

STORY ABOUT THE DAY IN A LIFE OF AN EMPLOYEE IN THE KAUNAS ORNITHOLOGICAL RESERVE RESEARCH CENTER

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Early in the morning, I set out for work. The Nemunas river glimmers faintly as I make my way through Panemunė Forest. Pines whisper softly above me, their branches alive with birdsong. My path leads me toward a pedestrian bridge, suspended lightly over the water. Crossing it feels like carrying the calm of Panemunė Forest into the otherwise heavily industrialized opposite bank of the river.

On the far side of the river, the research center opens before me. To the North - West, the forest continues to embrace the site, while to the South - East the access road and parking lot provide another way to enter the complex, an everyday approach for visitors and staff arriving by car. But for me, arriving on foot from the bridge is part of the ritual.

From this approach, the buildings reveal themselves gradually. Their green roofs rise from the ground in organic curves, echoing the river's flow and the soft curvatures of the land. It is as if the forest has extended itself into architecture. The main pedestrian entrance guides me inward, along winding paths that weave between courtyards, trees and glass façades that capture the morning light.

Moving deeper into the complex, I notice how each wing is connected by elevated bridges. They allow me to cross the site without ever losing sight of the landscape below, creating an uninterrupted dialogue between indoors and outdoors. Inside, laboratories hum with quiet precision, while the library and museum welcome both researchers and visitors, drawing the community into the story of this place.

Around midday, I step outside onto the dining terrace. Later, I might pass by the café to the north, where visitors gather, students linger, and conversations flow easily. Even the service access routes are discreetly placed, hidden so they do not disturb the calm heart of the site.

By the evening, when the sun starts to set, I climb onto one of the rooftop gardens. Up here, I feel elevated yet grounded, surrounded by grass, trees and the gentle hum of insects. The green roof is a terrace of reflection, a place where even my busiest thoughts find stillness. From this height, I watch birds trace the horizon, their paths mirroring the flowing lines of the buildings below.

When the day is done, I leave through the same bridge that brought me in. Standing midway across, I turn back one last time. I see the neat lines of the parking lot, the trees of the forest, and the living architecture, its glass and timber now glowing in the twilight, alive with people, stories, and the fragile harmony between human hands and nature.