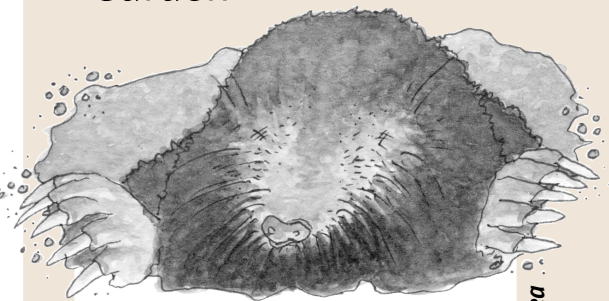


## Garden



The construction of Villa Elfvik was completed in 1904. The houses, the garden and the forest park were all strongly influenced by the Jugend (Art Nouveau) and English country house style of building and rural idealism.

The Elfvik headland is no longer tended as it was in the early 20th century. Today, as part of the Laajalahti nature reserve, the garden is being cleared of its original plants and ornamental shrubs, and moles are allowed to tunnel their way into the once healthy lawns.

*Moldy-warp, silky furry,  
spadefooted, enormous belly,  
burrowing its way  
under the ground  
leaving earth behind  
in a great big mound.*

European mole – *Talpa Europaea*

## Herb-rich Forest

Laajalahti nature reserve was established and put under protection in 1979, but not before a heated public debate on whether this bird sanctuary needed protection in the first place. Ultimately, nature and its protectors won.

The diversity of the protected forest has been left undisturbed. There are millions of known and maybe even unknown plasmodial slime molds, spring-tails, amoebae and bacteria living in the ecosystem of the forest. Densely growing black cherry trees and luxuriant vegetation thrive in the soil enriched by the many burrowing animals and insects.

Hop plant – *Humulus lupulus*

Climbing nightshade – *Solanum dulcamara*

## Reed Beds

There is a fantastic world lurking around the pontoon bridge. Different sounds intertwine with the song of the rustling reeds. Mud, six metres deep underneath the mat of reeds, exudes its heavy odour. The city lights glow on the horizon at night, and the only shadowed area is the Elfvik headland. The reeds conceal their inhabitants and offer a safe haven for many birds, insects and fish.



### *Tarzan of the Reeds*

*Light as a stick of candy,  
no longer than your pinky.  
Swinging gaily from the reeds,  
feasting on the fallen seeds.  
What animal is it?*

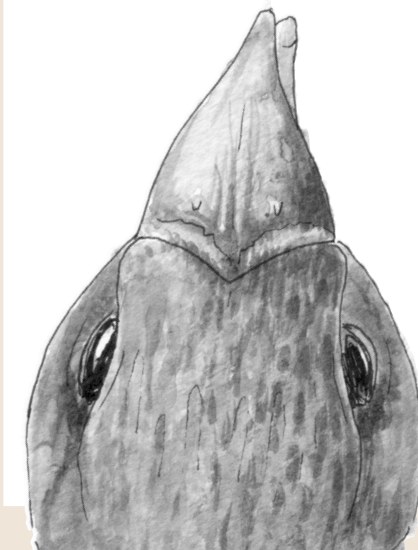
Harvest mouse – *Micromys minutus*

## Bower

As popular still as it was a hundred years ago, this gazebo called the Temple of Uranus was renovated in 1993.

Although the surroundings of the nature reserve are heavily urbanized, it still offers nesting places, day time cover, food and shelter to birds, mammals and insects alike.

The Elfvik headland is truly a sanctuary for all living creatures.



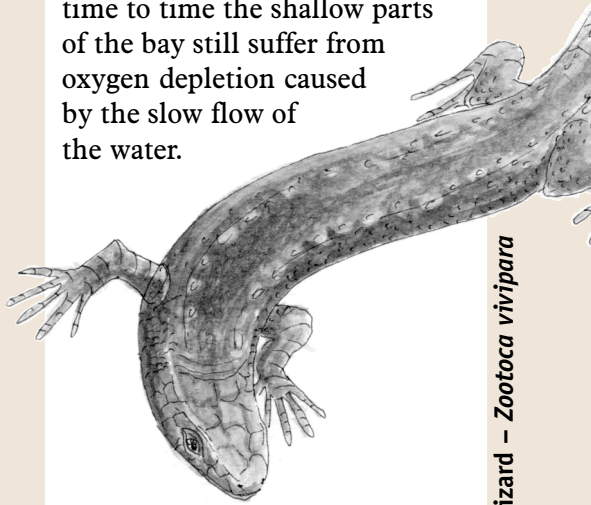
Common crossbill – *Loxia curvirostra*

Siskin – *Carduelis spinus*

## Stone Jetty

The stone jetty used to be clearly visible from Laajalahti Bay, but since the 1960s the expansive landscape has changed dramatically. Waste-water and effluent pollution caused eutrophication, and dense reed beds started to grow around the jetty. At the same time, housing, roads and bridges began to be built along the shoreline.

The quality of the water has improved since then, but from time to time the shallow parts of the bay still suffer from oxygen depletion caused by the slow flow of the water.



Common lizard – *Zootoca vivipara*

*Don't pull my tail!  
the lizard wailed  
and quickly to his hole he fled.  
But then the hungry crow  
crawled and said:  
For playing games  
I'm in no mood,  
I must quickly have some food.*

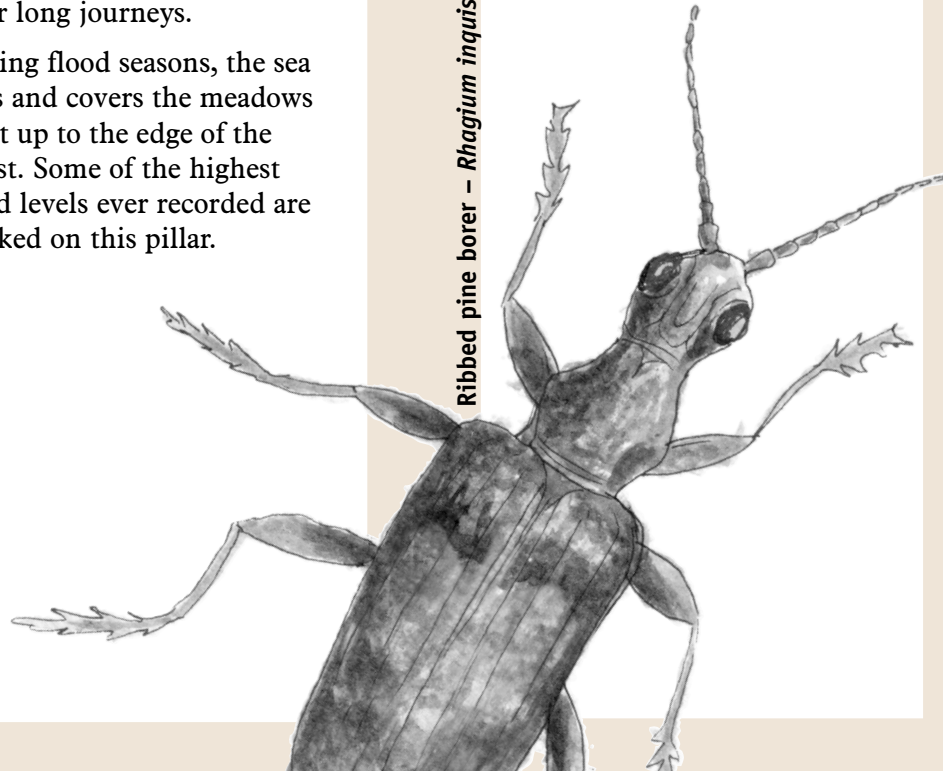
## Grassland



Snipe – *Gallinago gallinago*

During the summer months, cattle graze along the shoreline, helping to keep the plants and grass short. Slowly the reed beds are disappearing, replaced by meadows. Birds that nest near open fields have returned, and migratory birds by the thousand use the shores of Laajalahti Bay as a stopover on their long journeys.

During flood seasons, the sea rises and covers the meadows right up to the edge of the forest. Some of the highest flood levels ever recorded are marked on this pillar.



Ribbed pine borer – *Rhagium inquisitor*

## Forest

In the ancient forest it is always dark. Very little light seeps through the branches and foliage. Any open space left by a fallen tree is quickly overtaken by plants requiring a lot of light.

Many of the trees that grew when Villa Elfvik was founded are still growing. The fir trees are almost 150 years old, and the old oak tree in the forest park is 120 years old. Bracket fungus grows on the trunks of trees that are in poor shape, and beetles feast on them.



Southern Wainscot – *Mythimna straminea*

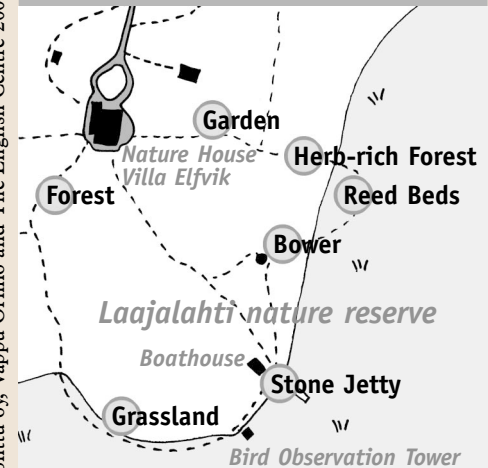
# Nature Sanctuary

– Nature Path

About one metre wide and 700 metres long, the circular Nature Path meanders its way around the headland of Villa Elfvik. There are seven bulletin boards along the path with information on the surrounding nature in both Finnish and Swedish.

Some of it is sand and some foot-bridge. A pontoon bridge crossing through rustling reeds adds to the adventure. The path is also accessible to wheelchairs.

City of Espoo, Mosatontu oy, Vappu Ormio and The English Centre 2008



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