

Metsähallitus Natural Heritage Services

# Protecting Finland's natural treasures

ANNUAL REPORT 2011



METSÄHALLITUS

# Enjoy nature – and improve your well-being

## FOREWORD

Activities in natural settings improve participants' well-being and health. This is particularly true when it comes to some of the worst problems we face in society today, such as stress, mental health problems and illnesses linked to obesity. Recent research findings show that even brief outdoor activities can help significantly. The longer-term benefits of outdoor recreation for children include the strengthening of the immune system and the development of a close relationship with nature.

The most important thing is that outdoor life is fun! Everyone can find suitable ways to enjoy Finland's natural attractions, from our spectacular national

parks and hiking areas to our vast wilderness areas, either alone or in the company of friends and relatives. What about trying snowshoe-trekking or geocaching for a change? Or a fishing trip in a hiking area, or bird-spotting in a national park? Or just some time off to think, surrounded by truly wild and undisturbed landscapes?

Metsähallitus Natural Heritage Services received a design award at the Finnish Sports Gala in January 2012, where the jury praised the ways we have planned facilities of high quality that encourage Finns to get out into the great outdoors. This work includes designing attractive and accessible visitor centres and websites, as well as providing traditional amenities such as wilderness huts and campfire sites across

Finland from the highlands to the islands. Our information services provide a suitable starting point for any outing.

Our protected areas provide settings for the development of local livelihoods related to sustainable nature-based tourism. Our national parks are among Finland's top tourist attractions, but without suitable services visitors will not enjoy them to the full, or wish to come back again. Natural Heritage Services is cooperating with local tourism service providers and the local and regional authorities more closely than ever. Last year the protected areas generated economic benefits for local communities amounting to an estimated 170 million euros and 2,200 person-years in employment terms.

It is vital to cherish the natural features that are the main attractions for visitors, as surveys have proven. Our national parks must particularly be managed sensitively to ensure that tourism and recreational activities do not endanger their unique natural and cultural attractions.

It is also important that we should pass on to our children our traditions related to the sustainable utilisation of Finland's fish and game stocks.

Our work has been given strong backing in the programme of the Finnish government which safeguards funding for the running and development of Natural Heritage Services.



*Rauno Väisänen, Director of Metsähallitus Natural Heritage Services*



*At the official opening of Sipoonkorpi National Park Natural Heritage Services' Director Rauno Väisänen gave an owl nest box to Minister of the Environment Ville Niinistö to hang up in the park's forests. PHOTO: METSÄHALLITUS / JARI KOSTET*



*These friendly four-legged habitat managers are working to restore pastureland biotopes in Sipoonkorpi. PHOTO: METSÄHALLITUS / JARI KOSTET.*

## Two new national parks for Finland

**The establishment of the Sipoonkorpi and Bothnian Sea national parks during 2011 means that Finland now has 37 national parks, all managed by Metsähallitus's Natural Heritage Services unit. Our national parks are the flagships of both nature tourism and nature conservation, since they are at the same time important major nature reserves and natural attractions open to everyone.**

**S**ipoonkorpi National Park significantly adds to our national network of protected areas by providing a second national park within easy reach of the densely populated Helsinki metropolitan area. Visitor numbers at Sipoonkorpi have

been rising rapidly, from 51,000 in 2010 to more than 75,000 in 2011.

The new park encompasses many ecologically valuable areas of forest, rocky, marshy and farmland habitat that are characteristic of Southern Finland, and also internationally significant. The park is home to about 80 species classified as threatened or near threatened.

Natural Heritage Services commenced the planning of facilities and habitat management work for the new park in autumn. This work aims to restore conditions that are as near natural as possible in habitats that have been shaped by people, and to gradually recreate a coherent and representative mosaic of diverse habitat types.

“*One of the most important ways to preserve biodiversity is to build up an extensive and interlinked network of protected areas. Under the guidance of the Ministry of the Environment, Metsähallitus Natural Heritage Services effectively manages protected areas throughout Finland in state-owned lands – and also increasingly in private lands. This involves the use of public funds to provide free facilities for everyone, enhancing our citizens' well-being. Encouraging people to enjoy activities in natural settings also increases their understanding of the importance of biodiversity.*”

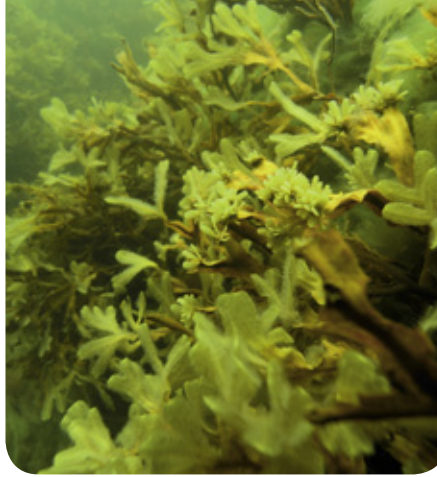
– VILLE NIINISTÖ, MINISTER OF THE ENVIRONMENT

Sipoonkorpi National Park is just under 19 km<sup>2</sup> in extent, and lies within the municipalities of Helsinki, Vantaa and Sipoo.

## A national park of underwater habitats and lonely lighthouse islands

The Bothnian Sea National Park is Finland's largest marine park, and the first park Finland has established specifically to protect natural ecosystems in the Baltic Sea. It extends for 160 km in a narrow belt off the west coast between Kustavi and Merikarvia. The 900-km<sup>2</sup> park mainly consists of shallow marine waters dotted with small islands.

Visitors can head off into the park from harbours on the mainland to explore wild waters populated by seabirds and seals, or visit remote lighthouse islands. Canoeing is a good way to explore many of the park's more sheltered waters.



*The crystal clear waters of the Bothnian Sea are much appreciated by visiting boaters and tourists.* PHOTO: METSÄHALLITUS / HEIDI ARPONEN.

Work on a management plan for the new park has been initiated in cooperation with the local authorities and representatives of local businesses. One goal is to return grazing animals to some islands to recreate the traditional open landscapes that benefit many plants and animals. Fishing is permitted through-

“Over the last 15 years Metsähallitus Natural Heritage Services has become a customer-oriented organisation in its approach to cherishing our national heritage effectively and productively. This gives all of us great opportunities to enjoy our natural attractions in state-owned lands and waters. Natural Heritage Services also provides excellent facilities for health-promoting outdoor recreation in hiking areas and nature reserves all around the country. We must all make the most of these outstanding opportunities!” – JARI KOSKINEN, MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE AND FORESTRY

out the park, subject to the payment of a fisheries management fee. Hunting is restricted, with elk-hunting, seal-hunting and the autumn hunting of waterfowl are permitted in some areas, but other species fully protected.

“The importance of national parks is not limited to the preservation of their valuable natural features. They can also help to promote social sustainability, by enabling children from all backgrounds to enjoy Finland's wonderful nature even if their parents do not own a holiday home in the countryside. To make the most of these amenities, it is important to ensure that our national parks and other significant natural attractions are easily accessible by public transport – especially those near towns and cities.” – RAKEL HILTUNEN, MEMBER OF PARLIAMENT AND DEPUTY CHAIR OF HELSINKI CITY COUNCIL

Residents of the Helsinki area now have two national parks within easy reach: Nuuksio and Sipoonkorpi. Mustalampi is a popular picnic site for hikers visiting Nuuksio at any time of year.

PHOTO: METSÄHALLITUS / TĒA KARVINEN. →



*Well maintained trails make for happy hiking. Well designed facilities can also protect nature in popular areas. The hanging bridges of Oulanka National Park are an attraction in themselves.* PHOTO: METSÄHALLITUS / MINNA KORAMO.



## Facilities to encourage outdoor activities

**We aim to provide services that make it easy for people to get outdoors and enjoy all kinds of activities that benefit their health and well-being, without harming the natural environment.**

**O**ur work promoting outdoor recreation gained welcome recognition when Metsähallitus Natural Heritage Services received a special design award at the annual Finnish Sports Gala for promoting outdoor recreation. This award was granted to acknowledge the role of the services we provide, including trails, picnic sites and signs, as well as our visitor centres and wide-ranging internet services.

In addition to promoting public health and well-being, our work benefits local economies and creates jobs. It is estimated

that each euro invested by the government in our national parks creates benefits to society with an average value of 10 euros, and in some cases as much as 30 euros.

### **New services, satisfied customers**

Producing new well-planned services can get more people outdoors, promote nature tourism, and safeguard valuable natural features in the areas we manage.

In Nuukio, within easy reach of Helsinki, we have opened up new hiking routes in collaboration with the local municipalities and the Solvalla Sports Institute. Routes from different parts of this popular area leading towards the Finnish Nature Centre Haltia, which is due to open in 2013, are being revamped and

**”** *Spending time out in a national park is clearly beneficial to the health, improving the condition of the body and the mind. Our findings are based on people's experiences and physiological measurements. The impacts of outdoor recreation do not depend on the length or intensity of any activity – the most important thing is just to get out there.”* – RAIJA LAUKKANEN (PHD), ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR, UNIVERSITY OF OULU

signposted. The starting points of these trails will serve as gateways to the Nuukio region with its beautiful lakes and forests.

The Pyhä–Luosto National Park and the tourism areas in its surroundings will be served from June 2012 by a new nature

and culture centre known as Naava. The visitor centre at Liminka Bay is also nearing completion. The main attraction is the extensive wetlands, which are exceptionally rich in birdlife, and form part of the Ramsar Convention's network of internationally valuable wetlands. In line with the convention's new goals, a wetlands training centre will be set up within the visitor centre at Liminka Bay by Metsähallitus Natural Heritage Services, since we are responsible for coordinating the conservation of wetlands in Finland.

At Syöte National Park we are developing new procedures and products to promote tourism through a special project. A competition calling for ideas for products reflecting local handicraft traditions proved very popular.

– At the Hossa Hiking Area we welcomed record numbers of visitors in 2011, and surveys indicated that 42 % of visitors were discovering the area for the first time, says park superintendent **Kerttu Härkönen**. This boom was partly due to the recognition given to Hossa as Hiking Destination of the Year following a vote among visitors to the Hiking Expo 2011.

EU-funded projects designed to promote nature tourism and cultural tourism are under way in the Ekenäs Archipelago and Eastern Gulf of Finland national parks. Natural areas are being managed, facilities are being renovated, and services are being enhanced. A new exhibition is being set up at the Ekenäs Visitor Centre, and new videos have been produced featuring the Eastern Gulf of Finland National Park.

Fishing waters managed by Metsähallitus in Kainuu in NE Finland have been surveyed to assess their recreational amenity values. These recreational fishing waters are important to local residents as well as tourism in the region. Recreational areas in Kainuu attract about 100,000 visitors a year, of whom about 15,000 buy fishing permits.

## Finnish Nature Centre Haltia under construction

Our national parks are among Finland's main attractions for international visitors. But so far we have lacked a single centre attractively exhibiting the best of our natural treasures under one roof. To meet this need we are now building the Finnish Nature Centre Haltia in Espoo, on the fringes of both the Helsinki metropolitan area and the Nuuksio National Park, together with various partners.

Haltia's main goal from the start has been to give visitors a genuine touch of nature. This is reflected in the wooden architecture and innovative design, its exhibitions and facilities. Haltia has benefited from the donation of a million euros from the **Jane and Aatos Erkko** Foundation, which enabled state-of-the-art ecological solutions to be incorporated into the centre's design.

Haltia is due to open to the public in 2013. Construction work and the designing of the exhibitions began during 2011. This work will form part of Helsinki's year as World Design Capital during 2012, and shares the same goal: to improve people's quality of life through good design.



“ *The Finnish Nature Centre Haltia, which is being built in Espoo on the edge of the Nuuksio National Park, is one of Espoo's spearhead projects for the design capital year. It will become an attraction for tourists visiting the Helsinki area. For people living in the Helsinki metropolitan area it will also be a centre for nature studies and the starting point for many trips into the outdoors.* ”

– JUKKA MÄKELÄ, MAYOR OF THE CITY OF ESPOO

“ *The outdoor recreational facilities run by Metsähallitus Natural Heritage Services are an excellent example of how design can be used to increase well-being. The Finnish Nature Centre Haltia, itself a design capital project, will become a leading feature among these wide-ranging services. With its great architecture, enthralling exhibitions and accessible advisory services Haltia will greatly encourage Finns and foreigners alike to get out into natural areas.* ” – PEKKA TIMONEN, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF THE WORLD DESIGN CAPITAL HELSINKI



WORLD DESIGN  
CAPITAL  
HELSINKI 2012

## Web communities for hikers and fishers

Our popular website Luontoon.fi has expanded to include a web community. Users can share their experiences and photos of visits to national parks, take part in competitions, watch videos, and read latest news from our parks, including descriptions of the everyday work of Natural Heritage Services staff.

A web-based fishers' diary site at [www.tuikki.fi](http://www.tuikki.fi) compiles details of catches submitted by fishers around the country. – Every fisher can make a diary using this web service, and also store data of the catches on an interactive map, says senior advisor **Mika Laakkonen**. Fishers can share details of their catches with their friends. Their input can also help us plan the management of our fishing waters.

*The wild scenery of Repovesi National Park is easily accessible for families, thanks to its safe and attractive facilities. The park and the Aarnikotka forest reserve owned by UPM together make up an extensive area of unspoilt forest.* PHOTO: METSÄHALLITUS / TEA KARVINEN. →



” Finns greatly appreciate the chance to experience the joys of hunting and fishing in wild areas managed by the state. Metsähallitus has been working to provide customer-centred services, and in many respects has led the way in managing the stocks of game species and their habitats.”

– REIJO ORAVA, DIRECTOR OF THE FINNISH WILDLIFE AGENCY

## A one-stop shop for hunting and fishing licences

Procedures for sales of licences for hunting small game animals have been changed to offer hunters a wider range of licences with flexible conditions, and to speed up the process of obtaining licences.

– Thanks to the present abundance of our game bird stocks, we can now sell more licences without endangering game bird populations, says senior inspector **Ahti Putaala**. The final numbers of

### CUSTOMER SERVICE IN NUMBERS 2011

- 4.9 million visits to areas managed by Metsähallitus Natural Heritage Services (see back cover for details)
- 833 000 visits to customer service points (see back cover for details)
- 42 000 participants in client groups provided with guidance
- Visits to the Luontoon.fi (Outdoors.fi) websites can not be reported because of changed content management system.
- 1.1 million visits to the Retkikartta.fi/Excursionmap.fi website
- 74 000 fishing permits purchased
- 45 000 hunting permits purchased
- customer satisfaction ratings averaging 4.3 (on a scale of 1–5)
- satisfaction ratings among fishers and hunters averaging 3.7 (on a scale of 1–5)

### VISITOR FACILITIES IN NUMBERS 2011

- 2,941 campfire site and maintained picnic sites
- 2,269 maintained waste collection points and dry compost toilets
- 6,730 km of maintained trails, including informative nature trails

licences will be decided for different districts in late August on the basis of survey data on the numbers of young birds.

Hunters agree that the few irresponsible hunters whose actions spoil both the enjoyment of others and the reputation of hunting should be duly taken to task. Metsähallitus has now changed the conditions for licences so that offenders can have their licences cancelled and be prevented from obtaining licences in future.

## Trail construction methods that save money and the environment

Setting up trails on beds made of stones and sand as much as possible has proven to be cost-effective and user-friendly. Such methods can also be used to replace duckboard trails.

Serious erosion along the very popular Hetta–Pallas trail at Pallastunturi has long been a problem for park managers and visitors. But new methods have now been found for stabilising trails on rocky slopes, using stone-crushing methods borrowed from Austria and Norway, where stones are taken from beneath and beside trails and compacted using machines to make a robust trail bed.

– We keep on developing more durable structures to serve people who wish to enjoy our natural areas, while also preventing the erosion of trails and the surrounding natural features, says senior advisor **Tapani Eskola**. We are also sharing our wide-ranging guidelines and models for the construction of such facilities with

other organisations who provide free hiking facilities, including local authorities and associations, by publishing them on our website.

## A labour of love

Volunteers can work to help us in many ways, for instance by managing habitats or assisting researchers, while enjoying working in natural settings in traditional or new ways. An ideas competition named “Labour of Love” was launched to find new ways to promote such voluntary work. The best ideas submitted by the public were realised during 2011, including communal haymaking days at the Korteniemi Heritage Farm in Liesjärvi National Park, and the setting up of new facilities with help from mountain-bikers.

Wildlife monitoring work was conducted by many staff members from Metsähallitus and Finland’s regional centres for economic development, transport and the environment, with greatly appreciated assistance from members of WWF Finland and local naturalists’ and birdwatchers’ associations.

### NATURE CONSERVATION IN NUMBERS 2011

- 2,148 hectares of forest and mire habitats restored
- 3,071 hectares of traditional agricultural biotopes managed
- 47,310 hectares of terrestrial biotopes surveyed
- 5,345 hectares of underwater biotopes surveyed
- 29,966 occurrences of significant species protected
- 4,642 archaeological relics and 233 protected buildings registered in protected areas





*Golden eagles (Aquila chrysaetos) are classed as vulnerable in Finland, but their breeding numbers are now on the rise thanks to conservation measures. PHOTO: METSÄHALLITUS / MARTTI RIKKONEN.*

## Cherishing natural and cultural heritage from the highlands to the islands

**Natural Heritage Services protects nature in many ways. This work involves surveys of flora, fauna and cultural heritage in protected areas, habitat restoration and management work, the sustainable management of game and fish stocks, and protective measures targeting specific species. Our work has helped many species and ecosystems to thrive again.**

**P**eople also benefit from this work through the vital immaterial and material ecosystem services that natural areas provide, including clean water, fresh air, and natural foodstuffs from wild berries and mushrooms to fish and game.

### **Threatened species recovering**

In addition to protecting all the species found in the areas we manage, Metsähallitus Natural Heritage Services is also responsible for the protection of 36 threatened species throughout Finland. These species include the golden eagle, the peregrine falcon, the white-backed woodpecker and the Saimaa ringed seal.

Surveys run in summer 2011 identified more than 300 golden eagle nesting sites. Breeding success rates were high, with more than 200 eaglets ringed in their nests for the first time..

– Finland’s peregrine falcons also had a good year: we found ten new territories



*If nature is impoverished, we too will suffer.”*

– PROFESSOR TARI HAAHTELA,

UNIVERSITY OF HELSINKI, FACULTY OF MEDICINE

and 42 new nesting sites in established territories, says senior advisor **Tuomo Ollila**. Nine of the ten new territories were in Lapland, and one was in North Karelia.

In the early 1990s Finland’s entire white-backed woodpecker population numbered just 30–50 pairs, but over the last 15 years this figure has more than tripled to 130–180 nesting pairs in 2011. Their drumming can particularly be heard

more widely in Eastern Finland, where woodpeckers originating from Russia have moved into new areas.

## Pleasant surprise: seal pups born in northern Saimaa

Surveys of Saimaa ringed seal dens indicated that 52 pups were born in 2011, a figure close to the average for recent years. The biggest surprise was that two pups were born in the northernmost part of the vast Saimaa lake system – the first pups born in this area since 1995.

There are now a total of 290 Saimaa ringed seals. There is a slight increase in numbers as there were 20 more seals than in 2010. Net fishing is banned between April and June in the areas where the seals live.

From the beginning of 2012 fishing with nets will be totally prohibited in five parts of Lake Saimaa. This will protect the lake's natural salmon, trout and charr populations, as well as its critically endangered seals. This prohibition will not cover a small number of local people who depend on fishing for their living.

## Good progress on conservation work

We successfully achieved our nature conservation targets for restoring and managing habitats and surveying and monitoring species, while exceeding our targets for biotope inventories.

Work continued on the major Boreal Peatland LIFE Project, which was launched in 2010. During 2011 some 250 km of artificial drainage ditches were filled in and almost 15,000 m<sup>3</sup> of timber was removed from peatlands around Finland to help restore them towards their natural state. This peatland habitat restoration work was carried out in sites with a total area of more than 1,000 hectares.

The Zonation computer programme facilitates decisions on the designation of protected areas by providing more detailed data on the locations of the species and ecosystems most in need of conservation. The programme's geographical data can also be used to harmonise other forms of land use. In 2011 Natural Heritage Services coordinated a Zonation project where this tool was applied in the selec-

tion of sites for the METSO Forest Biodiversity Programme for Southern Finland.

## Boosting fish and crayfish stocks

During autumn 2011 almost half a million young fish were introduced into state-owned waters in central and northern regions of Finland, including about 380,000 young whitefish, and thousands of pike-perch, grayling and trout. The introduced fish, which had a total value of almost 90,000 euros, will strengthen stocks in commercially fished lakes, and improve catches of mature fish in about 4–7 years time.

– This is being done to boost the natural reproduction of fish stocks of local varieties, explains game and fisheries manager Jukka Bisi. This fishing water management work is financed by Metsähallitus using income from fishing licence fees. This means that everyone who buys a fishing licence contributes to this valuable work.

An action plan designed to improve Finland's crayfish stocks over the period 2011–2016 includes measures to conserve native populations such as surveys of waters that could be protected, and to publicise risks related to crayfish disease.

## Rare species discovered

Surveys of species and biotopes provide an important basis for the conservation and management work done by Metsähallitus Natural Heritage Services. Findings from field surveys are studied in detail, and this often reveals the presence of rare species, providing useful information for experts and the managers of our areas.

Significant surveys of moss species in Finnish Lapland were completed in early 2011, providing new information on these seldom studied plants. A total of 46 rare moss species were found in the Malla Strict Nature Reserve, including many

### INNOVATIVE FINNISH FOREST HABITAT RESTORATION METHODS COMPILED IN A NEW HANDBOOK

*A lot of pioneering work on the restoration of natural ecosystems in forests and peatlands has been done in Finland. Metsähallitus Natural Heritage Services has now compiled a guide featuring recommended methods that can be applied in commercially managed forests and protected areas.*

*By the end of 2010 areas of forest habitat totalling 16,000 hectares had been restored in Finland's protected areas. Many visitors to protected areas have noticed the traces of this work, such as trees left to decay naturally. As many as a quarter of all forest species depend in various ways on decaying wood, so it is important for the sake of biodiversity to ensure that forests contain such features.*

*The handbook also describes ways to manage herb-rich broad-leaved woodlands, prevent the spread of invasive alien plants, and consider cultural relics.*

*The publication has been financed by the Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry.*

*An abbreviated English-language version will be available in 2012 online at: [www.metsa.fi](http://www.metsa.fi) > In English > What's New > Publications.*

*About 500 children and youngsters participated in the Fishing Rod Day event run by Metsähallitus and the Finnish Federation for Recreational Fishing on June 11th 2011. PHOTO: PETTER NISSÉN.*





*The wild arctic fells of the Käsivarsi region near the Finnish-Norwegian border offer breathtaking views in all seasons. Metsähallitus has long been involved in cross-border cooperation on nature tourism and conservation.* PHOTO: METSÄHALLITUS / ARTO SAIKKONEN.

not found anywhere else in Finland. Several moss species found in Kevo Strict Nature Reserve and Kaldoaivi Wilderness Area have only been observed in a few locations in Finland. Heinijänkä Bog in Tervola was found to have exceptionally rich moss species diversity. At Malla and Heinijänkä mosses benefit from the calcium-rich bedrock, while at Kevo many mosses thrive in the moist microclimate of the boulder-strewn floor of the canyon.

Surveyors also occasionally find species that have earlier been unknown. A new fungus species of the genus *Lepiota* was discovered in Sipoonkorpi National Park, playing an important role in decomposing leaf litter on the forest floor. Spiders of the species *Dictyna palmgreni*, which is found only in Finland and Russia, were discovered in Pallastunturi National Park and in the Rahja islands near Kalajoki.

## Highlighting historical relics in protected areas

Traces of local history preserved in protected areas can be of great interest to local residents as well as visitors.

Islands in the Bothnian Sea National Park are currently being surveyed to compile information on ancient relics, valuable old buildings and traditional landscapes.

Lapland's vast wild areas are surprisingly rich in traces of prehistoric human activity, as has been revealed in surveys of cultural relics around Kilpisjärvi, in the Kevo Strict Nature Reserve, and in the national parks of Pallas–Yllästunturi and Pyhä–Luosto.

– Along the River Kevo and also up on the fells we've found traces of settlements dating all the way back to the Stone Age, says senior advisor **Pirjo Rautiainen**. Kilpisjärvi has been continuously inhabited since ancient times, and around the village we've found many traces of the campfires used in prehistoric settlements.

It is now possible to visit exhibitions about the past and present cultures of the indigenous Sámi people free of charge at the Fell Lapland Nature Centre.

Entry fees were also removed at the Kellokas Visitor Centre, where exhibits feature local cultures and dialects in the Finnish-Swedish borderlands in Lapland.

## Groundbreaking cooperation with the indigenous Sámi people

Several extensive wild areas in northern Finnish Lapland were officially established as Wilderness Areas 20 years ago in 1991. Over the last 20 years management plans have been made for all these areas, and now work will begin on updating these plans.

Management plans significantly shape land use in Finland's wilderness areas, where human activities of certain kinds may be practiced, unlike in many other countries' wilderness areas. This is because these areas play an important role in the traditional livelihoods and activities of the indigenous Sámi people and other local residents in Lapland. Ten of the twelve wilderness areas are located in the Sámi homeland region.

The first revision of the management plan for the Hammastunturi Wilderness Area has begun, applying a new kind of collaboration. The plan's impacts will be assessed in line with the global Akwé:Kon guidelines which have been defined in connection with the UN Convention on Biological Diversity to safeguard both biodiversity and the traditional cultures and knowledge of indigenous communities.

This is the first such planning process to be conducted anywhere in the world. The impacts of the plan on the culture of the local Sámi people will be assessed at every stage. The Akwé:Kon guidelines are being integrated into the planning process for Hammastunturi by a working group chaired by **Heikki Paltto**, a member of the Sámi Parliament in Finland.

# Managing our natural areas for nature and people in 2012

**Natural Heritage Services works to improve public well-being and the viability of tourism, as well as the state of biodiversity in Finland. The current Finnish government programme aims to safeguard sufficient financial resources for Natural Heritage Services' operations, and maintain our present organisational and steering models. We will continue working towards the same goals in 2012. Below are examples of the work planned for the coming year.**

## Well-being from natural areas

- The expanded visitor centre at Liminka Bay, which features the area's birdlife, will reopen in April and Pyhä-Luosto National Park's brand new nature and culture centre will open in June.
- We will continue the planning of the Finnish Nature Centre Haltia to ensure that after its opening in spring 2013 it will form a gateway to natural attractions

around the Helsinki area and throughout Finland.

- We will set up a new website compiling all the information required by customers interested in hunting and fishing.

## Partnerships for sustainable nature tourism

- We will work together with the local authorities in the Kvarken Archipelago World Heritage Site to improve services and the marketing of the area through a special project. The 40th anniversary of the World Heritage Convention will be highlighted in various events.
- We will improve awareness of Finnish Lapland as a summer tourism destination together with tourism service providers, highlighting the prominent role that can be played by our national parks.
- We will initiate cooperation with local tourism businesses to develop services for the new Bothnian Sea National Park.

- In collaboration with the tourism sector we will start to utilise research findings on the customer segmentation of visitors to national parks to improve nature tourism services.

## Managing protected areas and natural resources productively and responsively

- We will restore and manage Finland's dwindling traditional agricultural habitats, using support obtained through the EU's LIFE programme.
- We will launch a new conservation programme for inland waters and greatly accelerate our work surveying sea-bed ecosystems.
- We will enhance stocks of arctic charr in waters in Finnish Lapland by introducing fish caught in their natural waters.
- We will establish significant numbers of new protected areas in sites designated in conservation programmes.

## An effective, flexible and networked organisation

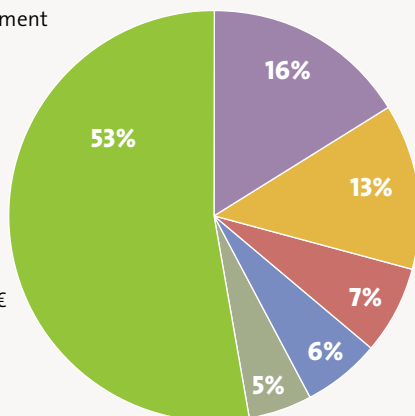
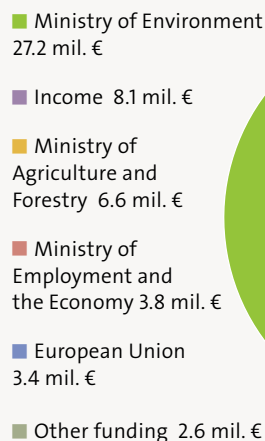
- We will continue to work with volunteers to improve both the facilities and the natural values of our areas.
- We will improve the ways that our visitor centres serve customers, nature tourism service providers and local communities.
- We will expand our collaboration with the prison authorities regarding the utilisation of convict labour in ways that help convicts to readapt to cope with working life.
- A pilot scheme involving the drafting of a management plan for the Hammas-tunturi Wilderness Area will be run in line with the Akwé:Kon guidelines to safeguard the rights and culture of the local Sámi people.
- We will revise our programme of action in response to new challenges.



*The alpine azalea (Loiseleuria procumbens) is a flowering dwarf shrub found in the highlands of Northern Finland.* PHOTO: METSÄHALLITUS / PASI NIVASALO.

## NATURAL HERITAGE SERVICES' FINANCES IN 2011

Metsähallitus Natural Heritage Services' activities are largely financed from the national government budget. Additional income is obtained from fees paid for hunting and fishing permits, and rent paid by tenants.



**Total: 51.7 mil. €**

## METSÄHALLITUS'S PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION FUNCTIONS

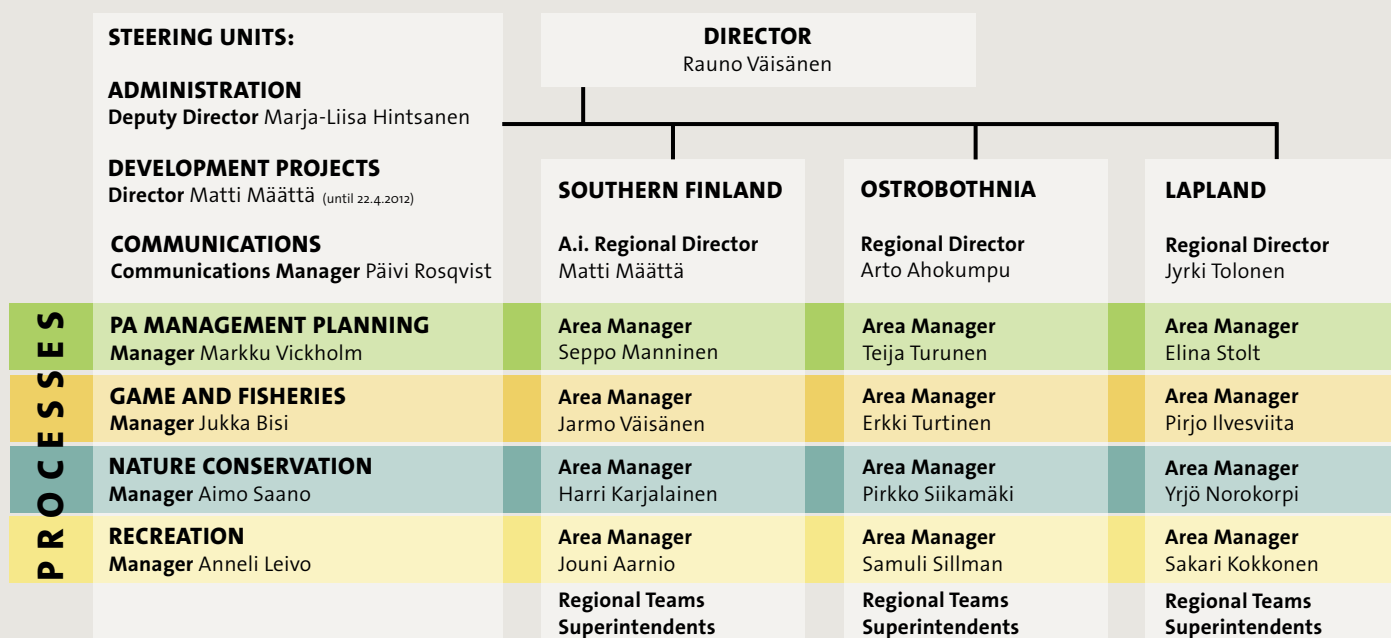
Metsähallitus is a state-owned enterprise that provides services related to natural resources. Metsähallitus's activities are divided into commercial operations (including forestry and real estate deals) and the public administration services provided by Natural Heritage Services (including nature conservation, hunting and fishing services and the provision of free facilities for outdoor recreation). The public services are largely financed from the national government budget.

## OUR AREAS IN NUMBERS 2011

The administration of lands and waters owned by the Finnish State (which amount to about a third of the country's total area) has been placed in the care of Metsähallitus.

- Metsähallitus administers areas with a total extent of 125,000 square kilometres, including 91,000 sq km of state-owned land and 34,000 sq km of state-owned waters.
- Of these totals Natural Heritage Services manages 39,000 sq km of land and 32,000 sq km of waters (totaling 71,000 sq km), including:
  - 37 national parks, 19 strict nature reserves, and about 500 other nature reserves (together totaling 17,000 sq km)
  - 12 wilderness areas (with a total extent of 15,000 sq km)

## ORGANISATION OF NATURAL HERITAGE SERVICES 1.5. 2012



## NATIONAL PARKS BRING VISITORS AND INCOME TO RURAL AREAS

Investments made by the government in the provision of facilities for recreation in national parks and hiking areas are paid back to society many times over through the opportunities they create for enterprise and employment.

In 2011 Finland's national parks welcomed around 2.09 million visitors, whose spending brought in income to the surrounding areas worth ca.108.3 million euros and 1 394 person-years in employment. Considering the costs of running their facilities, this corresponds to an overall 10-time payback.

These economic impacts are calculated using methodology devised by Metsähallitus Natural Heritage Services and the Finnish Forest Research Institute on the basis of data on visitor numbers compiled by Natural Heritage Services, survey findings on visitors' spending levels, and factoring figures that account for the cumulative impacts of visitors' spending in local economies.

## WORKING FOR NATURE

Half of our employees work in Southern Finland, a quarter work for our Pohjanmaa regional unit and a quarter work in Finnish Lapland. The total work input over the year amounted to 482 person-years. We continued to provide work for inmates from open prisons, amounting to 33 person-years.

Volunteers contribute greatly to our nature conservation work. During the European Year of Volunteering 2011 our volunteers worked a total of 13 person-years.

## ESTIMATED NUMBERS OF VISITS TO VISITOR CENTRES AND CUSTOMER SERVICE POINTS IN 2011

(total: 833 000 visits)

Service point	Visits
Blåmusslan	16 000
Ekenäs	15 400
Fell-Lapland	25 000
Hailuoto	17 400
Hautajärvi	7 500
Hossa	40 000
Häme	16 300
Ivalo	14 400
Kalajoki	28 100
Karhuntassu	32 400
Kellokas	72 500
Kiehinen	45 300
Kilpisjärvi	11 700
Koilliskaira	13 000
Korpoström	19 300
Korvatunturi	8 100
Nestori – Saimaa Nature Exhibition	25 600
Oskari	10 100
Oulanka	68 300
Pallastunturi	38 200
Petola	14 900
Pyhätunturi	25 200
Ruunaa	6 400
Seitseminen	28 600
Siida	113 000
Syöte	30 900
Teijo	17 900
Terranova	21 400
Ukko	50 100

## ESTIMATED NUMBERS OF VISITS TO NATIONAL PARKS IN 2011

(total: 2 086 500 visits)

National park	Visits
Archipelago	56 000
Bothnian Bay	10 000
Bothnian Sea	67 000
Eastern Gulf of Finland	16 500
Ekenäs Archipelago	51 000
Helvetinjärvi	20 500
Hiidenportti	10 000

Isojärvi	10 500
Kauhaneva–Pohjankangas	5 000
Koli	134 500
Kolovesi	8 000
Kurjenrahka	25 500
Lauhanvuori	10 000
Leivonmäki	15 000
Lemmenjoki	15 000
Liesjärvi	22 000
Linnansaari	31 000
Nuukio	197 000
Oulanka	171 500
Pallas–Ylläs	435 500
Patvinsuo	12 500
Petkeljärvi	19 000
Puurijärvi–Isosuo	8 500
Pyhä–Häkki	15 500
Pyhä–Luosto	118 500
Päijänne	14 000
Repovesi	78 500
Riisitunturi	22 000
Rokua	17 000
Salamajärvi	13 000
Seitseminen	37 500
Sipoonkorpi	75 500
Syöte	33 500
Tiilikajärvi	7 500
Torransuo	17 000
Urho Kekkonen	277 000
Valkmusa	8 500

## ESTIMATED NUMBERS OF VISITS TO NATIONAL HIKING AREAS IN 2011

(total: 356 000 visits)

Hiking area	Visits
Evo	61 000
Hossa	52 500
Iso-Syöte	19 500
Kylmäluoma	26 000
Oulujärvi	38 500
Ruunaa	84 000
Teijo	74 500



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Metsähallitus visitor centres and customer service points 2011.  
Contact information and services: [www.outdoors.fi](http://www.outdoors.fi) > Customer service.





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Finland's national parks, strict nature reserves, wilderness areas, national hiking areas and public waters under Metsähallitus's management as of 31.12.2011. For information on the management of these areas: [www.metsa.fi](http://www.metsa.fi) > Natural Heritage. For information on these areas and their facilities: [www.outdoors.fi](http://www.outdoors.fi), [www.excursionmap.fi](http://www.excursionmap.fi).

Examples of coverage of our areas  
in English-language media during 2011:

### **Finland adds two national parks**

– This is Finland, June 2011

### **Splendour in the sky**

– This is Finland, 2011

### **The Sound of Silence in Lapland**

– Blue Wings, 5/2011

### **Epic Inspirations in Koli**

– Blue Wings, 9/2011

### **A unique Nature Centre, in which new architecture will meet with Finnish nature and the public**

– The World Design Capital Helsinki 2012,  
November 2011

### **Uplifting experiences in the Kvarken Archipelago**

– Blue 1 Dream, March 2011

Find out more about the work of  
Metsähallitus Natural Heritage Services  
in this annual report for 2011.

