists and composers with inspiration for their work. For instance, Jean Sibelius, Akseli Gallen-Kallela, and Eero Järnefelt were visitors to Koli. At the same time Koli also became a well known tourist attraction.

THE FINNISH FOREST RESEARCH INSTITUTE METLA

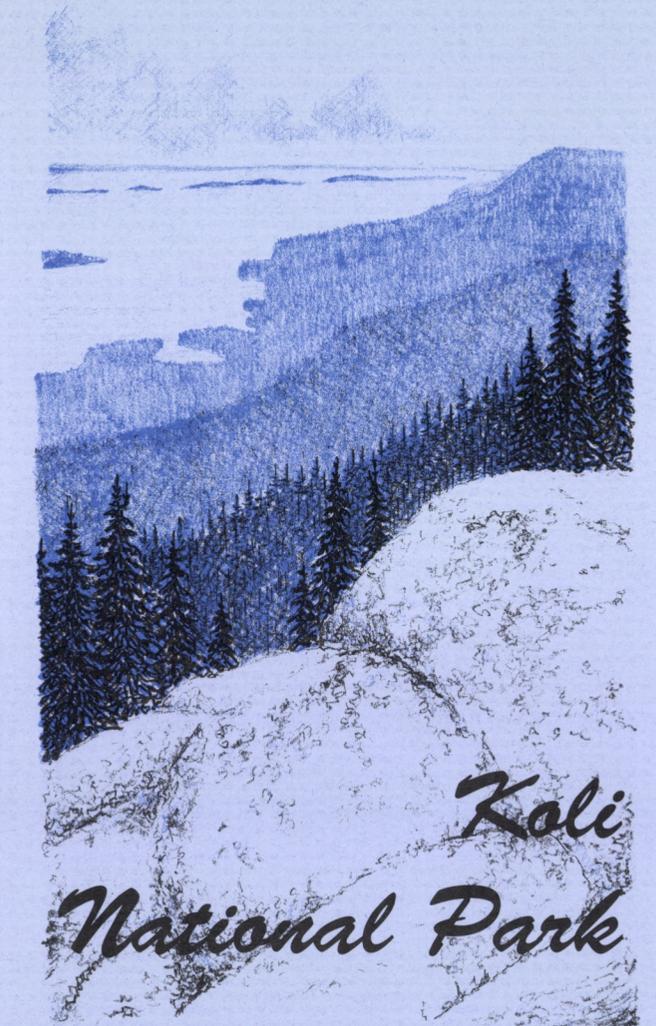
METLA is a state research institute, founded in 1917, with the task of producing information about the principles of sustained forestry, Finland's forest resources and state of health of its forests, as well as different forms of forest use.

METLA's headquarters are located in the Greater Helsinki area. There are eight research stations in different parts of the country responsible for local research and experimental activity. In order to ensure the continuity of long-term research METLA, manages about 140,000 ha of research forest, of which 60,000 ha are nature conservation areas.

The research work carried out in the Koli National Park by METLA covers the management and use of nature conservation areas, and forest growth and genetics.



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THE KOLI NATIONAL PARK

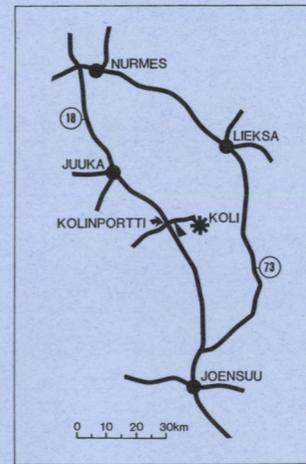
The Koli National Park was established in 1991. It is located on the western side of Lake Pielinen, near to the city of Lieksa. The total area of the park is 1,135 ha, including 186 ha of lakes and waterways. The park is to be enlarged to an area of about 2,500 ha.

The forests in the area are characteristic of the western parts of the northern coniferous forest zone, and the topography ranges from the open water landscapes of the Lake District to the rugged hills of Karelia. The central part of the park contains the Koli Hills, with the lake landscape of Pielinen opening out to the north and east. The tops of the rocky hills, the wild spruce forests, and the birch stands and clearings left by slash-and-burn agriculture, provide a wide range of natural settings in the area. Nature and the landscapes of Koli have been a source of inspiration for many artists ever since the end of the last century.

GEOLOGY AND LANDSCAPE

The Koli hills are located in the border zone between two areas with different-aged parent rock. The area to the east of the hills is the oldest in Finland, the bedrock having been formed about 3,000 million years ago. The area on the western side of the range of hills is considerably younger, about 2,000 million years old. The bedrock in eastern Finland became warped and folded about 1,800 million years ago as the continental plates were forced against each other. This range of hills, corresponding to the Alps, was formed as a result. Weathering and a number of ice ages have, however, worn them down to their present size.

The glaciers retreated from the area about 9,000 years ago. Many of the features characteristic of the Koli area were formed during the last ice age, e.g. the eskers that developed as the glaciers retreated. The most impressive of these eskers is the string of eskers dominating the landscape of Lake Pielinen. The marks left by the ice age can also be seen in the highest parts of the Koli Hills in the form of smooth rock faces with channels and grooves in the surface. The hilltops consist of rocky ridges running parallel to the direction of movement of the glaciers, with steep bluffs on the northeastern side, intersected by gorge-like valleys.



RULES FOR PARK USERS

PERMITTED

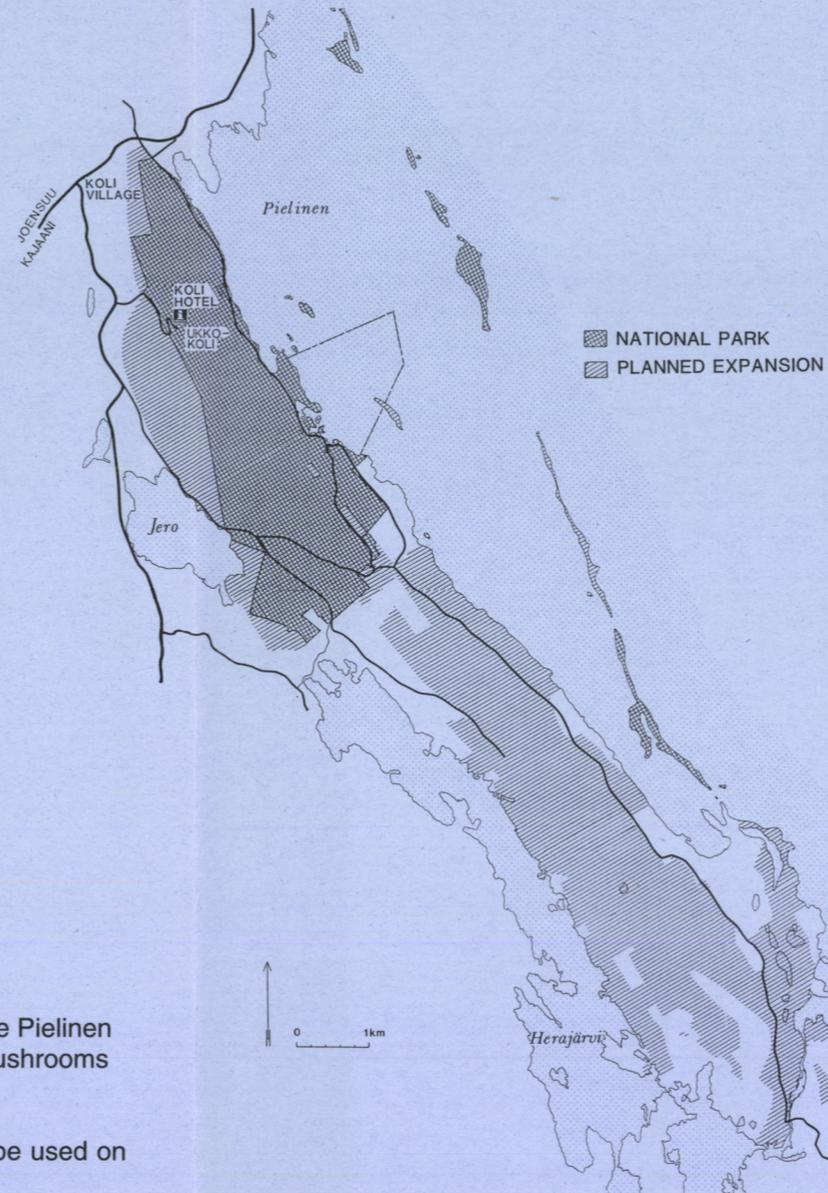
- * movement by foot, ski and boat on Lake Pielinen
- * the picking of forest berries and wild mushrooms

RESTRICTED

- * motor vehicles and bicycles may only be used on the roads
- * fire-lighting is permitted only at the points indicated

FORBIDDEN

- * discarding litter, damaging the soil or vegetation, disturbing the animals or carrying out any other activity likely to affect nature or damage buildings in the area
- * camping



MAPS

- * Finnish Road Map GT 9, 1:200,000
- * Tourist map of Northern Karelia, 1:200,000
- * Basic maps N:o 4313 08-12, 1:20,000
- * Koli hiking and nature trails, 1:20,000

HIKING AND GUIDANCE

The best way to see and enjoy the park is by hiking. There are a number of alternative trails and a nature trail available for hikers. A trail map and nature trail guide can be bought from the office of the Finnish Forest Research Institute, the Koli Hotel and Kolinportti. The trails all start at the park's Ylä-Koli guide-board, next to the Koli Hotel. There are camp-fire sites at Ikolanaho and on two of the islands off Koli. Camping is strictly forbidden in the park. Skiing is the best way to move around in the park during winter. The length of the trails and skiing tracks varies from 3 to 8 km. In addition to the trails, there are connecting skiing tracks from Koli to the Kopravaara and Loma-Koli tracks.

The information centre of the Kolinportti nature reservation is located at Ahmovaara, at the Koli cross-roads on the Joensuu-Kajaani road (trunk road N:o 18). A display of photographs and computer graphics provides information about the Koli National Park, as well as the Patvinsuo and Petkeljärvi National Parks and the Ruunaa hiking and nature conservation area, all managed by the National Board of Forestry.

TRAFFIC CONNECTIONS

Road connections to the area are shown on the accompanying map. There are bus services from the Joensuu and Kajaani areas, and access by boat from Joensuu, Lieksa, Nurmes and Vuonismaa. The boat to Lieksa is a car ferry.

FURTHER INFORMATION

- The Finnish Forest Research Institute
- * The Koli National Park, ph. (973) 672 205
 - * Joensuu Research Station, ph. (973) 1514 000
 - * Department of Forest Production, ph. (90) 857 051