



03.03.2021.

Coastal tourism & coastal environment

IN: NATIONAL LONG-TERM THEMATIC PLAN FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF PUBLIC INFRASTRUCTURE OF THE BALTIC SEA COAST (THE COASTAL PLAN)



EUROPEAN
REGIONAL
DEVELOPMENT
FUND



Vides aizsardzības un
reģionālās attīstības
ministrija

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Nocticus Ltd

Framework of the research

Latvia, 2019 | 2020

Assessment of the Baltic Sea coast visitor flow, its environmental pressure and public infrastructure

Research data are used by the Ministry of Environmental Protection and Regional Development of the Republic of Latvia within the framework of the *Interreg Baltic Sea Region Transnational Cooperation Program's* project #R098 “**Land-Sea-Act**” for the national long-term thematic plan for the development of public infrastructure of the Baltic Sea coast (the **Coastal Plan**) **Interim report** (2016-2019) including monitoring data (key performance indexes) and proposals for sustainable development



Made by:
Nocticus, Ltd

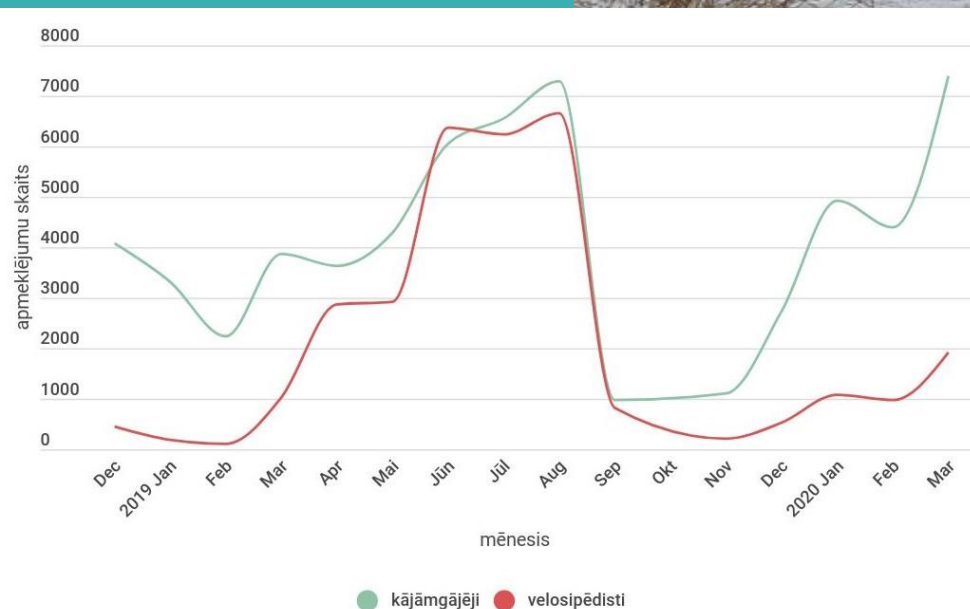
Authors:
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protection
Jāņa Sēta Ltd, GIS and cartography specialists (Mareks
Kilups, Dāvis Immurs, Agris Puriņš)
Jānis Ulme, environmental expert on marine litter

Demand for
nature space,
including
coastal areas
has rapidly
increased
during Covid-19

21.02.2021

Baltic Sea coast:
Saulkrasti-Carnikava

Foto: Mārtiņš Pakalniņš

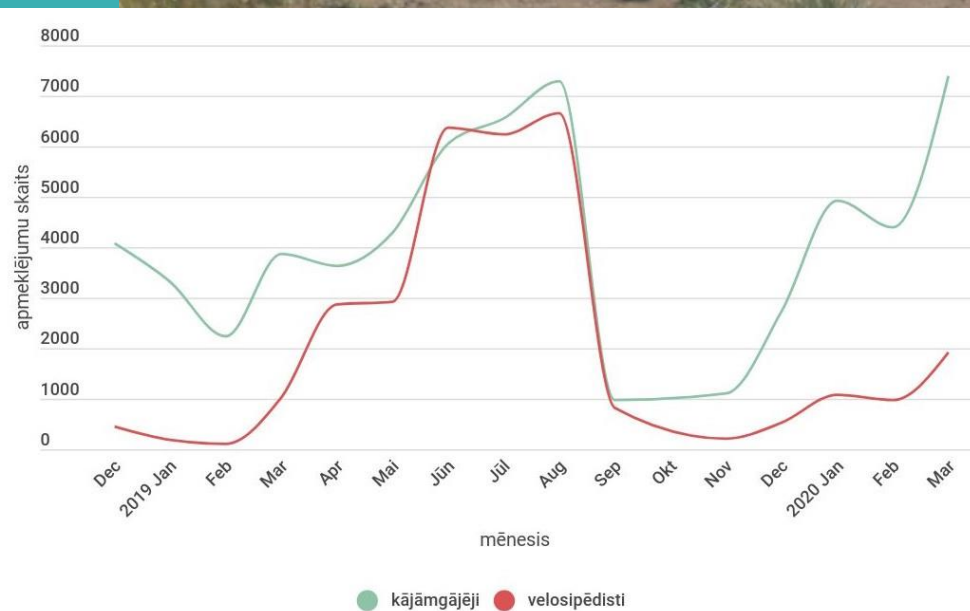


Data from visitor counters
(Carnikava municipality),
analyzed & visualized by —
VIA Hespi, 2021

21.08.2019

pastaiga pludmalē:
Saulkrasti-Carnikava

Foto: Andris Klepers

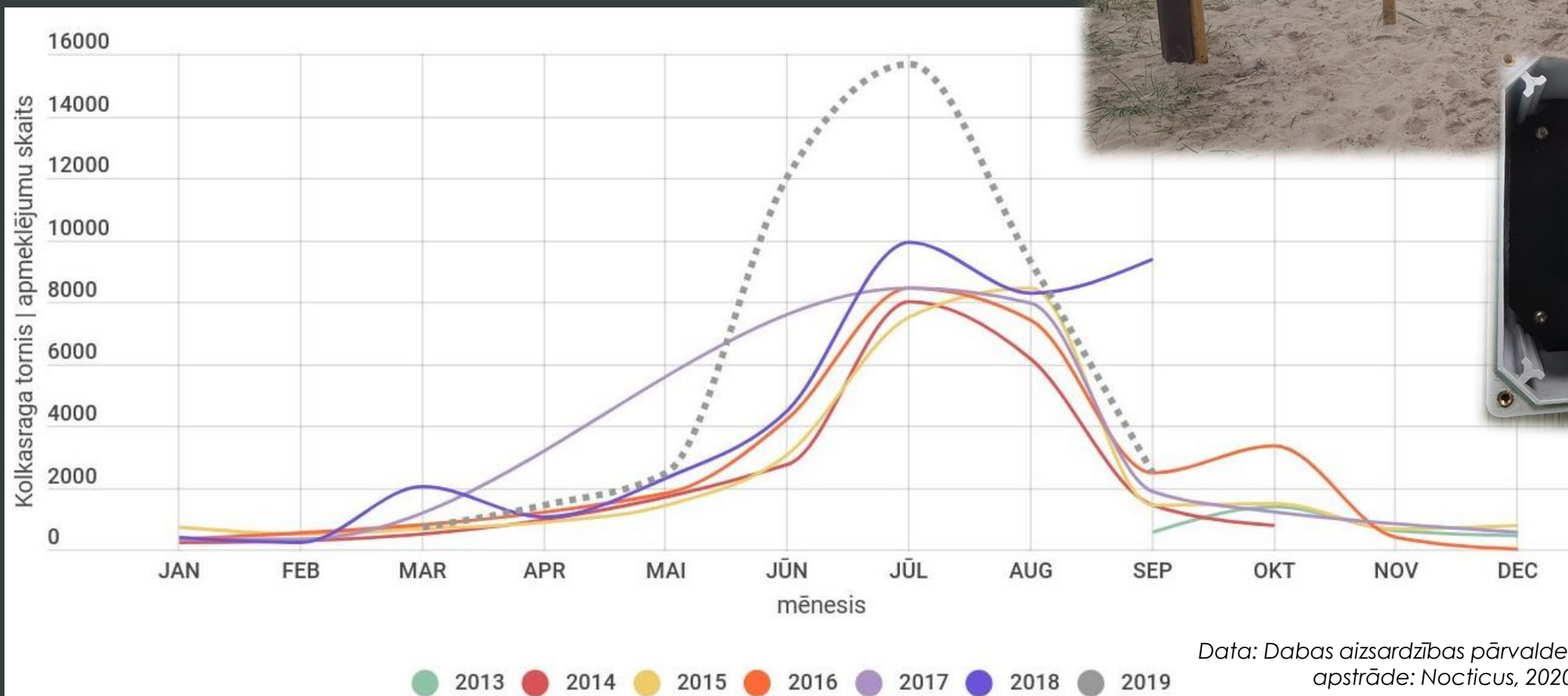


Dati: Carnikavas novada pašvaldība, apmeklētāju automātiskie
skaitītāji, 2020, ViA HESPI datu apstrāde un vizualizācija

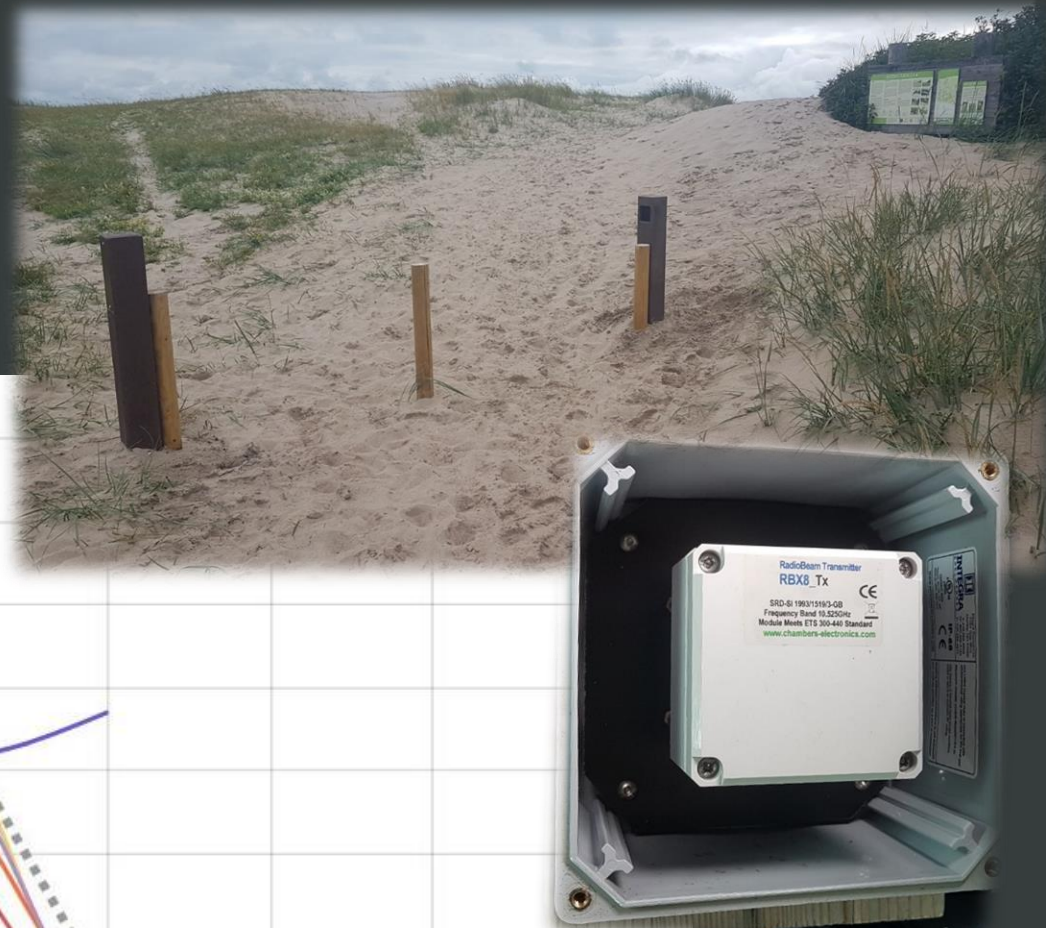


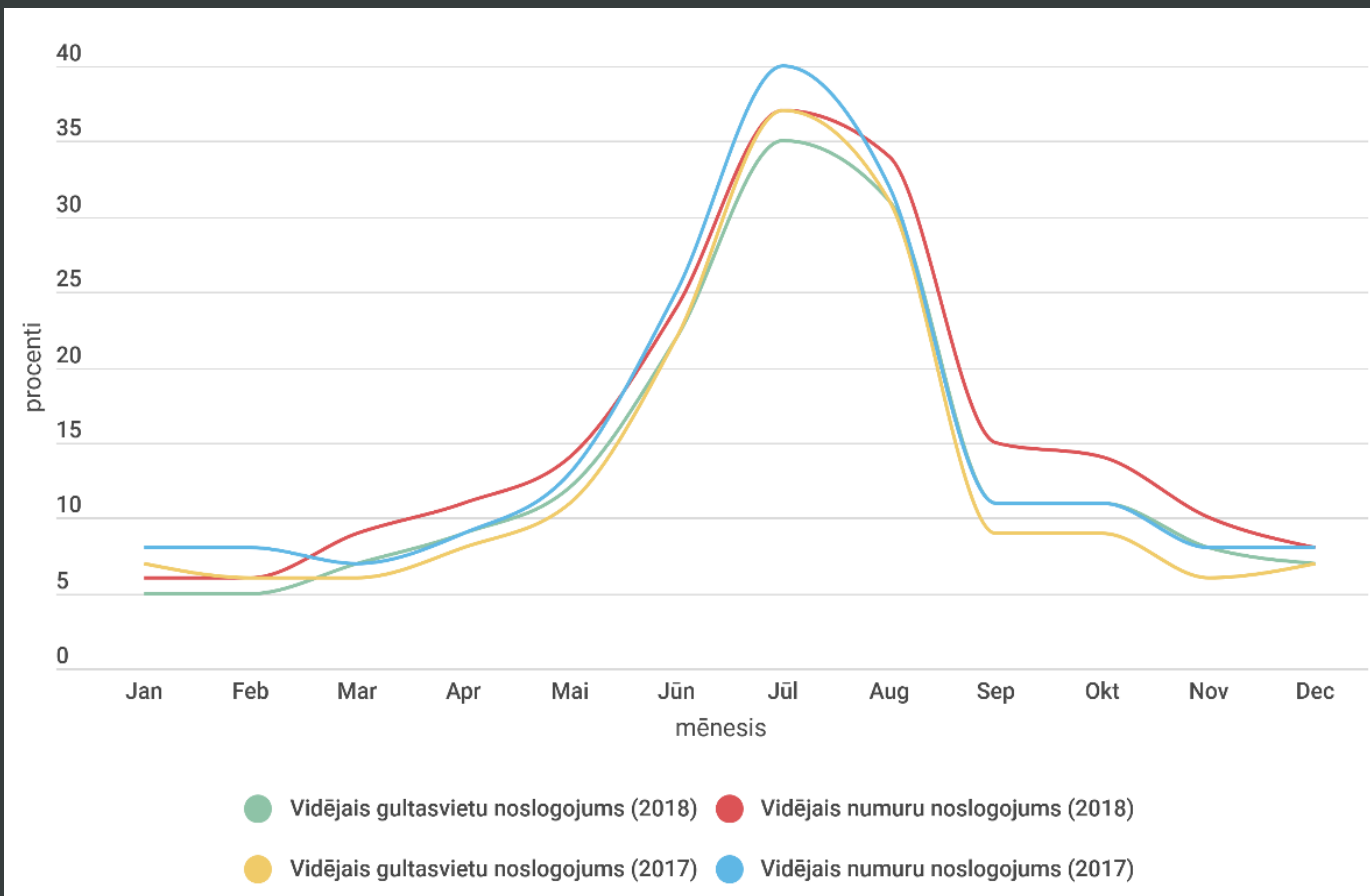
Estimation of the number of
visitors

Visitor counting methodology and technological advances for monitoring



Data: Dabas aizsardzības pārvalde,
apstrāde: Nocticus, 2020





- the capacity of tourist accommodation on the coastal region has increased by **26%** in less than five years (to 7283 numbers in 2019)
- more than a third of Latvia's tourist accommodation is located in coastal municipalities

Seasonality of the visitor flow

Impact of the rapid seasonality due to limited optimal climatic conditions for beach holidays, pronounced holiday season, dominant passive beach recreation motives

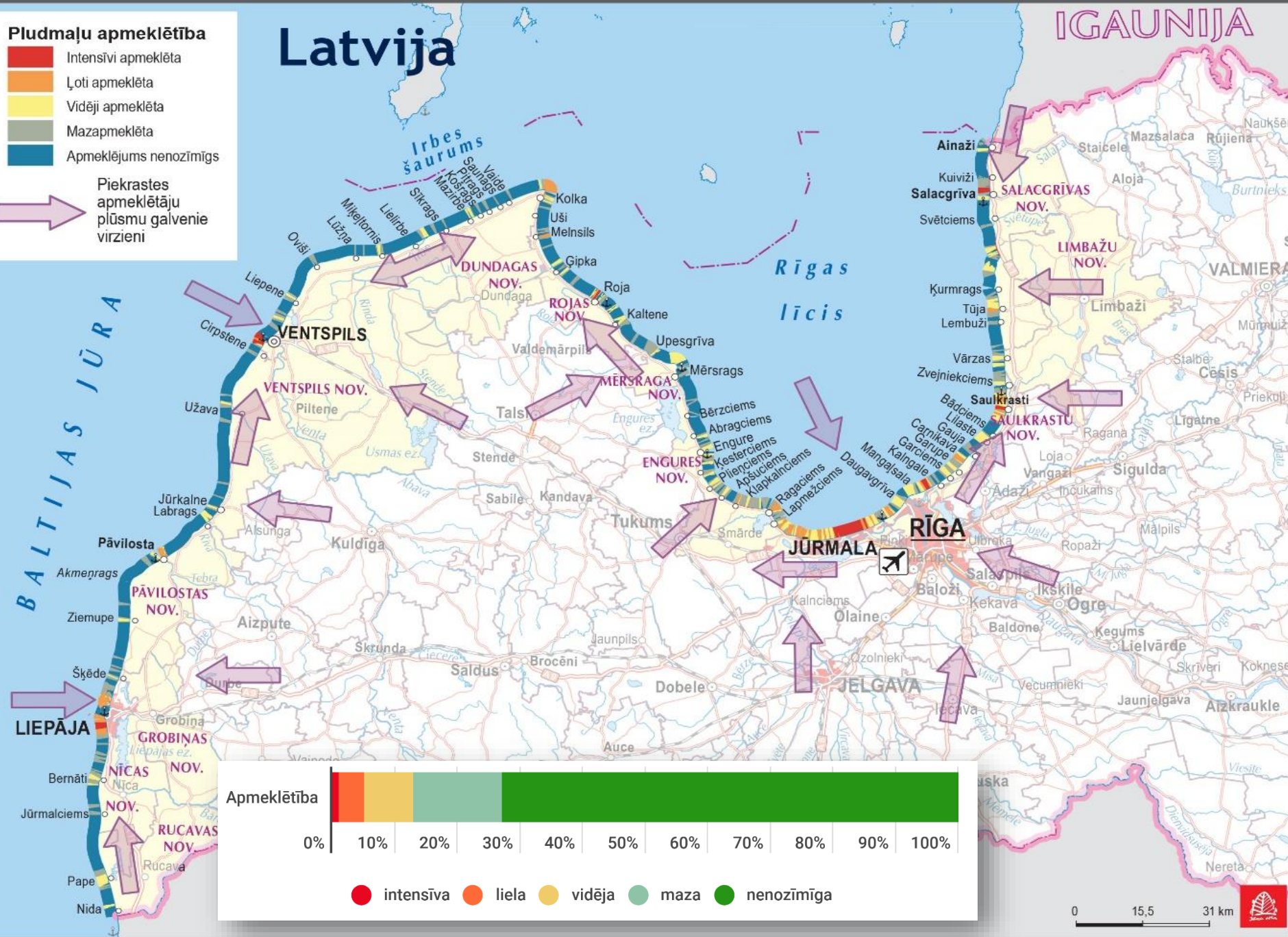
The occupancy rate of tourist accommodation beds outside urban areas in coastal municipalities is on average 10.7% per year. Only Jūrmala (45.6%) and Liepāja (39.9%) had a higher load. In other municipalities it fluctuated between 9.2% (in Roja municipality) and 19.7% (in Ventspils).



Pludmaļu apmeklētība



Piekastes
apmeklētāju
plūsmu galvenie
virzieni



Apmeklētība

0% 10% 20% 30% 40% 50% 60% 70% 80% 90% 100%

intensīva liela vidēja maza nenozīmīga

Intensity of the
visits in 2019
and main
directions of
the coastal
visitor flow

The estimated
number of visits to
the Baltic Sea coast
of Latvian territory in
2019 reached **8
million** (4.7 million in
2015)

- Compared to 2015, the **intensity of attendance has increased**. 11.6 km of beaches are intensively visited (~ 2.2%), very high attendance is 4.2% in the section (20.7 km)
- According to the standard of Mediterranean beaches (5–10 m² of beach area per holidaymaker), the beaches of the Baltic Sea coast in the territory of Latvia could **simultaneously accommodate up to one million people**, which would **not be sustainable**. In Latvia, the beach area per vacationer is at least about 50 m², but it varies greatly in different places (6 m² -1.7 ha)
- The Baltic Sea coast has steadily become **one of the most export-oriented destinations** for Latvian tourism
- The number of **foreign overnight stays exceeds 30%**. On average, one foreigner has spent 2.3 nights in coastal tourist accommodation, which is longer than in domestic regions
- Such a tourism structure gives rise to a debate on the **spatial distribution of regional tourist destinations**: the capital, the coast and the hinterland, or the traditional cultural and historical regions (?)

Welcome to Latvia

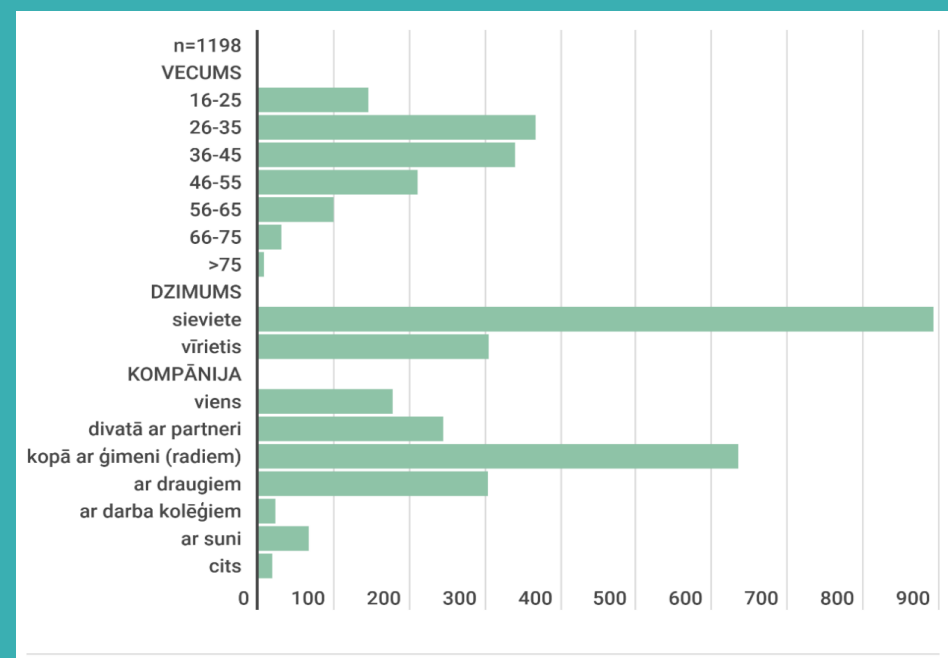
A tapestry of sea, lakes and woods, Latvia is best described as a vast, unspoilt parkland with just one real city – its cosmopolitan capital, Rīga. The country might be small, but the amount of personal space it provides is enormous. You can always secure a chunk of pristine nature all for yourself, be it for trekking, cycling or dreaming away on a white-sand beach amid pine-covered dunes.



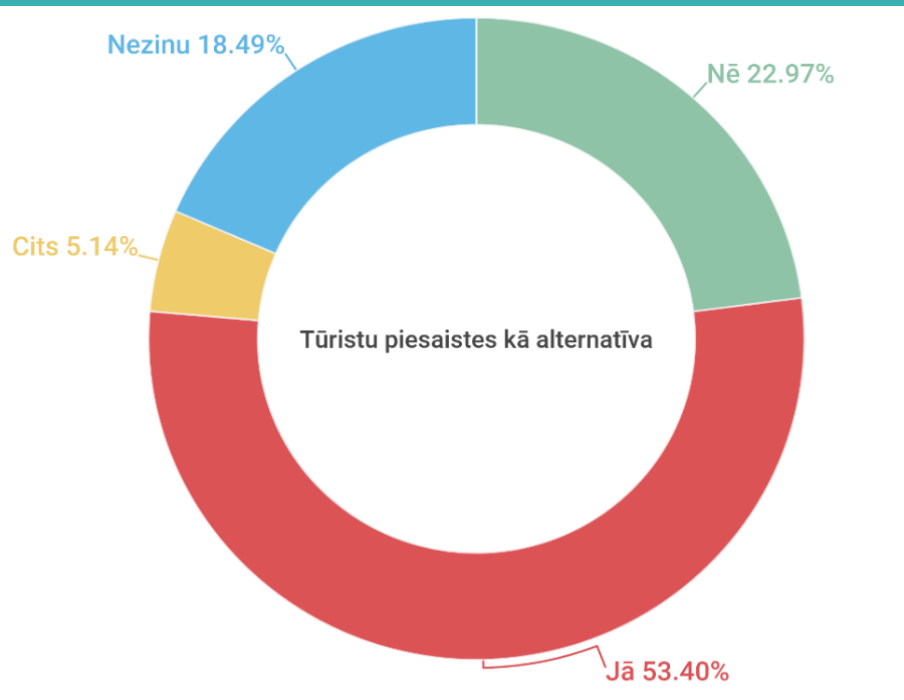


Survey of coastal visitors

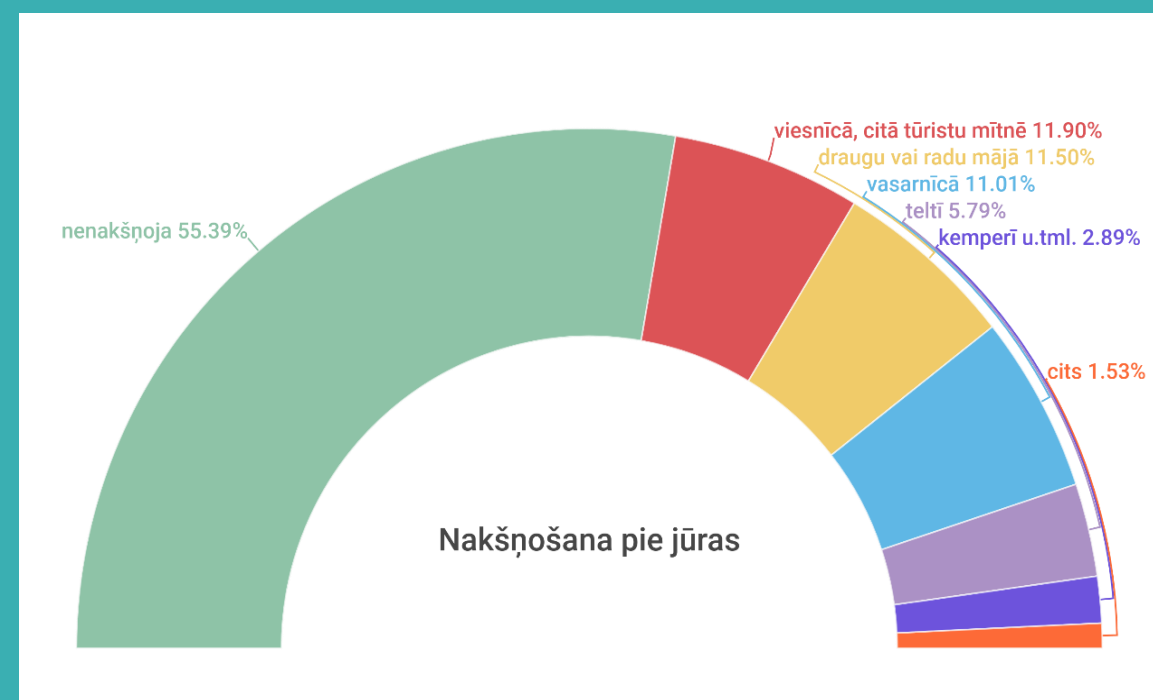
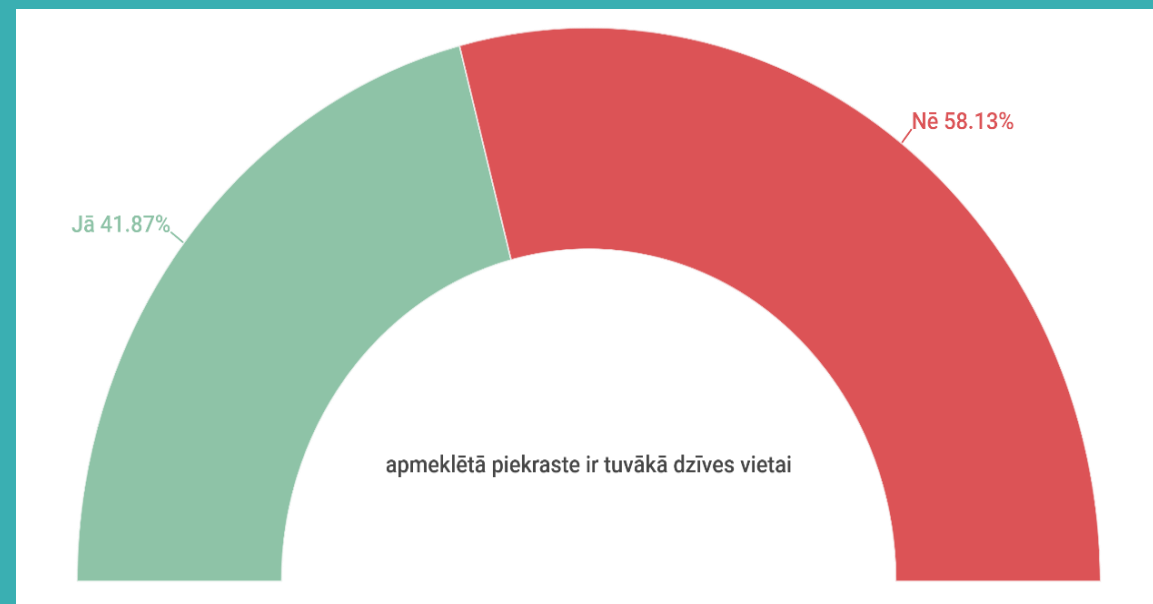
- carried out in the period from 7 July 2019 to 16 September 2019.
- A total of **1199 visitors** were surveyed, referring to their recent experience in their chosen sea recreation



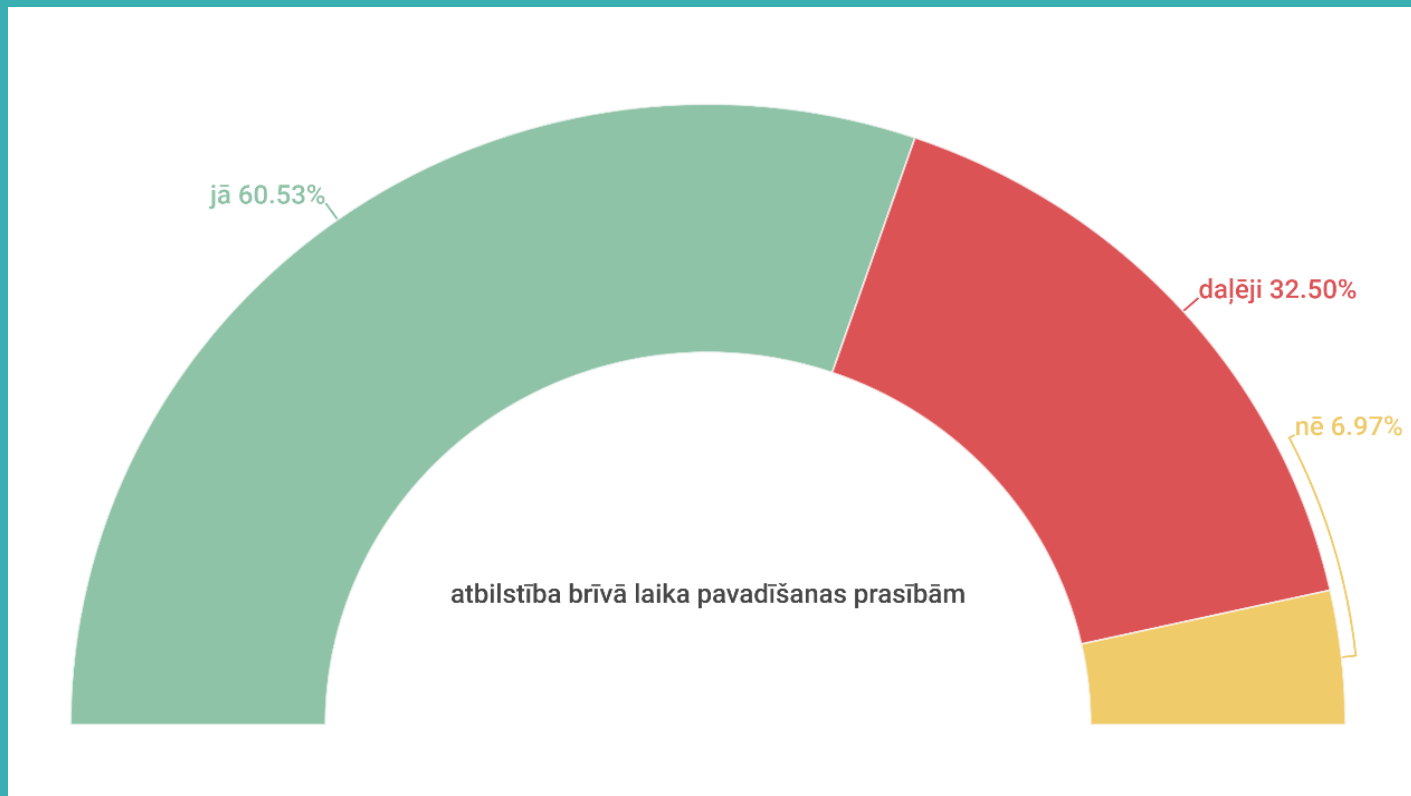
Tourist attractions as an alternative to beach recreation in case of bad weather



Location of the coastal area depending on the place of residence of the visitors and type of overnight stay (if relevant)



Visitor satisfaction with the quality of public infrastructure: its compliance with the expectations of spending free time



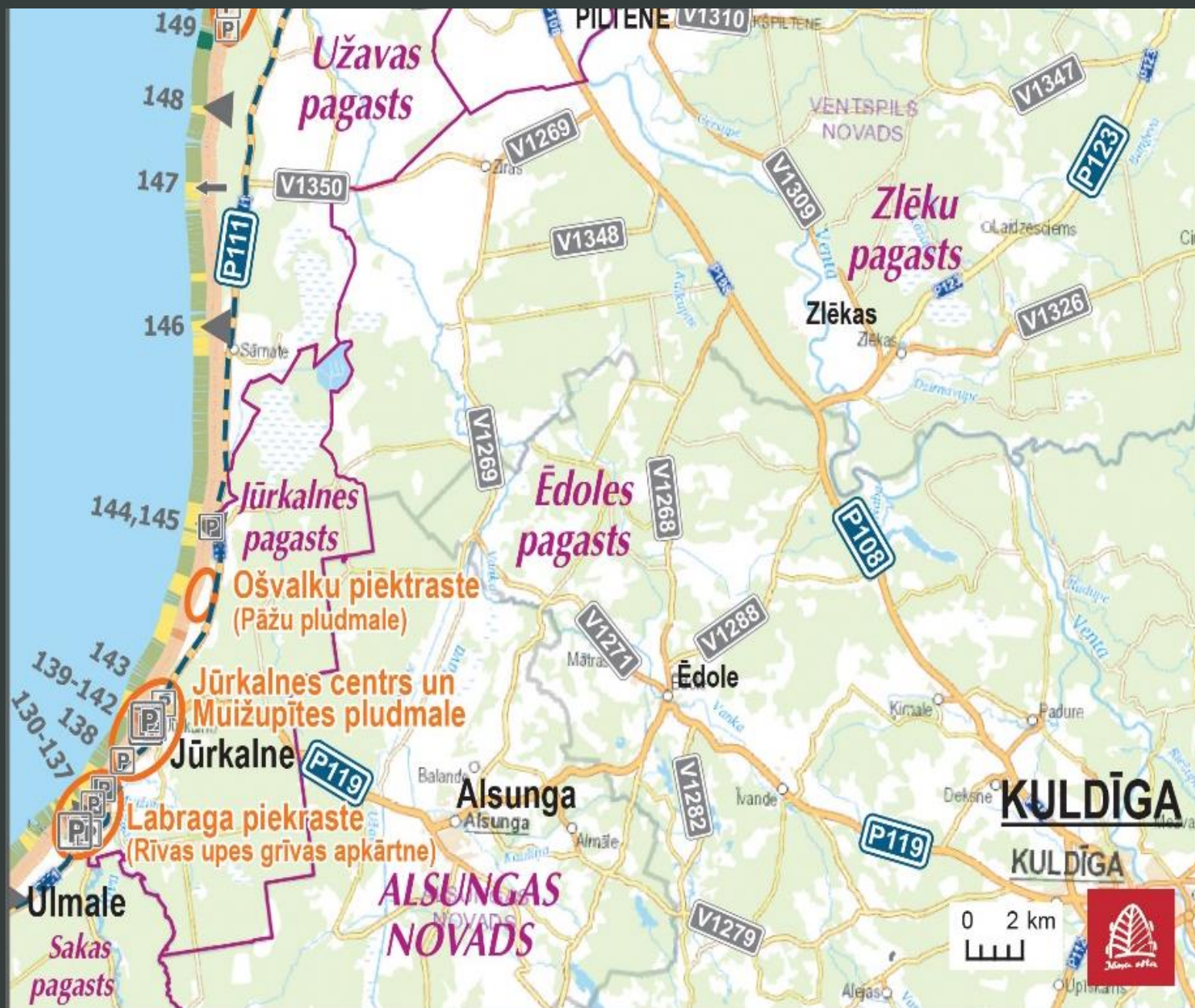
Out of 419 tourist accommodation on the Baltic Sea coast in the territory of Latvia (excluding Riga), 49 474 ratings were obtained, which characterize the opinion on the quality of tourist accommodation and satisfaction with the services provided therein. Satisfaction with the in coastal tourist accommodation is higher than the Latvian average (8,7 points out of 10)









Satisfaction with the public infrastructure varies in the popular camper mobile app Park4Night from > 500 reviews, but overall relatively good (8,5 out of 10)









Assessment of anthropogenic
impact on vegetation



Apzīmējumi

-  Auto stāvlaukums, ietilpība >50 auto
-  Auto stāvlaukums, ietilpība <50 auto
-  Noeja uz jūru
-  Nobrauktuve uz jūru
-  EuroVelo 13 velomaršruts (2019)
-  Piekrastes plānojuma kompleksi attīstāmā vieta

Slodze uz piekrastes veģetāciju (jūras pusē)

-  ostas akvatorija un infrastruktūras apbūves teritorija
-  1 - ļoti vāja ietekme
-  2 - vāja ietekme
-  3 - vidēja ietekme
-  4 - stipra ietekme
-  5 - ļoti stipra ietekme

Data have been collected within a 1km section along the entire Baltic Sea coast of the territory of Latvia. All priority development sites and public infrastructure sites were visited in the field

Implementation of complex solutions: infrastructure for recreation and mitigation of the impact of anthropogenic load



Temporary efforts to delay the erosion processes of the sea shore with an improvised twig weave and an aesthetic planking for sand stabilization under the established viewing terrace in Medze Parish - in a place where a very pronounced retreat of the sea shore takes place. In the spring of 2020, this element of public infrastructure was washed into the sea

Of the total length of 495.3 km of the Latvian coast, the anthropogenic load caused by visitor flows is divided into:

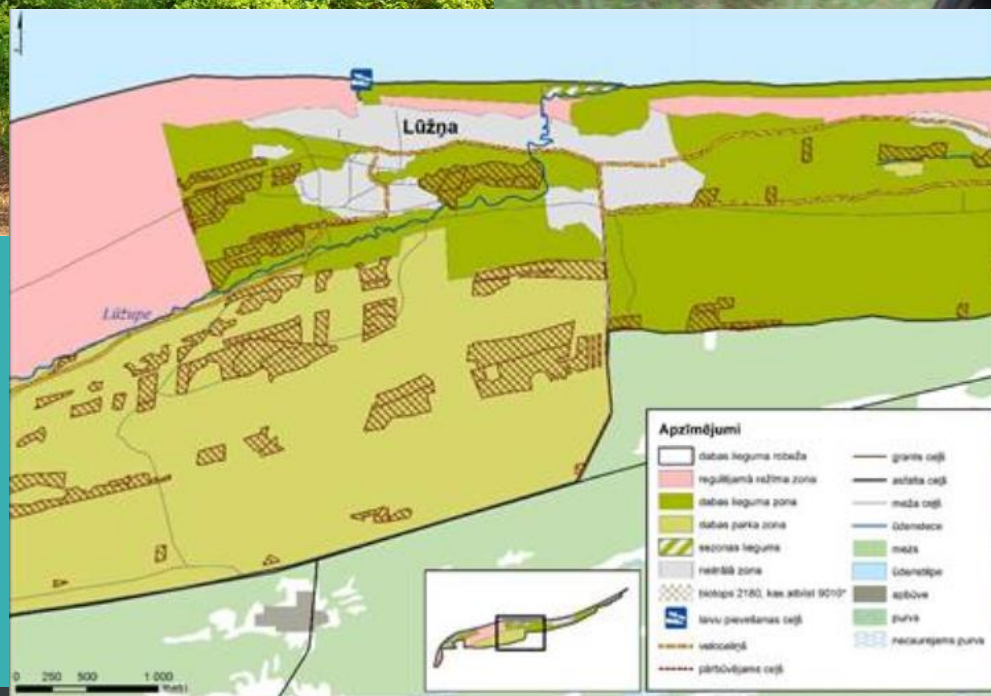
- 50% are low-impact ecosystems, i.e. rated at Class 1 or 2 (51.3% in 2015).
- 27% of coastal ecosystems are assessed as moderately affected (Class 3) (26% in 2015).
- 22.8% of coastal ecosystems are assessed as severely or very severely affected (Class 4 and 5) (22.5% in 2015).



Concentrations of coastal visitors in most of Latvia coincide with the distribution of dunes and embryonic dunes



Establishment of a seasonal visit ban in the most sensitive natural areas (bird breeding season)



Problems with illegal destruction of dunes by various motorized means

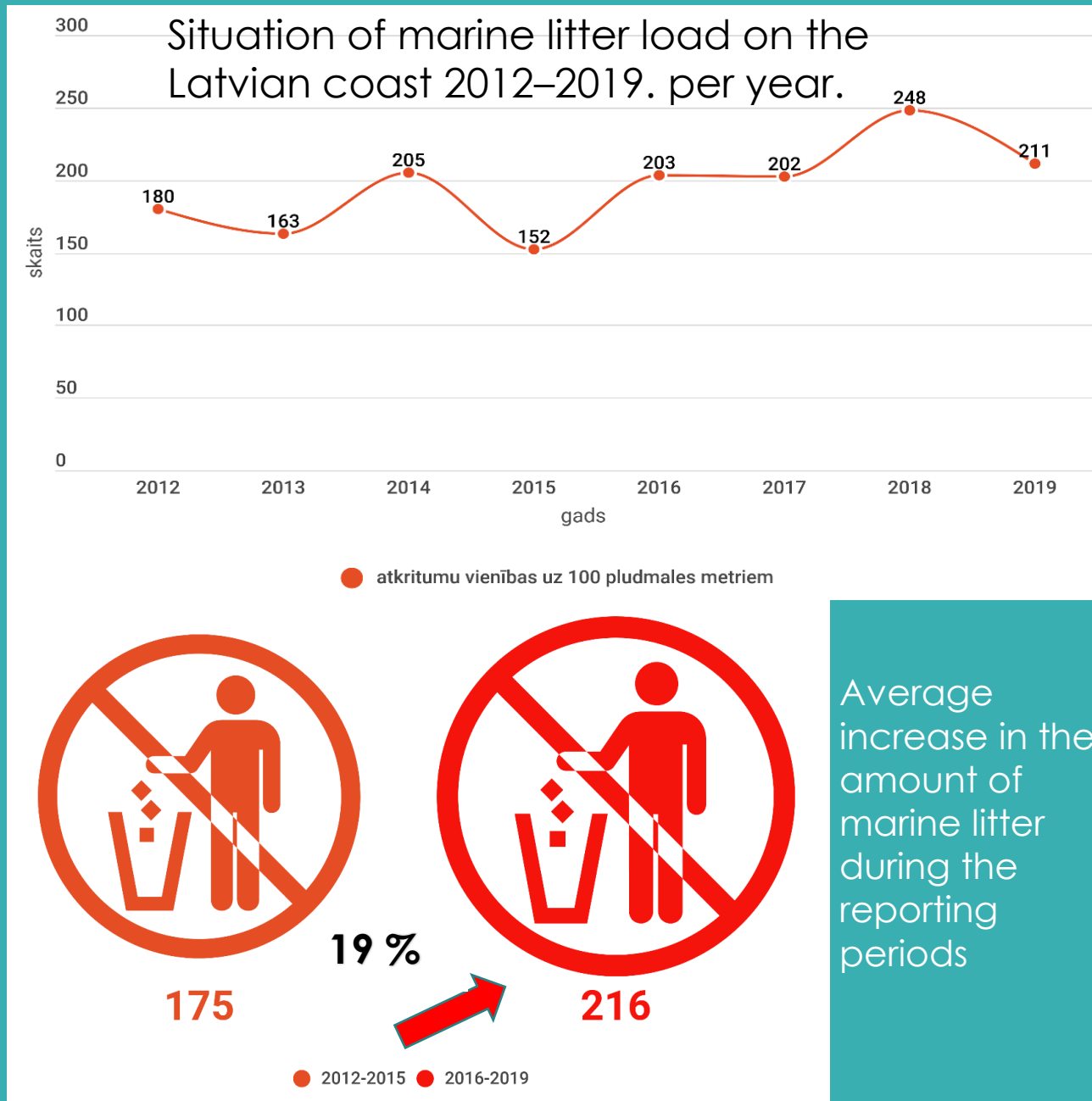


Coastal pollution load assessment of marine litter



- As the flow of visitors and the intensity of visits to the coast increase, so does the pollution with marine litter
- the current situation management is not effective enough, so the implementation of existing and planned measures alone will not lead to significant improvements
- The costs of environmental degradation to Latvian society, taking into account the current state of the marine environment, are estimated at 2,35 million EUR per year

Source: Environmental Education Foundation, My Sea campaign, 2019



Waste management



Public infrastructure assessment

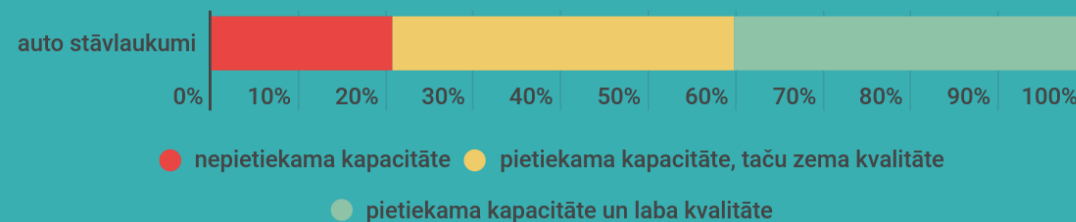


Overall, public infrastructure is still, according to experts in 2019, **undercapacity in the 77.2 km long stretch of coastline** (14.6% of the total coastline), with moderate, high or intensive traffic and moderately, strongly or very strongly affected habitats with high anthropogenic load

High priority is given to the improvement of existing areas and **ensuring high-quality maintenance** - coordinated integration with other infrastructure and services and connection with multimodal mobility solutions (integrated with public transport, bicycle parking and other types of soft mobility)

Parking lots

- There are a total of **462 parking lots** on the coast (slightly less than a third of the parking capacity is in Liepāja, Ventspils and Jūrmala. The total number is evenly distributed between the eastern and western shores of the Gulf of Riga or the Western Coast of Latvia (The Big Sea)
- **18 thousand parking places** are available in the existing parking lots for cars on the Latvian coast (excluding roadside and streets where it is possible to park a car that would at least double this number)
- **39% of parking lots** on the Latvian coast **are in good condition** with adequate capacity
- ~ 20% of the existing parking lots are with insufficient capacity. However, even if it is assessed as sufficient, half of these areas are of low quality



Beach accessibility

- Slightly more than 1/3 of the public infrastructure on the Latvian sea coast is in good condition. 1/5 part is in unsatisfactory condition, but 42% can be recognized as satisfactory but to be improved
- Of the 173 exits to the sea, good quality is rated at around 40%
- Access to the sea is generally worse for public pedestrian exits (70% in poor or satisfactory condition)
- Accessibility to a well-maintained environment for people with reduced mobility from the car park to the beach, including service areas and the public environment, is not sufficient with some fragmented solutions for wheelchair users. However, there are several exceptions in good developed sites

Access roads for transport of **maritime operational services**



Inadequate toilet problems on the coast are among the most critical



Dry toilet at Ošvalki parking lot

One of the three stationary dry toilets in the Irbe estuary of JSC "Latvijas valsts meži" recreation place overused only 12 days after the end of the seasonal ban



July 27, 2019



For discussion

- Well-maintained natural places for recreation outside *Natura 2000* territories
- Sustainability of public infrastructure (seasonality, materials and mobility)
- Alternatives of dry toilet in peripheral sites popular to visit
- Public infrastructure management in cooperation with the private sector and NGOs
- Coastal monitoring, technological advances and other impact indicators (defined in ETIS criteria, e.g. local society wellbeing)
- The trend and solutions for charge more from the end consumer (mobile and flexible payment options for public services)
- The illegal hospitality business existence on the coast, especially in border area with Lithuania (tax paying for public infrastructure maintenance)
- Coastal management as a joint regional tourism destination
- Managing collision situations with different priorities, goals and needs
- Soft mobility options and ensuring of better service design





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