



### DURATION OF ROUTES:

Krokšlys - Rudnia .....	3 hours
Rudnia - Kašėtos .....	2.5 hours
Kašėtos - Pauosupė .....	40 minutes
Pauosupė - Pauosupė campsite .....	1 hour
Pauosupė campsite - Zervynos .....	1 hour
Zervynos - Mančiagirė campsite .....	2 hours
Mančiagirė - Trakiškiai campsite .....	3 hours
Trakiškiai - the confluence of the Merkys and the Ūla .....	2 hours
Confluence of the Merkys and the Ūla - Mardasavas campsite .....	5 minutes
Confluence of the Merkys and the Ūla - Puvočiai campsite .....	1 hour
Puvočiai campsite - Merkys campsite .....	1.5 hours
Merkys campsite - Merkinė .....	30 minutes

The Ūla River flows through the Ūla landscape reserve and the Dzūkija National Park, therefore canoeing down this river is restricted. To obtain a permit to canoe down the Ūla River one should apply to the Visitor Centre in Marcinkonys.

Water tourism fans should remember that setting up a camp, putting up a tent, making a fire is permitted only in places set up for that particular purpose, i.e. at the campsites of Pauosupė, Mančiagirė, Trakiškių, Mardasavas, Puvočiai, Merkys and Nemunas. For sleeping in the camp there is a charge.

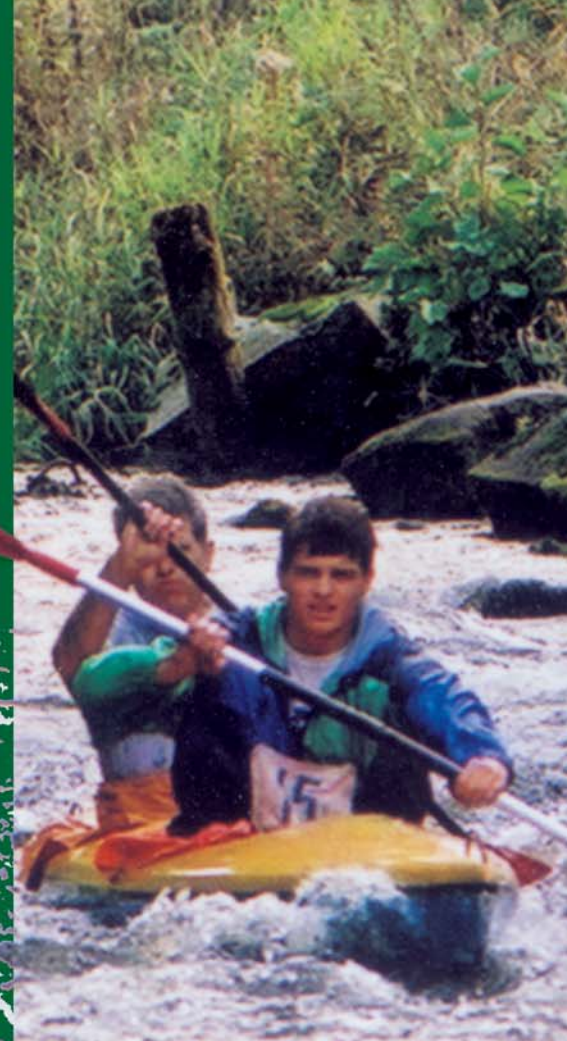
### INFORMATION

#### ■ Marcinkonys Visitors Centre

Miškininkų Street. 61, Marcinkonys, LT-65301 Varėna District  
Tel. (+370-310) 44466

E-mail: [info@dzukijosparkas.lt](mailto:info@dzukijosparkas.lt)  
[www.dzukijosparkas.lt](http://www.dzukijosparkas.lt)

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Canoeing down  
the Ūla River



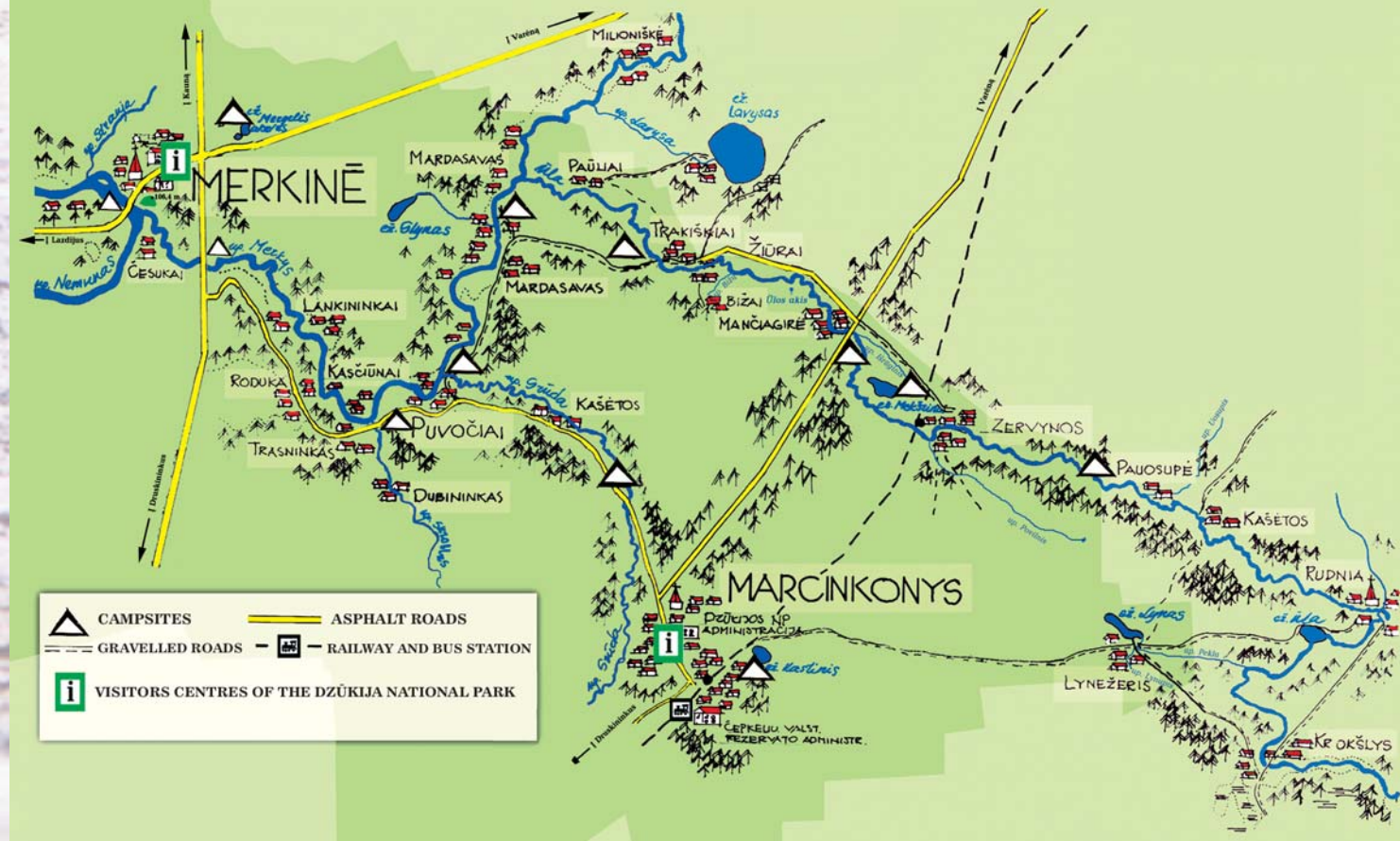


# Canoeing down the Ūla River

The Ūla is one of the most picturesque Lithuanian rivers flowing via ancient villages of Dzūkija, hidden in the heart of Gudų forest. It is famous for its impressive slopes and loops. A fast-flowing stream erodes and washes away the slopes. Here and there undermined new steep slopes and sand exposures open. Forest trees fall down from the eroded slopes into the river blocking its way. Numerous snags and logs lying across the river make canoeing more difficult, however, at the same time it makes it more interesting and adventurous.

The Ūla River is 84 km long. Its headwaters are in Belarus, Pelesa environs. The river flows along the channel from Dubičiai to Krokšlys. Therefore it is most advisable to start the trip in the village of Krokšlys. Two oak-trees, which were planted in memoriam of famous Lithuanian aviators Steponas Darius and Stasys Girėnas, grow in the village. Later, to commemorate their flight across the Atlantic, a baublys - a hollow oak trunk - was erected.

Lower, the Krokšlys River meanders along a deep valley through high steep and picturesque slopes. Its bed harbours a lot of fallen trees. This is one of the most "vigorous" sections. Near Rudnia the Ūla flows past the lake of Ūla. Until now hydrologists cannot agree whether the river flows through the lake or goes round it. With every day the shallow lake becomes more and more overgrown with weeds. The village of Rudnia is only several bends further. Soon a loud murmur of water reaches the ears. It is the Rudnia dam. Already several hundred years ago there was a foudler where iron ore from the bogs was smelted. Later there was a water mill and now only the dam remained. From Rudnia down, the banks of the Ūla are lower, small fields and pastures are scattered on dry terraces nearby. Near the confluence of the Uosupis and the Ūla, next to the small village of Pauosupė, on the right bank of the stream, a small wooden house of the Lithuanian writer An-



zelmas Matutis is located. The writer's imagination helped create it, which surprises many a visitor to that place.

Below the village of Pauosupė, the river valley gradually becomes wider and before Zervynos a peaty flood plane abundant in springs appear. Zervynos is one of the most beautiful villages in Dzūkija, famous for its ethnographic farmsteads. It has been declared an architectural monument.

From Zervynos the Ūla starts making its way through a stretch of inland dunes. Having passed the Saint Petersburg - Warsaw railway bridge, steep slopes of Mančiagirė - expressive river loops, high banks of falling sand - declared to be the monument of nature, come into sight. This is one of the most beautiful sections of the Ūla River. Rowing down the Ūla towards Žiūrai, impressive slopes and picturesque pastures in the willow groves and sandy meadows catch the eye. On the left bank of the river there is a monument of nature - the spring called "The Ūla's Eye". It is an oval lake on the bottom of which black "boiling" sand bubbles. Having flown through Žiūrai, Trakiškiai, Paūliai villages, the river simply disappears in the tunnels made of the riverside trees and it is only in the meadows that several loops emerge.

Below Paūliai the river becomes broader and soon flows into the Merkys River. It is only 22 km to canoe down the Merkys to reach the Nemunas. When canoeing down the Merkys one will come across several small shoals and single boulders, and wooded riversides

abound in springs. By Puvočiai, near the confluence of the Grūda and Merkys, a large split boulder called the "Thunder Boulder" comes to the surface of the river. A little further, at Kasčiūnai, the Skroblus flows into the river - a 18-kilometres long, bright and deep stream filled up with spring waters. The Merkys River here is rather slow and there are hardly any obstacles in it. The river valley becomes especially wide, villages distance themselves from the river. Down from Kasčiūnai on the right there are meadows of Lankininkų village, and on the left - the domains of the residents of Trasninkas and Jablanavas. Soon one comes to the Kaukas-Druskininkai bridge. Having meandered through the flooded meadows, before the town of Merkys, the Merkys River falls into the Nemunas. On arriving at the town of Merkys one should climb the mound, which is on the confluence of the Merkys and the Nemunas Rivers. Once there stood the Merkinė Castle, one of the most significant castles in the Grand Duchy of Lithuania mentioned in the ancient records as far back as 1359. The castle did not survive, however, the beauty of nature opening from the mound still fascinates every visitor. The St. Virgin Mary Ascension Church, the Local Lore Museum, the Art Gallery of Dzūkija National Park are worth visiting too. The town of Merkinė is squeezed into the confluence of the Nemunas, Merkys, Stangė and Strauja rivers, on the crossroads of the former important roads leading from Vilnius to Warsaw and from Kaunas to Gardinas.