



Metsähallitus Natural Heritage Services Annual Report 2007



Finland's National parks and strict nature reserves, wilderness areas and national hiking areas and state-owned public waters that were managed by Metsähallitus 31.12.2007.

- Information on the management of the areas: www.metsa.fi > Natural Heritage.
- Information on the areas and services: www.outdoors.fi.



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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.



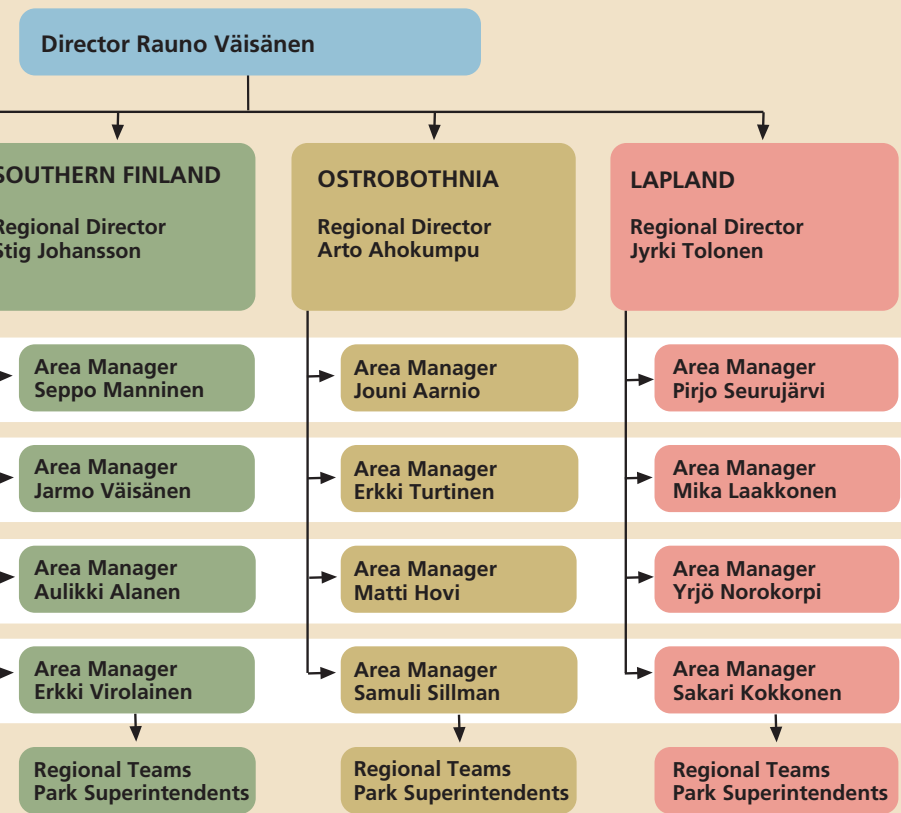
JUHA ILKKA

FRIGGA'S FRITILLARY (*CLOSSIANA FRIGGA*) HAS SUFFERED FROM ARTIFICIAL DRAINAGE SCHEMES. THE IMPACTS OF MIRE HABITAT RESTORATION SCHEMES ON BUTTERFLIES ARE BEING STUDIED IN A LIFE PROJECT IN EASTERN FINLAND.

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.

PROCESSES



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COVER PHOTO: A NEW MANAGEMENT PLAN IS BEING PREPARED FOR THE NATURA SITE OF PIHLAJAVESI IN THE PICTURESQUE HEART OF THE FINNISH LAKE DISTRICT. PHOTO: ARTO HÄMÄLÄINEN

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PRINTED AT:
ERWEKO PAINOTUOTE OY, HELSINKI 2008
ON CYCLUS PRINT, 100% RECYCLED PAPER
1 000 COPIES
ISBN 978-952-446-684-4 (PRINTED)
ISBN 978-952-446-685-1 (PDF)



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.

Metsähallitus Natural Heritage Services achieved and in part exceeded targets set for 2007 by Parliament and the ministries. The objectives of the wide-ranging Forest Biodiversity Programme for Southern Finland (METSO) were well fulfilled in general. Rapid progress was made on the ongoing inventories of underwater marine biotopes, thanks to improved networking as well as the many surveys carried out by Metsähallitus. Of the threatened species for which we have special responsibility, the golden eagle and the white-backed woodpecker both had an excellent year with record breeding levels, but the Saimaa ringed seal population decreased alarmingly due to high mortality rates. Species inventories in protected areas resulted in many new observations of threatened species. We have also been working more intensively to protect cultural heritage features, especially in Lapland. Research collaboration with universities, research institutes and expert organisations has been consolidated through co-operation agreements.

Progress on the drafting of management plans for protected areas has been speedy, with targets exceeded. Our principles for the management of Finland's protected areas were revised, and we have also published a comprehensive and descriptive report on "The State of the Parks in Finland".

A new system for planning and monitoring fish stocks was set up alongside the existing system for game stocks. At the same time a new geographic information system containing data on the characteristics of inland waters has been taken into use. An extensive scheme designed to improve game habitats in State-owned lands has been launched in co-operation with Metsähallitus's Forestry business unit. Fishing and hunting permit sales exceeded all expectations. Income from



LIISA NIKULA

permit sales has been used to improve supervision, by hiring temporary game and fisheries wardens.

A state-of-the-art seed germination laboratory has been completed at the Imari Seed Centre in Rovaniemi, enabling the accurate testing of seeds. Facilities for visitors have been widely improved, notably in the national parks Pallas-Ylläs-tunturi, Pyhä-Luosto and Urho Kekkonen, and in the Kvar-ken Archipelago World Heritage Site. Visitor numbers rose in national parks, and customer satisfaction levels remained fairly high. The Luontoon.fi website (available in four language versions including the English Outdoors.fi site) was visited 2.5 million times. A new parallel map service for hikers, hunters and fishers (Retkikartta.fi) was launched, and rapidly became very popular.

Preparations were also made during 2007 for the transfer to Metsähallitus of protected areas previously run by the Finnish Forest Research Institute (METLA). Koli National Park, strict nature reserves at Malla and Vesijako, and various nature reserves including Punkaharju and Saanatunturi will be run by Metsähallitus Natural Heritage Services from 1.1.2008.

Rauno Väisänen



The Pyhä-Luosto National Park protects ecosystems in the forests, fells and mires of Finnish Lapland. This expanded park's regulations, which were recompiled in 2007, permit hiking, reindeer herding, the digging of gemstones, and certain kinds of hunting practiced by local residents. LENTOKUVA VALLAS OY

The Natural Heritage Services

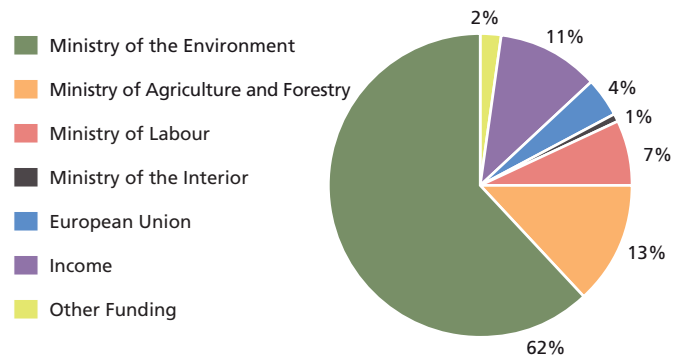
Metsähallitus produces services related to natural resources for a wide range of clients from individual citizens to large corporations. Metsähallitus's administrative tasks are divided into business activities and natural heritage services – which cover nature conservation as well as services related 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 lands and waters managed by Metsähallitus Natural Heritage Services in 2007 covered some 70,171 km², slightly more than in 2006.

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

Statutory protected areas, wilderness areas, national hiking areas, recreational forests, areas reserved for future protection, and public water areas managed by Metsähallitus as of 31.12.2007.

Type of area	No. of areas	km ²
National parks	34	8 825
Strict nature reserves	17	1 504
Other nature reserves	349	5 371
Privately-owned nature reserves	82	85
Areas established by Metsähallitus decisions	24	8
Statutory protected areas (total)	506	15 793
Areas reserved for conservation programmes	1 569	7 384
Protected forests	228	353
Other protected sites	334	1 998
Wilderness areas	12	14 903
National hiking areas	7	355
Other recreational areas	22	1 406
Other areas	20	3 627
Public water areas (where not included above)		24 350
All areas of land and water		70 171



A total sum of 54.5 million euros was used to finance the operations of the Natural Heritage Services in 2007 – half a million euros more than in 2006.

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 total work input amounted to 568 man-years (3.2% less than in 2006). In 2007 temporary staff carried out 38% of the organisation's total work, 13% less than in 2006.

The work input declined in activities related to recreation, but such tasks still accounted for almost half of the work done by the Natural Heritage Services during 2007.

Convicts from open prisons were employed for a total of 23 man-years by Metsähallitus in maintenance and habitat restoration work in Southern Finland, mainly in Nuuksio National Park. Their contributions are not included in the total work input figures above.

At the end of 2007 the NHS had 359 permanent employees and 176 temporary employees. Permanent employees had an average age of 46.5, compared to 39.1 for temporary staff. Female employees account for 32.5% of permanent employees and 45% of temporary staff.

Expanding Data Collection and Research Collaboraton

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. Our activities are enhanced through active collaboration with universities, research institutes and other expert organisations in Finland and abroad.

The NHS has striven to ensure that its own goals are incorporated into the programmes of research institutes through framework agreements, annually based research collaboration, and expert consultations. During 2007 our collaborative network was expanded and intensified. Research collaboration was developed as part of an experimental hydrological monitoring project carried out together with the University of Joensuu; while the University of Jyväskylä led a project designed to improve the coordination of research collaboration and the screening of research data. We also initiated a new partnership with the University of Oulu, and renewed our key collaboration agreement with the Finnish Environment Institute. The collaboration agreement between Metsähallitus and the Finnish Forest Research Institute was renewed. A new framework agreement was signed between the University of Helsinki and Metsähallitus.



Growths of bladder wrack (*Fucus vesiculosus*) like these in Archipelago National Park provide shelter for many sea creatures in Finland's coastal waters.

Species and biotope data collected at record rates

Good progress was made on the Finnish Inventory Programme for the Underwater Marine Environment (VELMU) thanks to the efforts of Metsähallitus's own marine biologists and collaboration with other partners involved in the programme. Underwater inventories were conducted at 3,913 sites, of which about 3,000 were of one hectare in extent, and the rest were larger. The target to survey sites of 3,100 ha in 2007 was exceeded.

The first five-year phase of the Forest Biodiversity Programme for Southern Finland (METSO) was completed in 2007. In spite of unfavourable weather conditions, forest habitat restoration work was done in areas amounting to 2,585 ha, just short of the target of 2,700 ha. Traditional agricultural biotopes with a total area of some 1,700 ha are now being actively managed. Biotope inventories were conducted in areas amounting to 7,000 ha in the METSO region and some 66,000 ha in other parts of Finland.

Metsähallitus also conducted Finland's first comprehensive national species inventories, with surveys particularly focusing on herb-rich woodland habitats as part of the METSO Programme. Mosses, lichens, molluscs and beetles were inventoried in herb-rich woodlands, while polypore fungi were surveyed in commercially managed forests. This work did not focus on the species of a particular protected area, but examined sites already believed to be suited to certain species groups. The aim was to produce new species data to facilitate planning and improve inventory methodologies. A major inventory project revealed almost 400 previously unknown occurrences of more than 170 threatened, near threatened or poorly known species. The species data system maintained by the Finnish Environment Institute was expanded to include 7,100 new observation sites and 8,300 observations, which together account for some 60% of all the data stored in the system. New observations of polypore fungi were particularly numerous.

Of the 37 species for which Metsähallitus has national responsibility, assessments indicated that 13 are in a poor state, and the conservation statuses of a further 15 are unfavourable. Future conservation measures should focus on these species. The situation seems to be worsening particularly for arctic fox (*Alopex lagopus*), Ray's knotgrass (*Polygonum oxyspermum*) and least moonwort (*Botrychium simplex*).

Finland's white-backed woodpeckers (*Dendrocopos leucotos*) had a good year, with 61 recorded nestings. The species' national population has almost doubled over the last five years. Golden eagles (*Aquila chrysaetos*) also bred more successfully than at any time since they have been monitored in Finland, with 194 eaglets raised.

Mild winters have made it hard for Saimaa ringed seals (*Phoca hispida saimensis*) to build their winter breeding dens, and also prolonged the fishing season. Fishing nets have proved fateful, especially for pups less than one year old. The seals have also been forced to seek new breeding sites outside protected areas. During the years 2006–2007 the total population has shrunk from around 280 to some 260.

Cultural heritage surveyed for the purposes of management planning

Cultural heritage work has been strengthened thanks to a collaboration agreement with the subject of archaeology of the University of Helsinki. Co-operation with other universities, the Sámi Museum and provincial museums has also continued. Archaeological inventories were largely conducted through co-operation projects, with results submitted to the Registry of Ancient Monuments.

Inventories of cultural heritage in Finnish Lapland revealed the presence of many previously unknown prehistoric relics and historical sites. Fortifications dating back to World War II were discovered in the Auttiköngäs Nature Reserve, and in the Martimoaapa Mire Reserve many stone structures were found, including food storage pits of various sizes.

In the Eastern Gulf of Finland National Park and its proposed extension more than a hundred previously unknown archaeological relics were discovered. An extensive inventory was also conducted in Seitsemien National Park, revealing the presence of many signs of human activity over past centuries, including game hunters' pits. Such inventories have focused on areas where new management plans are being prepared.

Approximately 13% of the buildings administered by the Natural Heritage Services are protected. The locations and current conditions of these buildings are registered in a special geographic information system run by Metsähallitus together with information on the grounds for statutory protection.

Habitat management and building renovations enabled by project financing

The five-year Forest Life project, co-ordinated by Metsähallitus, involved the restoration of forest and mire habitats in Natura sites with a total area of some 7,000 ha. The structural features of forests and hydrological features of mires were re-



PAIVI TERVONEN

These ruins in the Martinselkonen Nature Reserve are all that remains of a former sauna, where local people would sometimes stay overnight while making hay in the nearby meadows.

stored to resemble their natural states in 33 sites around Finland. This project generated valuable employment as well as favourable ecological impacts.

The Bird Wetlands project also aimed to create employment in wetland management and the renovation of facilities for visitors. The Finnish-Russian project inventorying threatened species native to both countries provided new data on the occurrences of species including the flying squirrel and the white-backed woodpecker on the Karelian Isthmus and south of Lake Ladoga, as well as on the Finnish side of the border.

The NHS also participated in another wetland project. The Life project Management of Wetlands along the Gulf of Finland Migratory Flyway was led by the Uusimaa Regional Environment Centre. Wetland habitats used by breeding and migrating birds were restored at Laajalahti Bay, Espoo, and Saltjärden and Medvastö in Kirkkonummi. This habitat restoration work has led to significant increases in water bird numbers.

Special funding amounting to 210,000 euros was obtained from the Ministry of the Environment for the renovation of the nature stations at Molpe and Mickelsörarna and the old protected buildings of pilots at Rönnskär and Norrskär. They have been converted for new uses including nature school facilities.

The renovation and guidance was planned in the NHS' own FENIKS project that also received funding from the Regional Council of Ostrobothnia, local municipalities and the EU Regional Development Fund.



Visitor Facilities Increasingly Well Used

We manage a wide range of attractive and safe destinations for people who enjoy outdoor activities. These destinations are comprehensively described on the website Outdoors.fi. Information and guidance about natural and cultural features are also provided in the field and at our many customer service points. Facilities and services are planned to ensure that nature tourism is sustainable.

Demand for our services has continued to grow, even beyond expectations. The total number of visits to national parks rose by 6% (almost 50,000 visits) compared to 2006, with the parks administered by Metsähallitus receiving 1,586,700 visits in 2007. The steepest rise was again at Nuuksio National Park, where the annual number of visits rose by 30,000. The most popular national park was Pallas-Yllästunturi, with 312,000 visits. The numbers of visits to national hiking areas and customer service points also increased, by 4% and 3% respectively. Customer satisfaction levels remained high, at more than 4 on a scale of 1–5, based on feedback received at service points, parks and hiking areas from almost 8,000 visitors.

The condition of facilities remained good or moderate on average. Facilities were renovated largely through project funding. A new website has been launched to publicise the improved facilities now available for visitors to the Kvarken Archipelago (Kvarken.fi).

Customer services enhanced in co-operation with local stakeholders

The organization Botnia Tourist and the Vaasa Adult Educational Centre organised a special course for guides and tourist service providers in the Kvarken Archipelago region. Twelve guides successfully completed the course and were granted special certificates qualifying them to work as local nature guides of the world heritage site.

Visitors to popular destinations around Oulu and Kalajoki can now learn more easily about these areas' natural features. The new Kalajoki marine nature centre, which opened in summer 2007 in the same building as a popular spa hotel and indoor swimming pool, features the wildlife of the Gulf of Bothnia and local fishing traditions. A new exhibition

◀ Repovesi is one of the most popular national parks in Southern Finland. Hikers sometimes have to wait their turn to cross the hanging bridge that leads into the park at Lapinsalmi. JARI KOSTET



MAARIT KYÖSTILÄ

The exhibition the Fell Lapland Nature Centre was produced by Metsähallitus together with the Sámi Museum Siida and the Sámi association Johtti Sápmelaččat. It especially shows how reindeer link the lives of local people to nature.

opened by Metsähallitus on the island of Hailuoto near Oulu also spotlights the region's natural and cultural heritage. The exhibition at Hailuoto is housed near the Luotokeskus holiday, school camp and activity centre.

An exhibition featuring nature in Lake Päijänne National Park has been relocated to Päijännetalo building in Asikkala, which already houses the Museum of Finnish Recreational Fishing. Advisory services for visitors will be provided in the summer months through joint funding.

A new exhibition featuring the life of the reindeer-herding Sámi and the wildlife of Finnish Lapland opened at the Fell Lapland Nature Centre in Enontekiö in February 2007. The expansion of the centre's premises has created more office space for the use of Metsähallitus, the Sámi Museum and the Sámi Parliament of Finland. The same building now also houses a local branch of the Inari-based Sámi Museum Siida. An employee of the museum takes care of the centre's cultural exhibits and events.

The expansion of the Fell Lapland Nature Centre was funded through the national government's VILMAT programme for the development of nature tourism, which also financed the renovation of facilities at national parks including Pallas-Yllästunturi, Urho Kekkonen and Pyhä-Luosto. The VILMAT programme aims to double employment related to nature tourism and outdoor recreation in Finland by 2010.

As part of an EU Interreg project, new interactive electronic information services have been set up for Oulanka National Park and its Russian twin park Paanajärvi, describing the region's natural features and opportunities for outdoor recreation. Ten guides of Oulanka National Park were certificated.

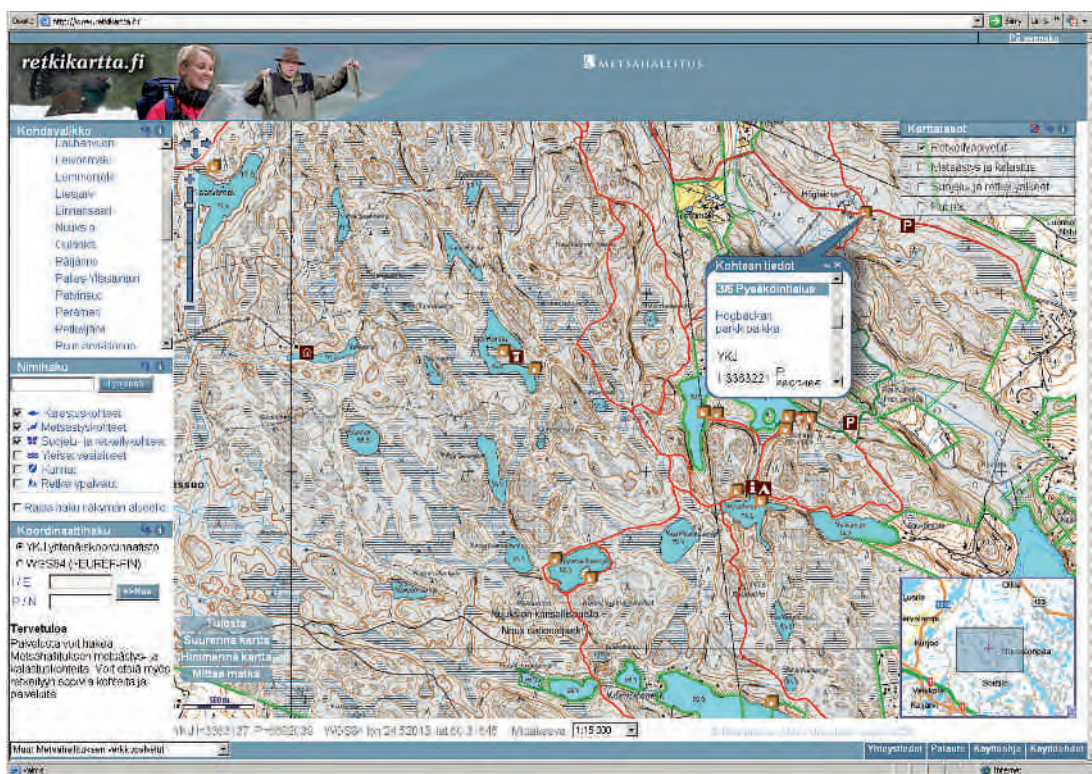
Co-operation with local nature tourism operators has been expanded and strengthened. Over the past year 49 new co-operation agreements were signed with new partner firms committed to the principles of sustainable nature tourism in protected areas.

An exhibition produced in collaboration with the Geological Survey of Finland featuring tools "From the stone axe to the mobile phone" was opened on the European Day of Parks 24.5.07. The exhibition is now touring visitor centres around Finland, following up on the earlier "Traces of the Ice Age" exhibition. The exhibitions aim to familiarize visitors with Finland's geological diversity and how people have used rocks, soils and minerals in their everyday lives over the ages.

New internet map service launched

During 2007 a new web service was launched at Retkikartta.fi (in Finnish, and under the name of Utflyktskarta.fi in Swedish) to provide useful maps for hikers, fishers and hunters. The maps available through the service feature areas including national parks, national hiking areas and Lapland's wilderness areas, and they show the locations of trails, cabins, shelters, campfires sites and other useful facilities. Areas where fishing and hunting are permitted are also marked on the maps. For more details of destinations users can visit the Luontoon.fi or Utinaturen.fi websites and these sites have links to the new map sites. During its first year the map service received almost 250,000 visits.

The annual number of visits to the Luontoon.fi sites rose by 50% from 2006, to more than 2.5 million.



Users of the Retkikartta.fi website can find their destinations in various ways: by moving around the maps; by selecting them from lists; or by searching: using place names or geographical co-ordinates. Route lengths can be measured, and maps can also be printed. The site's information on routes and local facilities comes from Metsähallitus's geographical information system.

Cherishing Finland's Fishing and Hunting Traditions

Hunting and fishing have always been an important part of rural life in Finland. The Natural Heritage Services works to safeguard the rights of all citizens to fish and hunt, and to provide opportunities for people to practise these activities. Hunting and fishing must be based on thriving fish and game stocks, with sustainability ensured through careful planning, habitat management and supervision. Hunting and fishing permits are sold by Metsähallitus's Wild North business unit.

The right to hunt in State-owned lands is part of Finland's hunting traditions. Hunting has become more popular in the 2000s, and in 2007 hunting of small game increased by more than 5% compared to 2006. It has been possible to increase the numbers of permits issued, by planning and scaling hunting to ensure that game bird stocks are exploited sustainably. A game management planning and monitoring system devised by Metsähallitus enables permit sales to be controlled to guarantee the ecological and social sustainability of hunting. This system uses population estimates made by the Finnish Game and Fisheries Research Institute in combination with details of hunters' bags from the previous season.

In spite of a general decline in the number of active fishers in Finland, recreational fishing in State-owned waters increased by 15% compared to 2006. Sustainable fishing can only be planned using accurate information on fishing catches and the productivity of fish stocks. In 2007 a new geographic information system was taken into use to facilitate the planning of fishing levels. Metsähallitus has also been preparing a new system that will be used to compile and process data on fishing catches from 2008.

The Natural Heritage Services and Forestry business units of Metsähallitus have together launched a project involving the active management of game bird habitats, aiming to restore and rehabilitate suitable breeding habitats in forest mires and wetlands for game birds, geese and waterfowl.

The wishes of fishers and hunters concerning the services have been fully considered. The NHS has tried to even out peak purchasing periods for hunting permits by spreading sales between the summer and autumn periods. Special hunting permits for young people introduced alongside the similar youth fishing permits are increasingly popular. Trials have been conducted of a new type of hunting permit purchasable by mobile phone. Such permits are best suited to hare hunters



JUHA SIEKKINEN

Habitat restoration work in commercially managed forests benefits birds including the willow grouse (*Lagopus lagopus*).

who may only decide on the same day whether to go hunting or not, depending on the weather.

Another new service launched in 2007 that will benefit fishers and hunters is the web-based map service Retkikartta.fi (Utflyktskarta.fi in Swedish). This service helps fishers to find out exactly where they can practise recreational fishing, lure fishing, or put down nets or traps. Public waters and areas where small game or elk may be hunted are also marked on the internet maps.

Metsähallitus also runs the website Suurpedot.fi, which provides a wealth of information on Finland's large carnivores. Use of this site doubled in 2007.

Metsähallitus's nine game and fisheries wardens ensure that State-owned lands and waters are used according to legal controls, and strive to prevent any offences in advance. This work is carried out in close co-operation with the police and border guards. Metsähallitus has also been involved in various intensive monitoring operations, notably in the Eastern Gulf of Finland, where special attention has been paid to safety issues, the legality of fishing and fishing equipment, and the observance of national park regulations.

Public Participation Encouraged in Planning

Land use and management in protected areas on State-owned lands are guided by specific management plans. These plans are drawn up by the Natural Heritage Services, who also ensure that the views of local residents, firms and authorities are duly taken into account.



NINA ÖVERHOLM

The Mickelsörarna Nature Station is housed in a former pilot station in the Kvarken Archipelago today used by boaters and guided tour groups. The station is jointly run by Metsähallitus Natural Heritage Services and a local firm.

A total of 32 management plans for Natura sites were completed in 2007 (compared to 20 in 2006), for areas including the national parks of Pallas–Yllästunturi, Pyhä–Luosto, Hiidenportti, Petkeljärvi and Leivonmäki, the Friendship Park near the Finnish-Russian border, and the Kaldoaivi Wilderness Area. The overall need for further management plans was also assessed, and a preliminary schedule of work drawn up for the period 2008–2010. New park regulations were defined for two popular national parks in Lapland, Pyhä–Luosto and Urho Kekkonen, to ensure that the activities practiced by visitors and local people are sustainable.

Metsähallitus's own principles of protected area management in Finland were revised, and they will now also be applied in wilderness areas and areas designated for future protection.

The Pihlajavesi Natura Site in Southern Savo includes both State-owned and private land, and a new model has been devised for the area's management as part of a joint project with a Finnish-Russian neighbourhood programme covering SE Finland. Another project named People, Nature and Harbours, which is being financed using EU structural funds over the period 2006–2008, pays special attention to participation in planning at local level, and tests new adaptive management methods and co-operation models.

Sites meeting the criteria of the METSO Forest Biodiversity Programme for Southern Finland with a total extent of 760 hectares were acquired during 2007.

The Natural Heritage Services was also involved in a working group preparing for the administrative transfer of certain protected areas from the Finnish Forest Research Institute to Metsähallitus.

Metsähallitus Natural Heritage Services is co-ordinating the administration, planning and development of the Kvarken Archipelago World Heritage Site. The site's steering committee also includes the representatives of municipalities and other key authorities, nature conservation organisations, tourism associations and landowners. This committee's work involves the drafting of an administrative and development plan, and liaison with the closely linked Swedish High Coast World Heritage Site.

The State of the Parks in Finland, a comprehensive report describing the state of Finland's national parks and other protected areas, has been published in Finnish and English. This report will form a vital basis for the future management of protected areas and for the future development of the activities of the Natural Heritage Services in general.



The Archipelago National Park is now part of the PAN Parks network of European protected areas. The PAN Parks foundation was set up by the WWF to recognise Europe's most beautiful and sustainably managed protected areas. Parks are only approved for the network after a strict appraisal of their work in nature conservation and sustainable tourism. Oulanka National Park in NE Finland is also a PAN Park.

Comprehensive State of the Parks in Finland Report Published

The State of the Parks in Finland report represents the first comprehensive description of Finland's protected areas and wilderness areas and their management during the 2000s. The report includes information for 2005 about the state of areas administered by Metsähallitus and the national network of protected areas. Finland's protected areas account for a considerable share of the boreal coniferous forest zone and the Baltic Sea region and Europe's conservation network as a whole.

An international group of expert evaluators described the overall standard level of the management of Finland's protected areas as good in their report of 2004. The experts went on to recommend that Metsähallitus should in future prepare reports at five-year intervals to analyse the effectiveness of the management of Finland's protected areas, with results communicated to the staff, stakeholders and the international nature conservation community.

This first State of the Parks report gives a detailed overview of the present state of Finland's protected area system, and

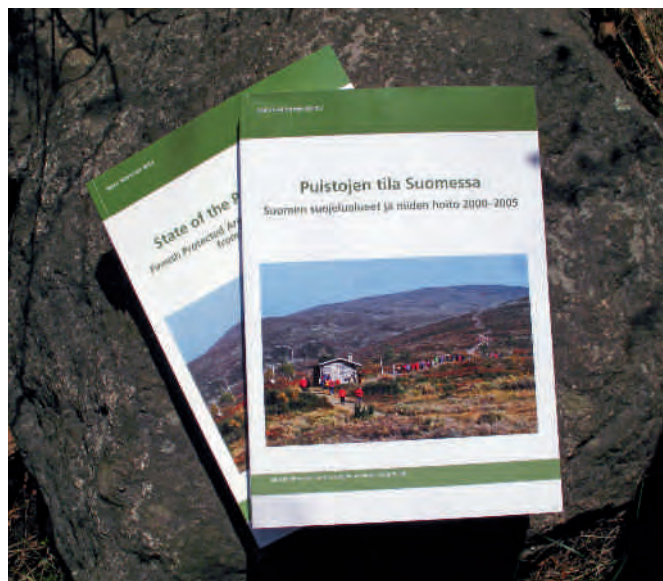
the quality of the related data. An examination of biodiversity and its conservation by habitat types shows why protected areas are needed and why they must be effectively managed. The report also comprehensively describes protected areas' diverse cultural heritage, their recreational use, and their use for various livelihoods, so as to highlight their ecological, cultural, social and economic benefits.

The report additionally describes progress made in recent years in the conservation of biodiversity, and recent changes in the operating environment. Problems and challenges related to the management of protected areas are approached from the perspective of the pressures and threats currently affecting habitats. The effectiveness and outcomes of the activities of Metsähallitus Natural Heritage Services are assessed using performance measures and indicators, with results and methods described in detail. A lot of progress has been made on both the conservation of biodiversity, and the provision of public facilities in State-owned lands. Challenges over the next few years include the need to complete land acquisitions for nature conservation programmes and to establish many new protected areas through new legislation.

The report was prepared applying methodology devised by the IUCN for assessing the effectiveness of protected area management. Monitoring and evaluations have focused on the state of individual protected areas and the protected area network as a whole, and also on the impacts of the ways areas have been managed and the network has been developed. The report will be used to support the future work of the NHS, co-operation with stakeholders, and the next international evaluation. Compiling data on protected areas and their management in this way also helps Finland to fulfil reporting obligations related to various international environmental agreements.

The NHS will continue to enhance the monitoring of the state of Finland's protected areas and the effectiveness of their management in close collaboration with the national nature conservation administration and researchers from various institutes. This work also forms part of the National Strategy and Action Plan for the Conservation and Sustainable Use of Biodiversity in Finland.

The next report on the state of Finland's protected areas has been scheduled for 2010.



JARI KOSTET

An extensive report describing the state of Finland's national parks and other protected areas is available in Finnish and English (or in summary form in Swedish and Sámi) on the internet at www.metsa.fi/sop.

Large Life Projects Were Brought to an End

Metsähallitus was involved during 2007 in some 60 projects. The total budgets of these projects amounted to about 50 million euros, of which approximately 23 million euros passed through the accounts of the NHS. At the end of the year, 30 projects were still ongoing. Many EU projects were completed during the year, which marked a transition between two EU funding programme periods.

The largest completed projects were the Forest Life project on the restoration of boreal forest and wooded mire habitats, the project on Bird Wetlands of international importance in the context of surrounding rural areas, and a project involving inventories of threatened forest species found in both Finland and Russia. These projects were all partially funded through EU programmes.

EU Life Nature projects involving the Natural Heritage Services during 2007

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 (Kokemäenjoki Life)

2006–2010 Promotion of public awareness and protection of aapa mires in Lapland (Pelkosenniemi Life)

2005–2009 Restoration of Dune and Coastal Habitats in the Vattaja Military Area (Vattaja Dune Life)

2005–2009 Marine Protected Areas in the Eastern Baltic Sea (Baltics MPA Life)

2005–2008 Conservation of Anser erythropus on European migration route

2004–2008 Tourist Destinations as Landscape Laboratories. Tools for Sustainable Tourism (Landscape Lab Life)

2004–2008 Natural forests and mires in the Green Belt of Koillismaa and Kainuu (Green Belt Life)

2004–2008 Restoration and maintenance of valuable aquatic bird habitats of Pirkanmaa (Pirkanmaan lintuvesi -Life)

2003–2008 Saving the endangered Fennoscandian Alopex lagopus (SEFALO Life)

2003–2007 Management of wetlands along the Gulf of Finland migratory flyway (Lintulahdet-Life)

2002–2007 Karelian mires and virgin forests – pearls in the chain of geohistory (Helmi-Life)

2002–2007 Restoration of boreal forests and forest-covered mires (Forest Life)

Projects financed through EU Structural Funds involving the Natural Heritage Services during 2007

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 Carelia)

2006–2008 People, Nature and Harbours (Neighbourhood Programme South Eastern Finland)

2006–2008 Improving eco-tourism infrastructure in Kvarken archipelago (FENIKS) (Objective 2)

2006–2008 Enhancing eco-tourism prospects in the Kvarken archipelago (FENIKS)

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 Carelia)

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 (BALANCE) (Interreg III B)

2005–2007 Developing nature tourism in the Kuninkaanpuisto Park (Objective 2)

2004–2007 Bird rich wetlands of international importance, nature reserves and cultural landscapes as resources for sustainable developments in rural area (BIRD) (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)



Estimated numbers of visits at visitor centres and customer service points in 2007

Blåmusslan	17 100
Ekenäs	20 700
Fell-Lapland	25 000
Hailuoto	15 000
Hautajärvi	8 000
Hossa	44 000
Häme	19 400
Kalajoki	24 800
Kellokas	52 200
Kilpisjärvi	13 100
Koilliskaira	18 800
Nestori	6 600
Oskari	13 100
Oulanka	70 500
Pallastunturi	40 300
Petola	17 400
Pyhätunturi	32 400
Ruunaa	8 000
Savukoski	6 100
Seitseminen	34 800
Siida	122 700
Syöte	34 200
Teijo	23 000
Terranova	24 700
Visitor centres total	691 900
Etiäinen	8 100
Ivalo	10 100
Karhuntassu	42 200
Kiehinen	46 100
Customer service points total*	106 500
Total	798 400

*Ruka (not estimated in 2007)

◀ The island of Jussarö in the Ekenäs Archipelago National Park has been home to pilots, lighthouse-keepers and miners over the centuries. A new exhibition and brochure featuring the island's fascinating history were produced in 2007. Photograph from 1950 shows former homes of lighthouse-keepers. REINO KALLIOLA

Estimated numbers of visits to national parks in 2007

Archipelago	60 000
Eastern Gulf of Finland	17 000
Ekenäs Archipelago	47 000
Helvetinjärvi	33 000
Hiidenportti	6 500
Isojärvi	8 000
Kauhaneva–Pohjankangas	6 000
Kolovesi	7 000
Kurjenrahka	32 500
Lauhanvuori	27 500
Leivonmäki	12 000
Lemmenjoki	10 000
Liesjärvi	22 000
Linnansaari	29 000
Nuukio	170 000
Oulanka	185 500
Pallas–Ylläs	312 000
Patvinsuo	14 000
Perämeri	6 000
Petkeljärvi	23 000
Puurijärvi–Isosuo	10 000
Pyhä–Häkki	14 500
Pyhä–Luosto	109 500
Päijänne	12 000
Repovesi	70 000
Riisitunturi	8 000
Rokua	23 500
Salamajärvi	11 000
Seitseminen	44 000
Syöte	36 000
Tiilikajärvi	7 000
Torransuo	27 000
Urho Kekkonen	180 000
Valkmusa	6 200
Total	1 586 700

Estimated numbers of visits to national hiking areas in 2007

Evo	50 000
Hossa	53 000
Iso-Syöte	23 000
Kylmäluoma	37 000
Oulujärvi	24 000
Ruunaa	82 500
Teijo	80 500
Total	350 000



■ Visitor centre
□ Customer service point

Metsähallitus Visitor Centres and Customer Service Points.

• Contact information and services: www.outdoors.fi > Customer Service.

outdoors.fi



A GAME AND FISHERIES WARDEN AT WORK IN THE KÄSIVARSI WILDERNESS AREA. PHOTO: HANNALEENA MÄKI-PETÄYS

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 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 three regional units. Visitor centres and other customer service points provide a wealth of information on nature 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.



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