



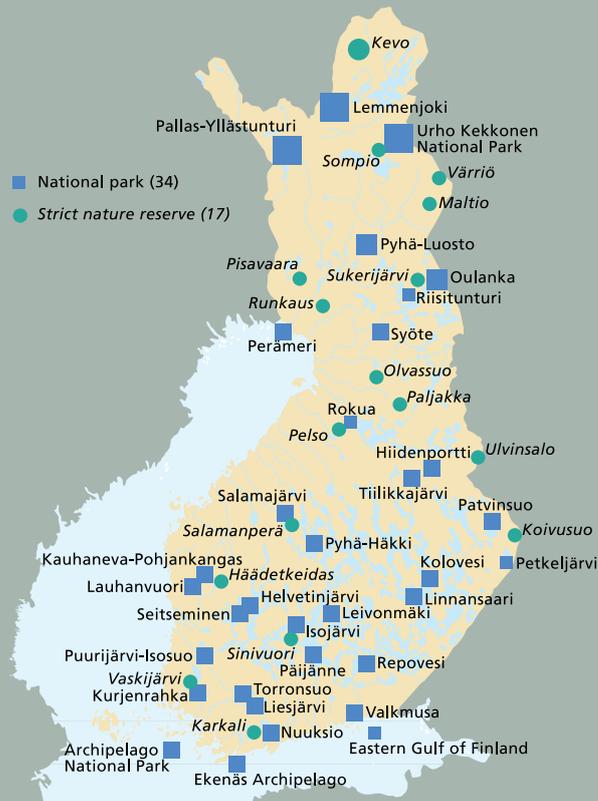
Metsähallitus Natural Heritage Services

Annual Report 2005



METSÄHALLITUS

National parks, strict nature reserves, wilderness areas, national hiking areas and state-owned public waters administered by Metsähallitus



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Natural Heritage Services Vision for 2010

The favourable conservation status of species and habitats are safeguarded in our areas. Our services are valued by society, and promote the well-being of people and nature.

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Cover photo: Arto Hämäläinen – The Kvarken Archipelago is on the tentative list to become a UNESCO world heritage site on grounds of its unique geology: the de Geer moraines moulded by the Ice Age are most clearly evident in this region.

Back cover photo: Paavo Hamunen

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Director's Review

The Natural Heritage Services manages national parks and strict nature reserves, other protected areas, wilderness areas and national hiking areas with the aim of preserving Finland's natural features and providing free facilities for outdoor recreation. We also manage State-owned waters in lakes and the sea. This wide-ranging work provides valuable employment and creates a suitable environment for nature tourism and scientific research. Our work also promotes the sustainable use of the State-owned forests managed commercially by Metsähallitus. Objectives are set annually by Parliament, and defined in detail by the Ministry of the Environment regarding nature conservation, or by the Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry concerning facilities for visitors.

The year 2005 was a year of change for Natural Heritage Services. New legislation enacted at the beginning of the year has created a clearer division between Metsähallitus's business activities and administrative tasks.

The Natural Heritage Services' new administrative tasks concern permits and land leasing issues for hunting and fishing, and permits for routes for off-road vehicles such as snowmobiles. Meeting the requirements of the new Act on Metsähallitus by organising these new administrative functions, issuing official decisions, looking after new tasks and reorganising the activities has involved a lot of extra work. The allocation of these new tasks to the Natural Heritage Services has increased our staff by 16 employees.

At the beginning of the summer we started a major reorganisation of all the activities of the Natural Heritage Services, aiming to clarify and improve the efficiency of our operations. Our new working processes were defined by development groups, which included employees' representatives. In October our three new regional units came into operation. Our operations have now been divided into four process areas: Protected Area Management Planning; Game and Fisheries; Nature Conservation; and Recreation. We have also taken over the running of our own project portfolio to improve the effectiveness of our project activities.

During the autumn Metsähallitus decided to set up a new service centre, which will include about 20 staff from the Natural Heritage Services from the beginning of 2006 when our new organisation comes into force. The new



LIISA NIKULA

reorganisation has been designed to anticipate future needs for improved productivity in public administration.

The groundbreaking Management Effectiveness Evaluation of Finland's Protected Areas was published in April. A group of respected international evaluators reported that our protected areas are generally well managed.

In accordance with the evaluators' recommendations, we are now preparing to initiate regular reporting on the State of the Parks managed by the NHS. This work forms part of our efforts to slow the ongoing decline in biodiversity and establish a comprehensive, effectively managed and well-resourced network of protected areas by 2010, thus also implementing the programme of work of Finland's National Action Plan for Biodiversity with regard to protected areas.

Similar aims are shared by the METSO Forest Biodiversity Programme for Southern Finland and the national inventory of marine biodiversity (VELMU), and we are among the key actors in both of these programmes.

Rauno Väisänen

Director,

Natural Heritage Services

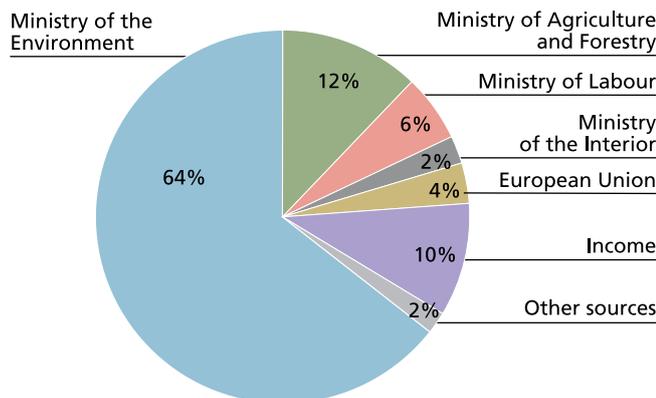
Metsähallitus Natural Heritage Services

Metsähallitus manages and utilises State-owned lands and waters in Finland. Metsähallitus is a State-owned enterprise that runs business activities while also fulfilling many administrative tasks. These wider functions, which are mainly financed from the Government budget, include the management of State-owned protected areas and hiking areas, the provision of outdoor recreation services, and administrative work related to log-floating infrastructure, tree seed banks, hunting and fishing. These administrative tasks are fulfilled by the Natural Heritage Services, which consists of three regional units and steering units responsible for developments in four process areas as defined in the new organisation.

Metsähallitus Natural Heritage Services manages most State-owned protected areas and national hiking areas in Finland, and plans their use. In 2005 these areas amounted to 38,367 km² of land (an increase of some 181 km² on 2004), and 31,381 km² of State-owned waters, making a total area of 69,929 km².

We additionally protect and monitor the occurrences of threatened species in State-owned lands managed by Metsähallitus, and are responsible for the nationwide protection and monitoring of populations of golden eagle, Saimaa ringed seal and many other threatened species. We also provide a variety of outdoor recreational facilities free-of-charge for everyone visiting natural areas in Finland on the basis of everyman's right of free access to the land. Since

Sources of funding for NHS in 2005 (53.3 million euros)



Statutory protected areas, wilderness areas, national hiking areas, recreational forests, areas reserved for future protection, and public water areas managed by Metsähallitus as of 31.12.2005.

Type of area	No. of areas	Total area(km ²)
National parks	34	8,789
Strict nature reserves	17	1,508
Other nature reserves	348	5,294
Privately-owned nature reserves	71	83
Areas established by Metsähallitus decisions	24	8
Statutory protected areas (total)	494	15,683
Areas reserved for conservation programmes	1,523	7,344
Protected forests	218	347
Other protected sites	235	1,956
Wilderness areas	12	14,904
National hiking areas	7	355
Other recreational areas	19	1,406
Other areas	9	3,604
Public water areas (where not included above)		24,330
All areas of land and water	2,517	69,929

the beginning of 2005 our public services have included tasks related to the management of tree seed banks and log-floating infrastructure, as well as hunting and fishing.

The NHS participates in international nature conservation activities, and promotes experimental and research activities that help to preserve biodiversity.

A total sum of 53.3 million euros was used to finance the operations of the Natural Heritage Services in 2005 i.e. 16.8 million euros more than in 2004. This increase was mainly due to the inclusion of all administrative costs in the government budget, including costs related to the implementation of nature conservation programmes. The total work input amounted to 579 man-years (almost 5% less than in 2004); and at the end of 2005 a total of 338 people were permanently employed by the NHS. Work done by 685 temporary employees accounted for about 40% of the organisation's total work during 2005.

The new Act on Metsähallitus came into force on 1.1.2005. The Natural Heritage Services is responsible for all of Metsähallitus's public administrative functions, including:

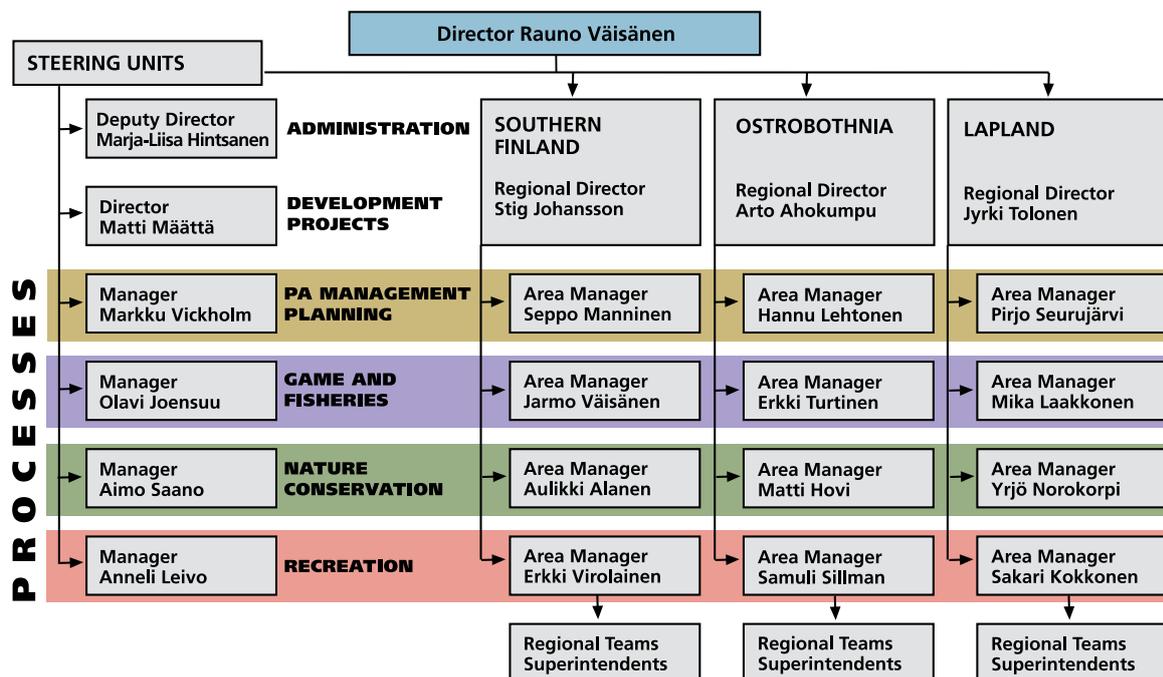
- nature conservation work and the acquisition of land for nature reserves, as stipulated in legislation on nature conservation and nature reserves
- administrative tasks defined in Finnish legislation on wilderness areas, fishing, the indigenous Koltta Sámi people, off-road traffic, hunting, rights to use public waters, rescue services, reindeer husbandry, the protection of traditional nature-based livelihoods, and outdoor recreation
- the provision of services for hikers and other groups interested in nature
- the implementation of game and fisheries management projects
- law enforcement as regards hunting, fishing and other outdoor activities
- acquiring and maintaining seeds for forest tree seed banks
- tasks related to log-floating infrastructure, including functions stipulated in the Water Act

The regional divisions of the Natural Heritage Services were reorganised on 1.10.2005, when three new regional units were launched: Southern Finland, Ostrobothnia

and Lapland. At the beginning of 2006 all operations were divided into four new process areas with their own steering units: Nature Conservation; Recreation; Game and Fisheries; and Protected Area Management and Planning. Field staff now mainly work in 18 teams, led by park superintendents. Other steering units cover administration and general development issues. Metsähallitus's new service centre now incorporates all Natural Heritage Services' invoicing, bookkeeping, salary and office services staff.

Natural Heritage Services' Operating Principles

- We manage our national parks and other areas according to best practices based on research and experience, so as to preserve their biodiversity and cultural values.
- We provide our customers with varied opportunities to enjoy outdoor recreation and learn about the natural environment.
- We create opportunities for nature tourism and sustainable regional development.
- We collaborate with many partners both in Finland and internationally.
- We work to improve our service skills and the productivity and impact of our activities.



Natural Heritage Services new organisation as of 1.1.2006

Recreation and Learning in the Natural Environment

The Natural Heritage Services provides visitors to national parks and other areas with opportunities to enjoy outdoor recreational activities and learn about nature. This work also promotes nature tourism and sustainable regional development. To improve our services, we have combined our customer services, guiding services and field maintenance services that promote sustainable outdoor recreation. Our services are continuously developed to meet changing demand.

In 2005 the total number of visitors to our 34 national parks increased by 20% to 1.4 million, largely due to the major expansion of the Pallas-Ounastunturi National Park. National hiking areas were visited by 360,000 people, 3% more than in 2004. Visitor numbers in hiking areas have remained stable over the last few years.

Finland's Oulanka National Park and Russia's Paana-järvi National Park were granted the Transboundary Co-operation – Following Nature's Design certificate in autumn 2005 by the Europarc Federation, in recognition of their well-functioning and fruitful collaboration, which has involved many successful projects addressing various issues.

Oulanka is crossed by Finland's best-known long-distance hiking route – Karhunkierros (the Bear's Trail), which celebrated its 50th anniversary in June. Commemorative events attracted over 500 participants and plenty of publicity.

Visitor facilities were completed at the easternmost Natura site on mainland Europe, Koitajoki, in Ilomantsi, where new routes crossing the River Koitajoki on ferries complete a network of 50 kilometres of trails that allows hikers to choose from various circular routes.

Improvements at customer service points

Customer service points attracted almost 800,000 visitors, 2% more than in 2004. Most of the increase was accounted for by the Kiehin Service Point in Saariselkä in NE Lapland, which moved to new premises in the Siula shopping centre. Kiehin and other service points in Finnish Lapland now also serve customers in the Sámi language.

In June the totally rebuilt Petola Visitor Centre reopened in Kuhmo, specialising in large carnivores. A special steering group was set up to support the work of Petola and



PAAVO HAMUNEN

Many structures and facilities have been provided in the field to help and guide visitors.

co-ordinate information services related to large carnivores in Finland by providing guidelines for communications and managing and developing the Suurpedot.fi website.



Petola Visitor Centre specialises in Finland's four large carnivores: Brown Bear, Wolf, Lynx and Wolverine.

Preliminary surveys related to a projected visitor centre for the Nuuksio National Park were completed in June, with a location in Luukki most favoured. Negotiations about the location and planned functioning of the visitor centre continued for the rest of the year, involving the Uusimaa Regional Council, local municipalities, and the Finnish Forest Industries Federation.

An additional customer service point is being planned for the shores of the Bothnian Bay together with other actors. The city of Kalajoki has resolved to construct a visitor centre in conjunction with a new hotel at Hiekkasärkät. Office space, exhibition rooms and an auditorium in the new centre will be rented by Metsähallitus, who will also set up and maintain the centre's exhibitions. Planning of a visitor centre at the Marjaniemi pilot station in Hailuoto has also begun on a similar basis, with the local authority being responsible for the building overall, and Metsähallitus setting up the exhibition. A common feature of these projects is that the new premises will house other activities as well as Metsähallitus's visitor centres. This is a useful way for to work, as maintenance costs can be shared by various actors.

A million visitors already for the outdoors website Luuntoon.fi

During 2005 Outdoors.fi, the English language version of the outdoor recreation website Luuntoon.fi was opened, together with a Sámi language site Lundui.fi, which is limited to destinations in Upper Lapland, but still represents the most extensive website ever produced in Sámi. An information package for hikers Retkeilyn ABC was published in Finnish in the spring, and in Swedish as Friluftslivets ABC by the end of the year. These websites were created in cooperation with the outdoor recreation association Suomen Latu and the Guides and Scouts Organisation of Finland. The Luuntoon.fi websites cover some 130 destinations and 50 customer service points.

The fully revised and updated nature conservation pages of Metsähallitus's main Metsa.fi website were reopened in October. These pages contain a wealth of information about Metsähallitus's nature conservation activities, operating principles and protected areas. They also include information about EU-funded projects where Metsähallitus has been involved. Visitors to the site can also view and comment on land use and management plans for protected areas and other special areas.

Information about these structures, buildings and other facilities is being compiled in the REISKA information system, which by the end of the year included data on about 16,000 structures, 1,700 buildings, 800 bridges and trails, and routes of various kinds with a total length of some 14,000 kilometres. Data has already been compiled for more than 90% of the sites to be included in the system. REISKA will facilitate reviews of the state of all these facilities enabling the more systematic planning of their maintenance and renewal.

Estimated numbers of visits to national parks in 2005

Archipelago National Park	60,000
Eastern Gulf of Finland National Park.....	16,000
Ekenäs Archipelago National Park.....	23,000
Helvetinjärvi National Park.....	32,000
Hiidenportti National Park.....	10,000
Isojärvi National Park	8,000
Kauhaneva-Pohjankangas National Park.....	6,000
Kolovesi National Park	6,500
Kurjenrahka National Park	25,000
Lauhanvuori National Park	27,000
Leivonmäki National Park	10,000
Lemmenjoki National Park.....	10,000
Liesjärvi National Park.....	25,000
Linnansaari National Park	28,000
Nuukio National Park	110,000
Oulanka National Park	173,500
Pallas-Yllästunturi National Park	300,000
Patvinsuo National Park.....	14,000
Perämeri National Park	2,500
Petkeljärvi National Park	17,500
Puurijärvi-Iso suo National Park.....	17,000
Pyhä-Häkki National Park	9,000
Pyhä-Luosto National Park.....	95,000
Päijänne National Park.....	12,000
Repovesi National Park	65,000
Riisitunturi National Park.....	7,000
Rokua National Park	20,000
Salamajärvi National Park	10,000
Seitsemäinen National Park	40,000
Syöte National Park.....	33,500
Tiilikajärvi National Park	6,500
Torransuo National Park	20,000
Urho Kekkonen National Park	165,000
Valkmusa National Park	6,000
Total (34)	1,410,000

Estimated numbers of visits to national hiking areas in 2005

Evo Hiking Area.....	50,000
Hossa Hiking Area	48,100
Iso-Syöte Hiking Area.....	25,000
Kylmäluoma Hiking Area	35,000
Oulujärvi Hiking Area	25,000
Ruunaa Hiking Area	117,000
Teijo Hiking Area	60,000
Total (7)	360,100

Estimated numbers of visits at visitor centres and customer service points in 2005

Blåmusslan Visitor Centre	19,000
Ekenäs Visitor Centre	23,000
Fell-Lapland Nature Centre	22,500
Hautajärvi Visitor Centre.....	6,500
Hossa Visitor Centre	40,100
Häme Visitor Centre	16,000
Kellokas Visitor Centre	59,000
Kilpisjärvi Visitor Centre.....	14,100
Koilliskaira Visitor Centre	18,500
Nestori – Saimaa Nature Centre	9,700
Oskari – Linnansaari Visitor Centre	12,500
Oulanka Visitor Centre.....	71,500
Pallastunturi Visitor Centre.....	41,800
Petola Visitor Centre	16,700
Pyhätunturi Visitor Centre	31,000
Ruunaa Visitor Centre	9,700
Savukoski Visitor Centre.....	4,700
Seitsemäinen Visitor Centre.....	30,000
Siida – Northern Lapland Nature Centre.....	112,900
Syöte Visitor Centre.....	27,200
Teijo Visitor Centre.....	16,000
Terranova – Kvarken Nature Centre.....	15,000
Visitor centres (22) total	617,200
Etiäinen Customer Service.....	43,600
Customer Service at Ivalo	10,100
Karhuntassu Customer Service.....	69,900
Kiehinen Customer Service	46,600
Customer service points (4) total.....	170,200
Total.....	787,400

EU LIFE-Nature projects involving Metsähallitus Natural Heritage Services during 2005

Objectives: to protect species and habitats primarily protected by means of the Habitats and Bird Directives; and to develop areas within the Natura 2000 Network.

2005–2009 Restoration of Dune and Coastal Habitats in the Vattaja Military Area
2005–2008 Conservation of Anser erythropus on European migration route
2004–2008 Tourist Destinations as Landscape Laboratories. Tools for Sustainable Tourism (Life Environment)
2004–2008 Natural forests and mires in the Green Belt of Koillismaa and Kainuu
2004–2008 Restoration and maintenance of valuable aquatic bird habitats of Pirkanmaa
2003–2008 Saving the endangered Fennoscandian Alopex lagopus (SEFALO+)

2003–2007 Management of wetlands along the Gulf of Finland migratory flyway
2002–2007 Karelian mires and virgin forests – pearls in the chain of geohistory
2002–2007 Restoration of boreal forests and forest-covered mires
2002–2006 Restoration of mire and bog ecosystems in North-Savo with reference to environmental education
2001–2006 Protection of valuable bird-rich wetlands in Central Finland
2003–2005 Best practices in Finnish bird wetlands (Co-op)
2002–2005 Evo Forest - Awareness-raising and protection of Southern Finland forest biotopes
2002–2005 Protection of aapa mire wilderness in Ostrobothnia and Kainuu
2001–2005 Herb-rich forests, forests of Dendrocopos leucotos and Western Taigas in North Karelia
2000–2005 Conservation of Cypripedium calceolus and Saxifraga hirculus in Northern Finland
2000–2005 Protection and usage of aapa mires with a rich avifauna in Central Lapland

Projects financed through EU Structural Funds involving Metsähallitus Natural Heritage Services during 2004

Objectives: to reduce regional inequalities within the EU by supporting less developed areas; and to implement various environmental projects.

2005–2007 Coastal Sustainability as a Challenge (Interreg III B)
2005–2007 Building of exhibition for Hailuoto Visitor Centre (Objective 2)
2005–2007 Oulanka-Paanajärvi – wilderness, experiences and well-being (Neighbourhood Programme Euregio)
2004–2007 Bird rich wetlands of international importance, nature reserves and cultural landscapes as resources for sustainable developments in rural area
2004–2007 Building of exhibition for Kalajoki Marine Nature Centre (Objective 2)
2004–2007 Wetlands, nature reserves and heritage landscapes as resources in rural areas (Interreg III B)
2005–2006 Turning environmental and wellness know-how into entrepreneurship in the Archangel corridor
2003–2006 Endangered Species in Common; Condition and Impacts on Conservation and Society (Interreg IIIA)
2003–2006 Historical Background to Nature Tourism on River Lieksanjoki (Interreg III A Karelia)
2003–2006 The occurrence and state of the populations of the freshwater pearl mussel in the NE parts of the North Calotte
2004–2005 Natura 2000 sites – a resource for Lapland
2004–2005 The Green Bridge III (Interreg III A)
2004–2005 Keropirtti construction project (Objective 1)
2004–2005 Developing nature tourism along the Peuran Polku Trail
2004–2005 Developing nature tourism in the Kuninkaanpuisto Park
2003–2005 A model for sustainable tourism in Arctic regions (Interreg III B)
2003–2005 Kalevala Parks (Interreg III A Karelia)
2003–2005 Launch of the Finnish Large Carnivore Information Centre (Interreg III A Karelia)



JOUNI KLINGA

The island of Ukonsaari in Lake Inari, a sacred site for the indigenous Sámi people in Finnish Lapland, is on the tentative list for world heritage site status.

Protecting Natural and Cultural Heritage

The Natural Heritage Services aims to protect biodiversity and Finland's cultural heritage using the best available information. Finland's protected areas and their natural and cultural features form the basis for this activity. During 2005 this work focussed on three main areas – the protection of species, habitats and cultural heritage.

The Natural Heritage Services aims to halt the decline in biodiversity in areas managed by Metsähallitus by 2010, and also to safeguard the favourable conservation status of habitats and species in these areas. The Natural Heritage Services has increasing responsibility for preserving Finland's plant and animal species, terrestrial and aquatic habitats, and cultural heritage. We are also responsible for surveys, planning, management and monitoring of nature reserves, wilderness areas and other special areas.

The NHS has been duly protecting and monitoring species and their occurrences by carrying out surveys to find out which species occur in a given area; by surveying and managing the occurrences of particular species; by improving the planning of habitat management measures; by providing more guidelines for management and monitoring; and by intensifying collaboration with research institutes and working groups within Finland's environmental administration.

Species monitoring has been improved by checking, compiling and updating data in the Hertta species data system for threatened species, species in need of special protection, and species listed in the EU Habitats Directive. Species protection work amounting to almost 30 man-years was carried out by the Natural Heritage Services during 2005. Volunteers were increasingly used in species monitoring work, but the total time spent by Metsähallitus staff on such work remained unchanged at about 30 man-months.



PAAVO HAMUNEN

A survey of Siberian jays (*Perisoreus infaustus*) in Southern Finland revealed that although most (84%) of the species' occurrences noted during the period 1990-2005 have been in privately-owned forests, Metsähallitus's actions in commercially-managed forests help to maintain important structural features in forests within the species' range.

Accurate data is needed on the state and distribution of habitats and related trends, to make nature conservation work as effective as possible in the long term. Biotope surveys are particularly designed to provide comprehensive information on natural values in protected areas.

More diverse forests for protected areas in Southern Finland

Metsähallitus is due to complete an extensive survey of biotopes in protected areas in Southern Finland by the end of 2006, as part of the METSO Forest Biodiversity Programme for Southern Finland. The survey data will then be used in the planning of species and habitat protection measures in protected areas, and in assessing the need for further measures.

These surveys will cover a total area of 5,050 km², and the survey data will be stored in Metsähallitus's own SutiGis geographical information system. The Natural Heritage Services is also participating in biotope surveys in privately-owned protected areas, which should cover a total area of about 500 km² by the end of 2006. So far data covering about 190 km² (approx. 38%) has been logged into the YSAGis system.

During 2005 ecological surveys were carried out over 2,000 km², including 925 km² within the METSO region, and 1,200 km² in Northern Finland. The biotopes surveyed in Southern Finland were mainly small in size, making surveys more labour-intensive. In the North, more survey work can be done by interpreting aerial photographs. About 28,000 km² (84%) of the areas to be surveyed in Northern Finland have so far been covered, and this work should be completed by 2012.

Metsähallitus administers State-owned waters with a total area of about 30,000 km², of which 26,600 km² are public water areas. The Natural Heritage Services' role in the VELMU marine biodiversity inventory programme has been strengthened, including responsibility for the collection of biological data, involvement in the administration of data, and participation in the programme's collaboration group. Marine biodiversity has also been promoted through various international projects.

The NHS has been carrying out a programme of surveys of marine areas since 2003, as part of the VELMU Programme. During 2005 only a total area of about 17 km² could be surveyed, due to difficult weather conditions. Divers collected samples and took photographs and videos of submarine plants. A more detailed inventory was conducted in the Archipelago Sea around the island of Jungfruskär, using equipment designed to collect samples of benthic animals.



Protected buildings and cultural heritage sites

The Natural Heritage Services administers 96 protected buildings – about 12% of all protected State-owned buildings around Finland – as well as two buildings protected under planning procedures, and a further 40 buildings covered by agreements between Metsähallitus and the National Board of Antiquities. These buildings altogether account for about 8% of all the buildings run by the NHS.

A total of 765 of the archaeological sites registered by the National Board of Antiquities lie in NHS managed areas. During 2005 the National Board of Antiquities for the first time authorised Metsähallitus to manage an archae-

ological site, which consists of the remains of gold-mining and panning structures along the River Sotajoki in Ivalo.

In the Nuuksio National Park, the renovation and conversion of a historically significant functional style home at Kattila into a school camp centre was initiated in co-operation with the Criminal Sanctions Agency. In the Petkeljärvi National Park, Ilomantsi, a park ranger's cabin built in 1960 was restored and opened to the public containing a special



METSÄHALLITUS

Surveys of eel-grass (*Zostera marina*) and other aquatic vegetation have been completed in waters with sandy and gravelly sea floor around Jungfruskär, in the SW Archipelago, as part of the BioGeo Project, run by the University of Turku, Åbo Akademi University and Metsähallitus.

exhibition about the park and its history. Renovation work was also completed in the Pyhätunturi National Park on a visitor's log cabin of historical interest, and at Langinkoski Rapids in Kotka on fish hatcheries at a fishing cabin used by the Russian Tsars.

Metsähallitus is responsible for the co-ordination of Finland's application for the Kvarken Archipelago to be granted world heritage site status by UNESCO, and the related reports. The application is being justified on the basis of the area's unique geology. Ice Age features including de Geer moraines are most clearly evident in this region, where post-glacial land uplift is still occurring rapidly. Efforts in connection with another Finnish natural heritage site on the tentative list for world heritage site status, the Saimaa-Pielinen lake system, have concentrated on obtaining funding.

Metsähallitus now administers its first world cultural heritage site, since the Struve Geodetic Arc was approved for the UNESCO World Heritage List in July. Six of the preserved sites along this surveying chain, which was used to make some of the first accurate measurements of the size and shape of the Earth, are in Finland. Three of these six sites are managed by the NHS: one in the Tarvantovaara Wilderness Area, one at Aavasaksa, and a third on the island of Mustaviiri in the Eastern Gulf of Finland National Park.

The Natural Heritage Services also manage other sites on the tentative list for world heritage site status: the island of Ukonsaari in Lake Inari, the stone carvings on the Hauensuoli rocks at Hanko, and parts of the geologically unique Saimaa-Pielinen Lake System.

Work has begun on the expansion of the Fell Lapland Nature Centre in Enontekiö, which should be completed during 2006. This project is expected to cost some 1.4 million euros, with funds mainly obtained from the Lapland Regional Economic and Employment Centre. The expanded centre will also house an exhibition featuring the reindeer-herding cultures of the local Sámi people, designed by the Sámi association Johti Sápmelaccat, as well as the relocated local service point of the Sámi Parliament. A culture centre for the Koltta Sámi is being planned at Sevetijärvi in Inari in a project led by the Sámi Museum. The new centre will be set up in close connection with a heritage building run by Metsähallitus.



MARKUS SIRKKA

The Sámi Parliament is evaluating land use and management plans for the wilderness areas of Käsivarsi, Kaldoaivi, Tarvantovaara and Vätsäri, and for the protected mires of Lätäseno–Hietajoki and Sammuttijänkä–Vaijoenjänkä.

Planning Land Use and Management in Protected Areas

The Natural Heritage Services manages almost all protected areas on State-owned lands, as well as extensive wilderness areas in northern Lapland, several national hiking areas, and areas reserved for future protection under nature conservation programmes. We are also responsible for 19 recreational forests. All these areas are managed according to land use and management plans.

At the end of 2005 Metsähallitus's protected areas and other special areas extended over a total area of 4,600 km², including 2,500 separate protected areas and other sites of various types. The expansions of two national parks in the north – Pyhä–Luosto and Pallas–Yllästunturi – added 630 km² (8%) to the total area covered by national parks.

Metsähallitus's Laatumaa business area and Finland's 13 Regional Environment Centres acquire conservation sites

for State ownership. Sites acquired by the Environment Centres are usually transferred to Metsähallitus for administrative purposes. The total area of land administered by the NHS increased during 2005 by 6,629 ha due to acquisitions and 3,525 ha due to administrative transfers. These figures include 1,884 ha acquired for the METSO Programme, and 4,812 ha for other conservation programmes.

Pilot schemes have been developed where properties are pre-designated for future establishment as protected areas whenever the drafting of new legislation covering the area makes this possible. This pre-designation facilitates the preparation of legislation, the management of areas, and the planning of their future land use and management. Clear boundaries marked out in the field can then legally confirm areas' protected status. Three such pre-designated protected properties were defined during 2005, and this process will be further developed and expanded in the future.

During 2005 Metsähallitus completed seven land use and management plans for protected areas, while two such plans were approved by the Ministry of the Environment. Whenever such plans are made in the Sámi homeland, they must be supplemented by evaluations of their impact on Sámi culture, prepared by the Sámi Parliament.

Metsähallitus's guidelines for drafting and administering land leasing agreements were harmonised in 2005.

Metsähallitus also participated in the drafting of general plans for the Natura network. These plans define which Natura sites require land use and management plans, and which only need less detailed plans of action, or no special planning at all. The general plans also determine the scheduling of the planning of Natura sites. During 2005 general plans were finalised for Pirkanmaa, North Karelia, Central Finland and Lapland, and the other 9 general plans will be completed during 2006.

Protected area management in Finland evaluated

A comprehensive international evaluation commissioned by Metsähallitus on the impact and effectiveness of the management of Finland's protected areas was compiled during 2004. According to the report, Finland's protected areas are currently managed well, and in most cases objectives related to the preservation of biodiversity have been achieved. The

evaluators also believe Finland's protected areas have a good status compared to those in many other countries, and should be used as an example for other countries to follow.

The evaluation also recommends that in future Metsähallitus should prepare State of the Parks reports on its protected areas at intervals of five years. During 2005 work commenced on the compilation and analysis of data for the first such report, which will cover protected areas' conservation values, threats, and ecological state, while also assessing the effectiveness of their management. Data will be collected over a five-year period to help compile a summary report, exploiting data already stored in existing information systems as much as possible.



A major report evaluating how effectively Finland's protected areas are managed was published at an international seminar held in Helsinki on 8.4.2005. The report may be downloaded at www.metsa.fi/mee.



VEIKKO VASAMA

When planning the management of protected areas, various land use interests will be amalgamated by means of participatory planning.

Hunting and Fishing Issues Transferred to the Natural Heritage Services

Since the beginning of 2005 the Natural Heritage Services has been responsible for issues related to hunting and fishing permits and leases, as stipulated in the Act on Metsähallitus. This legislation has made the issuing of hunting and fishing permits public decisions made by a national Game and Fisheries Manager.

The Game and Fisheries Manager makes decisions on the use of hunting and fishing areas, sets regional quotas, and can delegate the right to grant permits. Decisions are subject to appeal. The GFM also processes citizens' appeals concerning permit decisions. The Director of the NHS makes decisions on quotas for the licensing of off-road traffic, with appeals processed through the administrative courts. These quota decisions concern both designated snowmobile routes and areas off any routes.

The GFM has officially delegated responsibility for the sale of fishing, hunting and off-road permits to Metsähallitus's Villi Pohjola (Wild North) business unit. Permits are generally priced to cover administrative costs. Metsähallitus's visitor centres still sell permits, but private firms no longer sell hunting permits.

During 2005, 63,650 fishing permits, 38,350 hunting permits and 1,730 off-road permits were sold. Hunting permits covered 116 separate areas, with a total area of 72,400 km² of land, and 1,710 km² of water. The average hunting period covered by permits was 3.2 days, and hunters submitted 7,460 official reports on the game they bagged. Some 42,000 game birds were shot, at an average of 0.4 birds per km². Game bird densities averaged 19 birds per km², so the proportional toll on their numbers of 3% is clearly sustainable.

Metsähallitus runs 62 recreational fishing areas. Game and fisheries planners manage the leases of hunting and fishing areas. Some 2,000 hunting area leases and 1,145 fishing area leases were in force at the end of 2005.

Research was conducted into local residents' hunting activities in Metsähallitus's areas in Northern Finland, which are permitted under Section 8 of the Hunting Act, so as to ensure that such hunting is scaled at sustainable levels, and to obtain more information about this form of hunting.

This research was carried out in collaboration with the Lapland, Oulu and Kainuu game management districts, and the Finnish Game and Fisheries Research Institute.

Since the new Act on Metsähallitus came into force, payment procedures and prices for hunting, fishing and off-road permits have been controlled by the Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry Decree 1380/2004. Permit products and their prices have remained unchanged.

Co-operation on law enforcement

Metsähallitus's law enforcement work is designed to ensure that fishing and hunting are only practised on State-owned lands in full observance of the law, and subject to the relevant permits. The main aim is to prevent infringements. Voluntary supervisors are trained, and their work is co-ordinated by the game and fisheries wardens, who have similar powers to the police under the new legislation. Hunting and fishing are supervised in co-operation with the police and the national border guard, involving joint patrols and information exchange. Metsähallitus's other staff and game management associations' representatives also participate in this work.

Metsähallitus has participated in the preparation of new legislation defining its role in the supervision of hunting and fishing, which came into force on 1.1.2006.

Restoring fish stocks to log-floatways

Since log-floating ended along the River Iijoki and its tributaries, Metsähallitus has been authorised to reintroduce trout and grayling stocks to restored rapids along the river, and monitor the success of these introductions over a period of five years. The introduced fish had a total value of about 55,000 euros in 2005. Reintroductions have continued along four stretches of river restored by the Regional Environment Centre, and in waters used by migratory fish as they swim from the sea into the River Kostonjoki. A report on the restored rivers of the Iijoki basin, covering the years 2000–2004, was finalised in May 2005. The monitoring of introduced fish stocks has continued using electric fishing techniques along nine rivers, and 40 local fishermen have submitted their catch logs for inspection.

Metsähallitus Visitor Centres and Customer Service Points

Blåmusslan Visitor Centre

Meripuistontie, 25930 Kasnäs, tel.int. +358 205 64 4620

Ekenäs Visitor Centre

Rantapuistikko, 10600 Ekenäs, tel.int. +358 205 64 4613

Etiäinen Customer Service

96930 Napapiiri, tel.int. +358 205 64 7820

Fell Lapland Nature Centre

Peuratie 15, 99400 Enontekiö, tel.int. +358 205 64 7950

Hautajärvi Visitor Centre

Hautajärventie 414, 98995 Hautajärvi, tel.int. +358 205 64 6870

Hossa Visitor Centre

Jatkonsalmentie 6, 89600 Ruhtinansalmi, tel.int. +358 205 64 6041

Häme Visitor Centre

Härkätie 818, 31380 Letku, tel.int. +358 205 64 4630

Customer Service at Ivalo

P.O. Box 35, 99801 Ivalo (Ivalontie 10), tel.int. +358 205 64 7701

Karhuntassu Customer Service

Torangintaival 2, 93600 Kuusamo, tel.int. +358 205 64 6800

Kellokas Visitor Centre

95970 Äkäslompola, tel.int. +358 205 64 7039

Kiehinen Customer Service

Kelotie 1 / Siula, 99830 Saariselkä, tel.int. +358 205 64 7200

Kilpisjärvi Visitor Centre

99490 Kilpisjärvi, tel.int. +358 205 64 7990

Koilliskaira Visitor Centre

99695 Tankavaara, tel.int. +358 205 64 7251

Nestori – Saimaa Nature Centre

Akselinkatu 8 (visitors Aino Acktén puistotie 5), 57130 Savonlinna, tel.int. +358 205 64 5929

Oskari – Linnansaari Visitor Centre

Ohitustie 7, 58900 Rantasalmi, tel.int. +358 205 64 5916

Oulanka Visitor Centre

Liikasenvaarantie 132, 93999 Kuusamo, tel.int. +358 205 64 6850

Pallastunturi Visitor Centre

99330 Pallastunturi, tel.int. +358 205 64 7930

Petola Visitor Centre

Lenttiirantie 342 D, 88900 Kuhmo, tel.int. +358 205 64 6380

Pyhätunturi Visitor Centre

Kerontie 22, 98530 Pyhätunturi, tel.int. +358 205 64 7302

Ruunaa Visitor Centre

Ruunaantie 129, 81750 Pankakoski, tel.int. +358 205 64 5757

Savukoski Visitor Centre

Samperintie 32, 98800 Savukoski, tel.int. +358 205 64 7556

Seitseminen Visitor Centre

Seitsemisentie 110, 34530 Länsi-Aure, tel.int. +358 205 64 5270

Siida – Northern Lapland Nature Centre

Inarintie, 99870 Inari, tel.int. +358 205 64 7740

Syöte Visitor Centre

Erätie 1, 93280 Syöte, tel.int. +358 205 64 6550

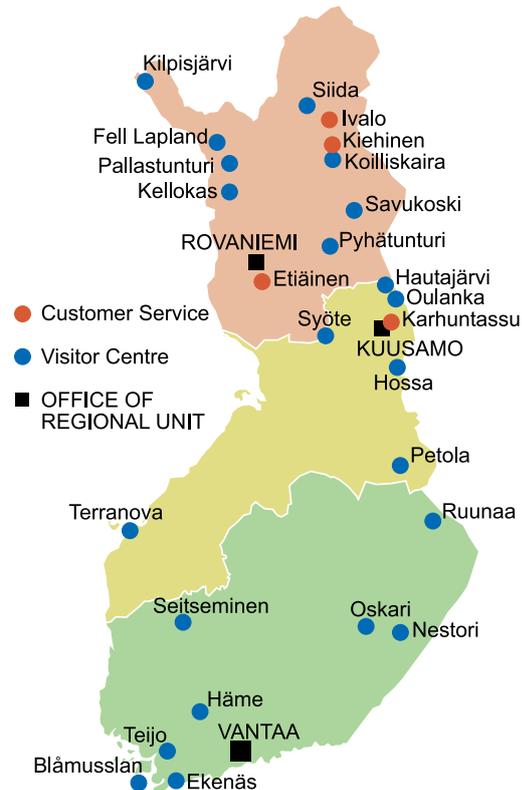
Teijo Visitor Centre

Matildanjärventie 84, 25660 Mathildedal, tel.int. +358 205 64 4700

Terranova – Kvarken Nature Centre*

P.O. Box 2 (Museokatu 2), 65101 Vaasa, tel.int. +358 6 325 3800

* in cooperation with the Ostrobothnian Museum



Metsähallitus Natural Heritage Services

Natural Heritage Services, Steering Units

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P.O. Box 94, 01301 Vantaa, tel.int. +358 205 64 100

Natural Heritage Services, Ostrobothnia
Torangintaival 2, 93600 Kuusamo, tel.int. +358 205 64 100

Natural Heritage Services, Lapland
P.O. Box 8016, 96101 Rovaniemi, tel.int. +358 205 64 100



For Nature and for People

Metsähallitus Natural Heritage Services protects and manages valuable and endangered natural areas in Finland, and provides a wide range of outdoor recreational facilities for visitors. We are responsible for the management of almost all of Finland's national parks, strict nature reserves and other protected areas owned by the State, as well as the extensive wilderness areas of Northern Lapland and many other State-owned areas where facilities are provided for visitors. These areas are managed by Natural Heritage Services' three regional units. Visitor centres and other customer service points provide a wealth of information on their natural features and facilities for visitors. More information in English for visitors is available on the new website www.outdoors.fi. Details of all our activities are available on the website www.metsa.fi in Finnish, Swedish, Sámi and English.



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