



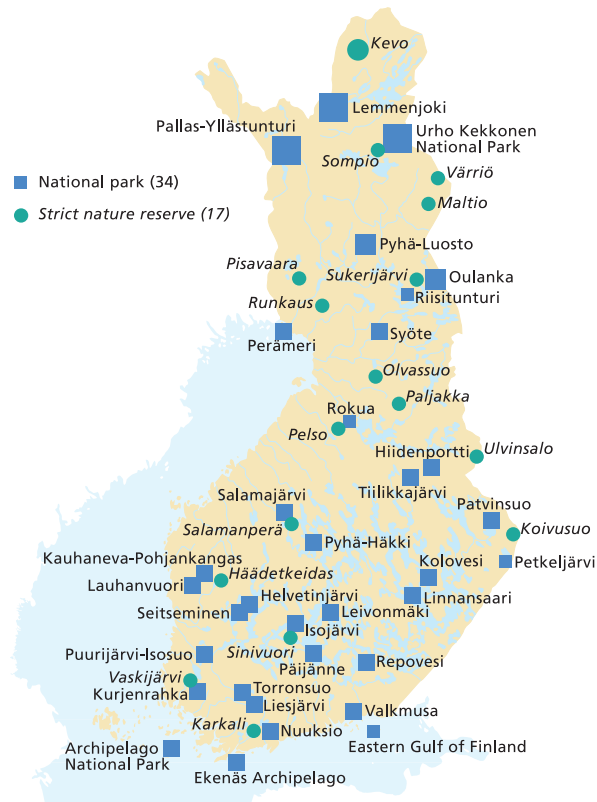
Metsähallitus Natural Heritage Services

Annual Report 2006



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: Mikael Hintze – Protected areas in the region around Salamajärvi in Central Finland are covered by exceptionally wide-ranging land use and management plans.

Back cover photo: Timo Nieminen

Metsähallitus, Natural Heritage Services 2007

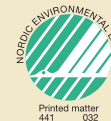
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JARI KOSTET

Director's Review

The Natural Heritage Services manages Finland's national parks, strict nature reserves, other protected areas, wilderness areas and national hiking areas with the aim of preserving Finland's natural features and providing services for all interested in nature and outdoor pursuits. We also manage State-owned waters in lakes and the sea. This wide-ranging work provides valuable employment and creates suitable environments for nature tourism and scientific research. We also work to promote the sustainable use of State-owned commercial forests administered by Metsähallitus. Our goals 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 hunting, fishing and facilities for visitors.

The Natural Heritage Services has recently been speeding through a torrent of changes, but we have not been swept along aimlessly, and have kept our hands on the rudder and steered the best possible course, with our eyes fixed on the perils and opportunities ahead. We have certainly been kept busy with our own reorganisation, the productivity report on Finland's whole nature conservation administration, the preparation of a new National Strategy for the Conservation and Sustainable Use of Biodiversity, and the implementation and further planning of the METSO Forest Biodiversity Programme for Southern Finland. These changes are all interlinked. The reorganisation has been designed to improve productivity and our ability to carry out new tasks related to the management of protected areas.

We have successfully achieved our revenue goals for 2006. The inventories needed for the METSO Programme were completed as planned, while progress has also been made on inventories of marine areas. In this marine context we were

pleased to be associated in the media with the rare visit of wild dolphins to Finnish waters. The approval of the Kvarken Archipelago as a UNESCO World Heritage Site supports our efforts to preserve marine and coastal habitats in this unique area. The preservation of Finland's cultural heritage will also be improved following the closer integration of such work with our nature conservation work.

Our activities related to the sustainable use of natural resources expanded considerably in 2006, due to the incorporation of personnel administering hunting and fishing issues into the staff of the NHS, where such issues are now comprehensively addressed under the supervision of the Game and Fisheries Manager. A new data system has been set up in collaboration with researchers and other stakeholders to ensure that these issues are dealt with effectively.

Our expertise has been in demand worldwide. During 2006 we signed co-operation agreements with Estonia's State Nature Conservation Centre and State Forest Management Centre (RMK). We have also helped to enhance the administration of nature conservation in Lithuania. In 2007 one of our park superintendents will be working in Switzerland at the headquarters of the World Conservation Union (IUCN) with the implementation of the programme of work on protected areas of the UN Convention on Biological Diversity. After careful deliberation we have decided to join the Eurosite network, which aims to improve the management of Natura sites. We will also continue to work within the EUROPARC Federation and the European State Forests Association EUSTAFOR, both of which are based in Brussels.

Rauno Väisänen
Rauno Väisänen

The Natural Heritage Services

Metsähallitus produces services related to natural resources for a wide range of clients from individual citizens to large corporations. These activities are expertly planned to encourage the collaborative use of State-owned lands and waters in Finland. Metsähallitus's administrative tasks are divided into business activities and natural heritage services - which cover nature conservation as well as services related to the public recreational use of natural areas, fishing and hunting, log-floating infrastructure and tree seed bank management. These administrative tasks are largely funded from the national government budget.

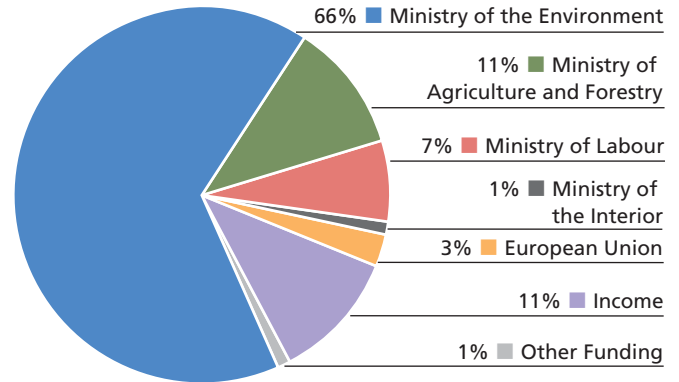
The Natural Heritage Services manages most State-owned protected areas and national hiking areas in Finland, and controls their use. In 2006 these areas amounted to 38,588 km² of land (an increase of some 65 km² on 2005) and 31,456 km² of State-owned waters, making a total area of 70,043 km².

We additionally protect and monitor the occurrences of threatened species in State-owned lands managed by Metsähallitus, and are also responsible for the nationwide protec-

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 | 8,818 |
| Strict nature reserves | 17 | 1,503 |
| Other nature reserves | 348 | 5,350 |
| Privately-owned nature reserves | 75 | 85 |
| Areas established by Metsähallitus decisions | 24 | 8 |
| Statutory protected areas (total) | 498 | 15,764 |
| Areas reserved for conservation programmes | 1,555 | 7,333 |
| Protected forests | 218 | 347 |
| Other protected sites | 281 | 1,971 |
| Wilderness areas | 12 | 14,903 |
| National hiking areas | 7 | 355 |
| Other recreational areas | 21 | 1,406 |
| Other areas | 13 | 3,603 |
| Public water areas (where not included above) | | 24 360 |
| All areas of land and water | 2,605 | 70,043 |

Metsähallituksen luontopalvelujen rahoituslähteet vuonna 2006 (54 milj. euroa)



tion and monitoring of populations of golden eagle, Saimaa ringed seal, white-backed woodpecker and certain other threatened species. The NHS also participates in international nature conservation work, and promotes experimental and research activities that help to preserve biodiversity.

We also provide a wide range of free outdoor recreational facilities and visitor centres for the benefit of everyone visiting natural areas in Finland, on the basis of Finland's traditional 'everyman's right' of free access to the land. Our responsibilities also include the supervision of hunting and fishing, and the maintenance of tree seed banks, tree collections and log-floating infrastructure.

The NHS organisation includes three regional units and several steering units responsible for developing the organisation's activities, which are divided into four main processes – nature conservation, recreation, game and fisheries, and protected area management planning. Additional activities include administration and development projects. Our field staff mainly work under the supervision of 18 park superintendents.

A total sum of 54 million euros was used to finance the operations of the NHS in 2006 – 0.5 million euros more than in 2005. The total work input amounted to 587 man-years (1.4% more than in 2005). This increased workload was mainly due to the organisation of new public administrative tasks.

At the end of 2006 a total of 355 people were permanently employed by the NHS (5% more than in 2005), as well as

209 temporary employees. The work done by the 675 temporary staff employed over the year accounted for about 57% of the organisation's total work during 2006. The proportion of female employees is 31% for permanent staff and 35% for temporary staff. Just over half (51%) of our permanent staff have completed university-level education.

Almost half of the work done in terms of man-hours was related to recreation, and a quarter concerned nature conservation. The amount of work done on game and fisheries issues increased considerably due to the incorporation of personnel working in these areas into the NHS at the beginning of the year 2006.

Operating Principles of the Natural Heritage Services

- 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.

EU LIFE-Nature projects involving the Natural Heritage Services during 2006

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.

- 2006–2010 From Ancient to the Present Estuary, Kokemäenjoki Wetland Chain
- 2006–2010 Promotion of public awareness and protection of aapa mires in Lapland
- 2005–2009 Restoration of Dune and Coastal Habitats in the Vattaja Military Area
- 2005–2009 Marine Protected Areas in the Eastern Baltic Sea
- 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

Projects financed through EU Structural Funds involving the Natural Heritage Services during 2006

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

- 2006–2009 The Viena Bridge - workshops, tourism, culture (Neighbourhood Programme Euregio)
- 2006–2008 People, Nature and Harbours (Neighbourhood Programme)
- 2006–2008 Improving eco-tourism infrastructure in Kvarken archipelago (Objective 2)
- 2006–2008 Enhancing eco-tourism prospects in the Kvarken archipelago (Objective 2)
- 2006–2008 Building of nature and culture exhibition for Kellokas Visitor Centre (Interreg III A)
- 2006–2007 Promotion of nature protection and sustainable nature tourism in the Inari-Pasvik area (Neighbourhood Programme Kolarctic)
- 2006–2007 Sustainable nature tourism and biodiversity in the Eastern Gulf of Finland National Park (Objective 2)
- 2005–2007 Oulanka-Paanajärvi – wilderness, experiences and well-being (Neighbourhood Programme Euregio)
- 2005–2007 Coastal Sustainability as a Challenge (Interreg III B)
- 2005–2007 Building of exhibition for Hailuoto Visitor Centre (Objective 2)
- 2005–2007 Baltic Sea management - Nature conservation and sustainable development in the marine ecosystem through marine spatial planning
- 2005–2007 Developing nature tourism in the Kuninkaanpuisto Park (Objective 2)
- 2005–2006 Turning environmental and wellness know-how into entrepreneurship in the Archangel corridor (Interreg III A)
- 2004–2007 Bird rich wetlands of international importance, nature reserves and cultural landscapes as resources for sustainable developments in rural area (Interreg III B)
- 2004–2007 Building of exhibition for Kalajoki Marine Nature Centre (Objective 2)
- 2004–2007 Developing nature tourism along the Peuran Polku Trail (Objective 2)
- 2004–2007 Norce – Northern Coastal Experience (Interreg III B)
- 2004–2006 Restoring bird wetlands in the Forssa–Tammela region (Objective 2)
- 2003–2006 Endangered Species in Common; Condition and Impacts on Conservation and Society (Interreg III A)
- 2003–2006 Historical Background to Nature Tourism on River Lieksanjoki (Interreg III A)



MARKUS SIRKKA

Pyhä-Häkki National Park attracted more than 15,000 visitors during 2006, the park's 50th anniversary year.

Facilities for Recreational Activities and Nature Studies

The Natural Heritage Services runs many national parks and other areas where visitors can enjoy outdoor activities and learn about nature. Campfire sites and shelters are carefully located to enhance visitors' enjoyment and safety. Expert advice and fascinating exhibits about Finland's natural and cultural heritage are also provided in visitor centres and in the field. These facilities are all designed to help make nature tourism and local economic development truly sustainable.

The year 2006 marked a historic milestone for nature conservation in Finland, as the national parks of Lemmenjoki, Liesjärvi, Linnansaari, Oulanka, Petkeljärvi, Pyhä-Häkki and Rokua all commemorated their half-centuries. These parks have allowed visitors to enjoy peaceful natural surroundings in many regions of the country since 1956, and they still form the core of Finland's nationwide network of national parks.

The seven 50-year-old parks welcomed a total of almost 300,000 visitors during 2006. Visitor numbers particularly rose at Oulanka and Pyhä-Häkki. The Natural Heritage Services today runs 34 national parks with a total area of 8,818 km². These parks together received about 1.5 million visitors in 2006 – 6% more than in 2005.

A wealth of information on Finland's natural heritage

The website Outdoors.fi (Luontoon.fi in Finnish; and Utinaturen.fi in Swedish), which is run by the Natural Heritage Services, is the best place to find useful information about Finland's national parks, hiking areas and other natural areas of interest.

The Luontoon.fi site was further expanded in 2006, and now covers almost 150 destinations and about 50 visitor centres and other customer service points. Outdoors.fi has been

extended to encompass Lapland's extensive wilderness areas and descriptions of many more natural areas of interest to visitors. The Sámi-language Lundui.fi web pages have also grown to provide more information in the language of Lapland's indigenous people about many destinations in Finnish Lapland.

New facilities and plans

The planning of a visitor centre for the Nuuksio National Park and nearby recreational areas commenced in 2006 when State funding of 6.5 million euros was approved in Parliament for the project. The new visitor centre will provide a conveniently located shop window to introduce natural destinations and nature tourism around Finland to people from the Helsinki area and foreign visitors. It will also be designed to help visitors value natural forest habitats and their sustainable use, and to add to the area's facilities for everyone interested in nature and outdoor recreation. The Nuuksio Visitor Centre will be located along the main route into the park near the Solvalla Sports Institute. Provisional agreements have been made between the main parties involved in this project, including Metsähallitus, Solvalla, and the city councils of Espoo, Helsinki and Vantaa. The centre should open to the public in 2010. The whole Nuuksio lake upland region is one of the most important natural and recreational areas in the Helsinki region. The Nuuksio National Park alone attracted more than 140,000 visitors in 2006.

Several new facilities were completed for the Pallas-Yllästunturi National Park in 2006. A new rentable wilderness hut was built at Hannukuru, and a traditional Lapp-style kota shelter is now available for rent at Pallas. Duckboard walkways have been constructed and renovated to prevent erosion along trails, and paths around Pallas have been surfaced with gravel. Facilities at the Pallas Visitor Centre have also been renovated, and the reference library expanded. These projects have largely been financed through the Vilmat Programme for the development of nature-based tourism and recreation.

New destinations

Metsähallitus's first underwater nature trail was launched in year 2006 in the Archipelago National Park. This attraction is intended for boaters, groups from nature schools, local tour operators, divers, and anyone else interested in marine life. The trail features seaweeds of various kinds anchored to rocks on the seabed, as well as other aquatic plants that grow where the sea floor is sandier. With luck, visitors may also be able to spot fish, shellfish, crustaceans and other sea creatures among the marine plants.

The Kvarken Archipelago became Finland's first UNESCO World Natural Heritage Site in July 2006, in partnership with Sweden's previously designated High Coast Heritage Site on the other side of the Gulf of Bothnia. The area has been recognised for its unique geology. The whole region is undergoing rapid land uplift, creating emergent coastlines and islands that are also valuable ecologically and scenically.

During autumn 2006 Metsähallitus set up a working group to prepare an administrative model for the new world heritage site. An EU-funded project led by Metsähallitus was also launched to plan and implement measures to enhance facilities for visitors in areas of special interest.



New data system examines customers' satisfaction

Accurate information about the levels of visitor demand for protected areas and recreation areas helps planners to ensure that their use and the impacts of recreational activities are sustainable. In order to produce more reliable data on visitors, the NHS has for the last two years been devising new survey methods. This work has resulted in new procedures and guidelines created for the monitoring of the use of protected and recreation areas by nature tourism operators, as well as the new ASTA customer satisfaction data system.

In 2006 more than 7,000 people responded to questionnaires distributed in customer service points and natural areas run by the NHS. Respondents generally rated their experiences favourably, with overall scores averaging just over 4 on a scale of 1–5.

Such information will also be used to prioritise where customer services and visitor facilities should be improved qualitatively and quantitatively, and to ensure that resources are channeled effectively. This type of data is also needed for the purposes of monitoring the sustainability and impacts of activities, and for collaborative research work, such as assessments of the regional economic and employment impacts of nature-based recreation.



Visitor's opinions were surveyed from comments written in 19 visitors' books in the national parks of Nuukio and Linnansaari, and the Käsvärssi Wilderness Area. Visitors seemed to greatly value their experiences in these beautiful natural areas.

Estimated numbers of visits at visitor centres and customer service points in 2006

| | |
|---|----------------|
| Blåmusslan Visitor Centre | 19,700 |
| Ekenäs Visitor Centre | 19,600 |
| Fell-Lapland Nature Centre | 22,000 |
| Hautajärvi Visitor Centre..... | 6,300 |
| Hossa Visitor Centre | 41,800 |
| Häme Visitor Centre | 17,800 |
| Kellokas Visitor Centre..... | 64,200 |
| Kilpisjärvi Visitor Centre..... | 14,200 |
| Koilliskaira Visitor Centre | 20,800 |
| Nestori – Saimaa Nature Centre | 7,800 |
| Oskari – Linnansaari Visitor Centre | 12,100 |
| Oulanka Visitor Centre..... | 60,200 |
| Pallastunturi Visitor Centre..... | 37,000 |
| Petola Visitor Centre | 17,900 |
| Pyhäntunturi Visitor Centre | 30,300 |
| Ruunaa Visitor Centre | 9,000 |
| Savukoski Visitor Centre..... | 5,200 |
| Seitsemäinen Visitor Centre..... | 33,600 |
| Siida – Northern Lapland Nature Centre..... | 122,700 |
| Syöte Visitor Centre..... | 29,500 |
| Teijo Visitor Centre..... | 16,500 |
| Terranova – Kvarken Nature Centre..... | 24,000 |
| Visitor centres (22) total | 632,200 |
| Etiäinen Customer Service..... | 30,600 |
| Customer Service at Ivalo | 10,300 |
| Karhuntassu Customer Service..... | 59,000 |
| Kiehininen Customer Service | 43,300 |
| Customer service points (4) total..... | 143,200 |
| Total..... | 775,400 |

Estimated numbers of visits to national parks in 2006

| | |
|--|------------------|
| Archipelago National Park | 60,000 |
| Eastern Gulf of Finland National Park..... | 17,000 |
| Ekenäs Archipelago National Park..... | 25,000 |
| Helvetinjärvi National Park..... | 32,000 |
| Hiidenportti National Park..... | 10,000 |
| Isojärvi National Park | 7,000 |
| Kauhaneva-Pohjankangas National Park..... | 6,000 |
| Kolovesi National Park | 7,000 |
| Kurjenrahka National Park | 25,000 |
| Lauhanvuori National Park | 27,000 |
| Leivonmäki National Park | 11,000 |
| Lemmenjoki National Park..... | 10,000 |
| Liesjärvi National Park..... | 25,000 |
| Linnansaari National Park | 29,000 |
| Nuukio National Park | 142,000 |
| Oulanka National Park..... | 183,500 |
| Pallas-Yllästunturi National Park | 310,000 |
| Patvinsuo National Park..... | 15,000 |
| Perämeri National Park | 5,500 |
| Petkeljärvi National Park | 18,500 |
| Puurijärvi-Iso suo National Park..... | 12,500 |
| Pyhä-Häkki National Park | 15,500 |
| Pyhä-Luosto National Park..... | 103,500 |
| Päijänne National Park..... | 12,000 |
| Repovesi National Park | 69,000 |
| Riisitunturi National Park..... | 7,000 |
| Rokua National Park | 18,000 |
| Salamajärvi National Park | 12,000 |
| Seitsemäinen National Park | 42,000 |
| Syöte National Park..... | 33,000 |
| Tiilikajärvi National Park | 7,000 |
| Torransuo National Park | 20,000 |
| Urho Kekkonen National Park | 170,000 |
| Valkmusa National Park | 6,500 |
| Total (34) | 1,493,000 |

Estimated numbers of visits to national hiking areas in 2005

| | |
|------------------------------|----------------|
| Evo Hiking Area..... | 50,000 |
| Hossa Hiking Area | 49,000 |
| Iso-Syöte Hiking Area..... | 23,500 |
| Kylmäluoma Hiking Area | 35,000 |
| Oulujärvi Hiking Area | 25,000 |
| Ruunaa Hiking Area | 94,000 |
| Teijo Hiking Area | 60,000 |
| Total (7) | 336,500 |



TIMO NIEMINEN

The METSO Programme aims to safeguard biodiversity in the forests of Southern Finland.

Providing Ecological Data and Protecting Cultural Heritage

The Natural Heritage Services aims to preserve Finland's cultural heritage and biodiversity, especially in Finland's extensive network of protected areas. The conservation work concerns three main areas: species, habitats and cultural heritage.

The implementation of projects within the METSO Forest Biodiversity Programme for Southern Finland accounted for almost half of our working hours during 2006. Inventories of listed biotopes were completed according to plan. This internationally significant survey work provides a wealth of vital information on which to base the future management of protected areas. Over the period 2002–2006 a total area of more than 5,000 km² has been surveyed. Inventories will continue to be conducted outside the METSO region until at least 2012.

The results of habitat restoration work carried out in forests and mires as part of the METSO Programme have exceeded all expectations. Controlled burnings were successfully carried out in many localities across Finland to reproduce conditions that occur after natural forest fires. Habitat restoration work was done over a total area of 3,600 ha in Southern Finland, and in 280 hectares of forests in protected areas in NE Finland as part of the Green Belt Life Project. Traditional agricultural biotopes with a total area of more than 1,400 ha have been maintained and restored. Other habitat management work included measures to maintain herb-rich woodlands with a total area of 127 ha.

Aquatic habitats are also being restored in Finland. Metsähallitus and the North Ostrobothnia Regional Environment Centre were jointly granted the WWF's Panda Award

during 2006 for a project involving the restoration of woodland streams. Previously such work in Northern Finland had focused more on larger rivers, even though smaller streams often contain vital breeding and spawning habitats for trout.

Cultural heritage in the spotlight

Protecting cultural heritage is becoming increasingly interlinked with the NHS nature conservation work. Surveys carried out by the NHS have documented and registered the locations of hundreds of previously unknown or unlisted cultural sites, including the remains of stone age settlements, bronze age burial sites and sites of interest to military historians. The NHS collaborates closely on projects related to Finland's cultural heritage with the National Board of Antiquities, several regional museums, the Sámi Parliament of Finland, the Sámi Museum and various universities.

Metsähallitus also compiles data on the history of areas owned by the Finnish State. Very little archaeological research has yet been conducted in extensive areas of Finnish Lapland which are today unpopulated but may have been

settled in the past. The NHS has funded archaeological inventories carried out by Helsinki University in the Muotkatunturi Wilderness Area. These surveys have discovered seven previously unknown sites of interest – including remains of five prehistoric settlements and two more recent relics.

The Delos Initiative of the World Conservation Union (IUCN) aims to assess how well traditionally sacred natural sites and their cultural and spiritual values have been incorporated into protected areas within developed countries. The island of Ukonsaari in Lapland's Lake Inari was investigated as a case study during 2006, and the Kolovesi National Park is also being studied in this context. The scheme aims to increase the prominence of protected areas, to promote nature tourism, and to combine the conservation of natural and cultural heritage.

A tough year for golden eagles and Saimaa ringed seals

Metsähallitus is responsible for the nationwide protection of several species including golden eagle (*Aquila chrysaetos*),



KEIJO TAURIJAINEN

The Natural Heritage Services has participated in an innovative woodland stream restoration project in Northern Ostrobothnia.



HENRIK JANSSON

The fortified island of Gustavsvärn, managed by Metsähallitus, near Hanko, is interesting for its naval history.

Saimaa ringed seal (*Phoca hispida saimensis*) and white-backed woodpecker (*Dendrocopos leucotos*). The distributions, numbers and viability of these species are monitored annually.

Golden eagles raised fewer eaglets across Finland in 2006, due to unfavourable spring weather and shortages of prey. Summer surveys showed that about 300 pairs commenced nesting, but breeding was only successful at 114 nesting sites, with a total of 128 eaglets surviving to the age when they are ringed. During good years as many as 180 young may be raised in about 140 nests. The reasons behind golden eagles' continuing breeding problems in Southern Finland remain unclear, but deliberate or accidental disturbance by people is one likely factor.

Surveys of the dens of Saimaa ringed seals revealed that their population did not increase during 2006, even though 40 pups were born. Six pups died before leaving their dens. This is slightly more than in a normal year, perhaps due to unusual weather. Few suitable snowdrifts were available for the seals to excavate their dens inside, and several dens collapsed as early as March. Water levels in Lake Saimaa also dropped by as much as 20 cm during the seals' breeding season, making the ice unstable.

White-backed woodpeckers are gradually increasing their numbers around Finland. Surveys revealed record numbers of both territories (86) and nests (54). The protection and restoration of more areas of suitable habitat in Southern Finland

and measures to consider their needs in commercially managed forests have all helped to improve the species' prospects.

Last autumn the NHS and the University of Jyväskylä inventoried occurrences of polypore fungi in the national parks of Isojärvi and Pyhä-Häkki through comprehensive field surveys, which produced plenty of new data revealing that both parks form very valuable refuges for such fungi. Species observed at Pyhä-Häkki included *Antrodiella citrinella*, which is very rare throughout Finland and had never before been noted in Central Finland, as well as *Diplomitoporus crustulinus* – a declining species only previously found in one other locality in the region. One of the 88 polypore species found during a week-long survey at Isojärvi, the yellow-red gill polypore (*Gloeophyllum protractum*), had previously been listed as extinct in Southern Finland. NHS will apply the results of these surveys in creating land use and management plans for the two parks.



Macrogastrea ventricosa Drap.

ILMARI VALOVIIRTA

A group of mollusc experts were surprised to discover an unusual specimen in a Natura site managed by Metsähallitus at Hollola in Southern Finland. The mystery mollusc was identified as the first *Macrogastrea ventricosa* Drap. ever observed in Finland. It is thought that this species has managed to survive in an isolated relic population ever since a warm period after the Ice Age.



ARI KARHILAHTI

Visitors to the Korpoström Archipelago Centre in early November enjoyed a rare opportunity to see two common dolphins (*Delphinus delphis*) in Finnish waters. The mother dolphin and her youngster swam in the Archipelago for about a week before they tragically became entangled in fishing nets and drowned.

Planning the Use and Management of Protected Areas

The Natural Heritage Services manages almost all protected areas in lands owned by the Finnish State, including national parks, strict nature reserves and other protected areas, as well as areas within State-owned lands designated for future protection under nature conservation programmes, the extensive wilderness areas of northern Lapland, several national hiking areas, and publicly-owned waters. All these areas are covered by land use and management plans.

Two notable new protected areas within easy reach of Helsinki were established in 2006 at Sipoonkorpi and Meiko. Sipoonkorpi includes some of the most extensive undeveloped forests in the vicinity of the capital, and has great regional significance as a refuge for forest biodiversity. Land use at the Meiko Nature Reserve in Kirkkonummi is being planned in tandem with the nearby Nuuksio National Park. Facilities for larger numbers of visitors will be concentrated in Nuuksio, which is already a popular destination. The backwoods of Meiko will not be so extensively developed for recreational use.

The total area of lands and waters managed by the Natural Heritage Services increased by more than 100 km² during

2006. More than half of the new lands were acquired through administrative transfers. Sites with a total extent of 36 km² were procured for existing conservation programmes, while sites covering 9 km² were acquired for the METSO Forest Biodiversity Programme for Southern Finland. Five hectares of ecologically valuable fen habitat in Juuka in Eastern Finland was donated to Metsähallitus for the purposes of nature conservation by a local landowner.

Sustainability through carefully drafted plans

All activities in protected areas are carefully controlled through land use and management plans. At the end of 2006 the Ministry of the Environment approved various new plans drafted by Metsähallitus, including a proposed land use and management plan for an extensive area of Central Finland including the Salamajärvi National Park and other nearby protected areas with different statuses and conservation objectives. Previously such plans have usually only been made to cover single protected areas, but such wider-ranging plans help the authorities to carefully channel the land use pressures that can affect Natura sites and other sensitive areas. The new plan will include various vital conservation measures for the region's protected areas.

During 2006 wide-ranging natural resource plans for Eastern and Western Lapland were completed by Metsähallitus, a similar plan for Upper Lapland was revised, and work began on the renewal of plans for Eastern Finland and Ostrobothnia. Natural resource plans comprehensively cover many different kinds of resource use and management, aiming to harmonise the enjoyment and exploitation of natural resources according to the needs of many different local stakeholders, who are involved in the drafting of these plans together with Metsähallitus personnel. These plans are applied at regional level to define the need for conservation and recreational land use and the suitable extent of forestry activities. A recent amendment to the natural resource plan for Upper Lapland, for instance, has permanently ended commercial forestry in an additional area of some 200 km².



TAPIO TUOMELA

The Rokua National Park has been expanded by more than 100 ha through land deals related to the METSO Forest Biodiversity Programme.



JARI KOSTET

Metsähallitus hopes to get more young people hooked on fishing as a healthy outdoor pursuit.

Opportunities for Sustainable Hunting and Fishing

The Natural Heritage Services officially safeguards public hunting and fishing rights, and provides facilities to encourage these pursuits, which are controlled through official decisions made by the Game and Fisheries Manager. Game stocks and fishing waters are carefully managed and supervised to ensure they are used sustainably. Fishing and hunting permits are sold by Villi Pohjola (the Wild North).

The right to hunt on lands owned by the State is an important basic right for many hunters across Finland. Almost half of all State-owned lands consist of protected areas of various kinds, where hunting is controlled by the Nature Conservation Act, the official regulations defined for each area, and guidelines issued by Metsähallitus. In Northern Finland, where local residents have a statutory right to hunt in their own municipality, some form of hunting is permitted in many protected areas. In national parks and many other protected areas in the south, hunting is more usually prohibited or strictly controlled through permits.

There is a peak in demand for permits to hunt in areas run by Metsähallitus when the hunting season begins each autumn, and some hunters may not be able to obtain permits for the times when they wish to hunt. This year attempts were made in co-operation with the Wild North organization to ease the rush for permit sales by staggering sales regionally, by improving web-based services, and by increasing sales staff. A total of 37,800 hunting permits were sold for State-owned lands.

Metsähallitus's fishing and hunting clients generally reflect the age-structure of the population as a whole, although the average age of people fishing with nets seems to be rising. Surveys of hunters over the last few years have indicated that young people are also taking up the sport, at least in State-owned lands. Metsähallitus has tried to encourage young people to take up outdoor pursuits by providing cheaper permits for young people. Under-18s can get fishing permits half price, and hunting permits for ten euros a week. During 2006 the Natural Heritage Services was actively involved in special events held as part of a 'national fishing day', which attracted thousands of children and young people across the country.

Sales procedures for fishing permits are also being steadily improved. Under a new scheme introduced in 2006 fishing permits for ten waters could be bought using mobile phones. The feedback on this scheme was highly positive, and it will be extended during 2007 to cover more waters. Finland's State-owned waters include 57 recreational fishing areas and 56 other fishing waters covered by permits. Some 60,000 fishing permits were sold for these waters during 2006.

Metsähallitus rangers monitor and supervise the use of State-owned lands to ensure regulations and permits are fully observed. Rangers' work is co-ordinated by game and fisheries wardens, who have the same legal authority as the police. Rangers work in close co-operation with the police and the Border Guard.

Defining Common Practices for Nature Tourism



SAULI KOSKI

Funding from the Vilmatt Programme has been used to build new duckboard trails in the Pallas-Yllästunturi National Park.

The Vilmatt Programme for the development of nature-based tourism and recreation in Finland was launched by the Government in 2003, aiming to double the number of employment opportunities in this sector by 2010. The programme particularly focuses on demand-based developments, sustainability, and equality of opportunity.

Metsähallitus is greatly involved in the implementation of the Vilmatt Programme, which sees Finland's national parks as key nature tourism attractions. The need to develop nature-based tourism and recreation is both a challenge and an opportunity for the parks, especially in Northern and Eastern Finland and in coastal archipelagos. Parliament and the Ministry of the Environment have set a goal for Metsähallitus to contribute to regional economies and employment by developing nature tourism. Conservation objectives will nevertheless continue to be prioritised in protected areas, setting limits for tourism.

The main aim of the Vilmatt Programme is to identify measures that need to be taken by different actors to improve opportunities for nature-based recreation and tourism, and then define harmonised responsibilities and objectives. Met-

sähallitus has been actively participating in the preparation of regional tourism strategies, which provide a good example of fruitful co-operation between different actors.

The programme's most significant objective from the viewpoint of Metsähallitus is the need to improve the facilities for tourism and recreation in natural areas while also preserving their natural attractions and values. This work involves enhancing services and land use planning in recreational areas and protected areas. The need for tourism and recreational activities to be sustainable must be considered when land use and management plans are initially drafted, as well as in controlling and monitoring land use subsequently.

Metsähallitus has made recreational and nature tourism development plans for protected areas and other State-owned lands and waters, and also prepared a programme of projects based on these plans. Implementation began in 2006 in the Pallas-Yllästunturi National Park, where facilities and guidance for visitors were improved.

In line with the Vilmatt Programme Metsähallitus has also been finding ways to develop the Nuuksio National Park to help its visitor facilities promote nature-based tourism and recreation throughout Finland, and attract more foreign visitors to Finland's national parks. It has consequently been decided that a visitor centre should be built at Nuuksio.

The Vilmatt Programme also aims to improve co-operation between different actors and to make nature tourism services into more attractive products. The international certification of national parks under schemes designed to promote sustainable tourism can help to attract more visitors. The Syöte National Park has already been granted the European Charter for Sustainable Tourism certificate of the EUROPARC Federation, while the Oulanka National Park has been certified under the WWF's PAN Parks scheme.

Services for nature-based recreation and tourism are provided on the basis of demand. Customers' needs and satisfaction are surveyed in detail through the new ASTA customer satisfaction data system, which was taken into use by Metsähallitus during 2006.

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

Koskikatu 44–46, 96101 Rovaniemi, 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

Ivalontie 10, 99800 Ivalo, tel.int. +358 205 64 7701

Karhuntassu Customer Service

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

Kellokas Visitor Centre

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

Kiehin Customer Service

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

Kilpisjärvi Visitor Centre

Käsivarrentie 14145, 99490 Kilpisjärvi, tel.int. +358 205 64 7990

Koilliskaira Visitor Centre

Tankavaarantie 11 B, 99695 Tankavaara, tel.int. +358 205 64 7251

Nestori – Saimaa Nature Centre

Akselinkatu 8 (visitors Aino Acktén puistotie 4),
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

Pyhäntunturi Visitor Centre

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

Ruunaa Visitor Centre

Ruunaantie 129, 81750 Pankkoski, 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

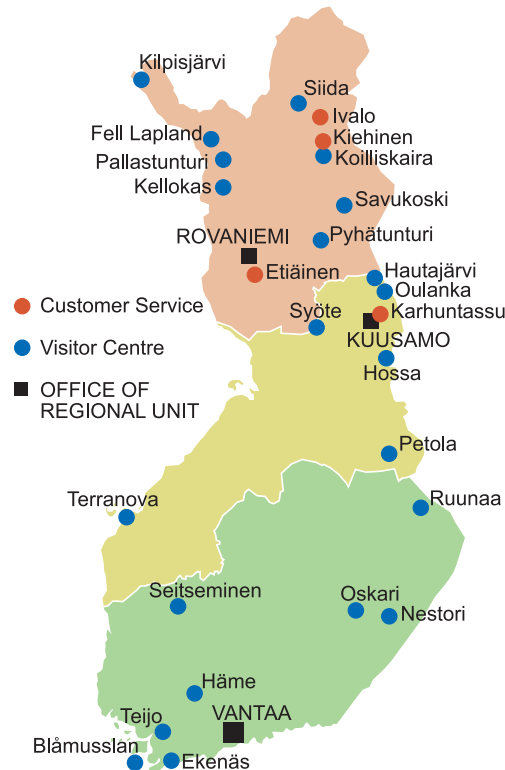
Teijo Visitor Centre

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

Terranova – Kvarken Nature Centre*

Museokatu 3, 65100 Vaasa, tel.int. +358 205 64 5281

* in cooperation with the Ostrobothnian Museum



Metsähallitus, Natural Heritage Services

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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 recreation, fishing and hunting 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 the 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 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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