

Metsähallitus Natural Heritage Services

# Protecting Finland's natural treasures

ANNUAL REPORT 2013

# Natural Heritage Services brings well-being throughout Finland

A close relationship with nature is an essential part of the Finnish identity. A country's national parks constitute internationally important natural heritage – places that we can be proud of, and show off to our visitors. Our parks have been created both to conserve nature and to benefit people, by providing amenities that promote health, enhance well-being and strengthen our respect for nature and our links with nature.

The increasing unfamiliarity of urban residents with nature, and particularly the gradual loss of a connection with nature evident among children and young people in the Helsinki area, are worrying social trends. These trends are already reflected in increasing mental health problems and lifestyle-related illnesses. We at Metsähallitus Natural Heritage Services believe that the opening of the new Finnish Nature Centre Haltia last year represents a significant milestone in our efforts to promote environmental education as well as nature conservation.

Haltia's nature school has since been full of activity. Visiting Haltia gives all children a chance to experience Finland's natural wonders.

With its award-winning unique wooden architecture Haltia has filled a significant gap in the amenities available for tourism, leisure activities and conferences in the Helsinki region. At the same time Haltia has attracted more clients and income for the many enterprises offering activities in and around nearby Nuuskio National Park.



PHOTO: OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT OF THE REPUBLIC

*The new Finnish Nature Centre Haltia was officially opened by the President of Finland Sauli Niinistö and his wife Jenni Haukio.*

The health benefits and well-being people can gain from nature have also been a key element of our other activities over the last year. Two extensive projects have indicated promisingly that outdoor activities in natural settings can significantly help to improve the well-being of groups such as immigrants and young people facing the risk of marginalisation.

Last year at Natural Heritage Services we also continued to expand our work managing Finland's cultural heritage. By the end of the year we prepared to take over the running of 29 significant cultural sites and attractions, such as castle ruins, from the National Board of Antiquities. At the same time we have started to develop the islands of Vallisaari, off Helsinki, and Örö, in the Archipelago Sea, for future visitors. These islands were formerly in

military use. Vallisaari will become an attraction for tourists and local residents alongside the nearby World Heritage Site, fortress of Suomenlinna.

2013 was also a busy and productive year for Natural Heritage Services in our more established fields. We prepared reports for the Ministry of the Environment about prospects for setting up new national parks. Hunters and fishers have been able to use our webservice to purchase permits more easily than ever before. We have also expanded our work evaluating the ecological state of the Baltic Sea, surveying extensive areas of the sea bed. Progress has also been made on major EU-funded projects promoting natural habitat management, the protection of peatlands, the conservation of the endangered Saimaa ringed seal, and cross-border co-operation with Russia. These EU-funded projects all benefit the local economy as well as nature.

As the social impact of our work expands we look forward to the future

with confidence and enthusiasm. We feel privileged to work in an organisation that enhances well-being across Finland.



PHOTO: JARI KOSTET

*Raimo Väisänen*

*Rauno Väisänen, Director,  
Metsähallitus Natural Heritage Services*

*Haltia represents the start of a new age for wood construction in Finland as the first major public building to be made totally out of solid-wood elements.* PHOTO: METSÄHALLITUS /

MIKA HUISMAN



# Haltia – a gateway to Finland’s natural treasures

Visitors to the Finnish Nature Centre Haltia experience the best of Finland’s natural scene from our windswept arctic fells to the depths of our famous lakes. Haltia was opened on 31<sup>st</sup> May 2013 in Espoo, on the fringes of Nuuksio National Park. By the end of the year the centre had welcomed 95,000 visitors.

**M**ore than half of the turnover of Finland’s tourism sector comes from the Helsinki area, and more than half of Finland’s foreign visitors come here because of Finland’s nature.

Until now there had been no major attraction in the Helsinki area where visitors could learn about nature in Finland.

Haltia’s Metropolitan Green Belt exhibition features natural attractions within easy reach of Helsinki.

The centre’s architecture complements this focus on nature. Haltia’s unique wooden building, designed by **Rainer Mahlamäki**, is worth a visit in itself. Green thinking is clearly evident in the building design, which utilises renewable energy sources including solar energy and ambient heat from the ground. Haltia also has

a restaurant, meeting facilities, a souvenir shop and nature school facilities. The centre is run by Metsähallitus Natural Heritage Services using funding from the Ministry of the Environment. Activities are organised and funded in partnership with the local authorities from Espoo, Helsinki, Vantaa, Kauniainen, Kirkkonummi and Vihti, as well as the training institute Solvalla Nedre.

Haltia additionally aims to promote nature tourism throughout Finland, with an emphasis on national parks and their nearby resorts.



*Studies show that even brief outdoor recreational activity can bring significant health benefits. Koli National Park offers splendid settings for a range of activities.* PHOTO: METSÄHALLITUS / TĒA KARVINEN

# Encouraging healthy outdoor activities

Getting people out enjoying activities in natural settings can significantly enhance public health and well-being. In 2013 Natural Heritage Services resolved to intensify efforts to encourage and enable as many people as possible to enjoy Finland's natural amenities and related services.

The facilities we provide at Finland's finest natural attractions provide a good basis for developing outdoor recreation, as well as vital amenities for enterprises offering activities related

**On a trip out into the forest you're affected by very basic things. Being free from hurry, using a suitable level of physical effort and sharing experiences with others can give people great peace of mind and mental well-being.**

JARI KORKALAINEN  
METSÄKARTANO YOUTH AND WILDERNESS CENTRE

to nature tourism and well-being. They also establish good practices that can be

shared with the local authorities around Finland. The designs for the facilities we provide along hiking routes are freely available on our website. The national Fit for Life programme last year granted Natural Heritage Services an award for leading the way in enhancing recreational facilities.

Well-designed new facilities can attract people who have never really experienced natural settings before, as well as groups who will particularly benefit from outdoor recreation.

In the Oulu region our OpenAir project continued to systematically build up amenities for outdoor activities in recreation areas. The Air part of the project (Activation, Interaction, Recreation) has devised ways for natural areas to be used to promote occupational health, prevent marginalisation, and achieve

educational goals. The project's Open section (Oulu Parks – Enjoying Nature) has established a network of natural and recreation areas, and devised ways to evaluate the health benefits people derive from outdoor recreation.

– When we get people out into natural settings we aim to create a relaxed, pressure-free and motivating atmosphere, explains project manager **Riikka Mansikkaviita**.

The project's main partners include local municipalities, Oulu Deaconess Institute and Oulu University. The project receives funding from the European Social Fund and the European Regional Development Fund.

## Nature as a source of inspiration and pleasure

The new project Moved by Nature, launched in Northern Savo and North Karelia, aims to develop well-being services linked to natural settings. Metsähallitus has brought together a group of

**Recent findings indicate that from a public health viewpoint it would be particularly important and cost-effective to get the most inactive people to exercise more. There's no need to make them do strenuous sports, but they do need to sit around less and improve their condition by enjoying more everyday activity. This message is good news for us who might find typical recommendations on healthy exercise too daunting. For your health – and the economy – it's effective just to get out into the forest for a walk!**

RAIIJA KORPELAINEN, PROFESSOR OF HEALTH EXERCISE, UNIVERSITY OF OULU

service-providers including activity firms, a rehabilitation institute, local authorities and learning institutions. The project's funds largely come from the European Social Fund.

Moved by Nature has already activated groups including trade school students, who found Tiilikajärvi National Park a relaxing setting for enjoying new activities together. Quitting studies is a significant risk factor that can lead to the marginalisation of young people. Sharing experiences with their schoolmates in natural

settings can encourage youngsters to persevere with their studies.

– Various small tasks helped the young people to discover good things about themselves and others, says careers guidance officer **Tarja Rissanen** of Savo Vocational College, who applies adventure learning methods in her work. – Experiences enjoyed in a safe and trusted atmosphere can help prepare them for everyday challenges.

## Out into the forest on doctor's orders

According to a group of well-being experts who met at a Moved by Nature seminar held at Haltia, nature evidently increases happiness, reduces the sense of loneliness, encourages people to be active, and reduces vulnerability to type 2 diabetes.

The positive physiological reactions produced by natural environments, such as reductions in pulse rates, blood pressure and stress hormones, are rapidly observable. This is also reflected in mood changes, making even a brief "immersion" in a natural setting like a forest worthwhile.

– Getting out and about in natural settings can ease a wide range of problems related to issues from stress and mental health to weight, sleeplessness and motor skills, explains Moved by Nature project manager **Kati Vähäsarja** of Metsähallitus Natural Heritage Services.



*It is increasingly important to provide suitable trails and other facilities designed with Finland's ageing population in mind. Public investments in such services are repaid in public health improvements.* PHOTO: METSÄHALLITUS / MINNA KORAMO.



*Sharing experiences in natural settings like Pallas–Ylläs National Park can also strengthen social networks when people enjoy outdoor activities together with their friends and relatives.*

PHOTO: METSÄHALLITUS / SEIJA OLKKONEN

# Enjoying outdoor adventures with friends

Natural Heritage Services and the Martha Organisation encouraged people to get outdoors with their friends. The campaign urged people to go fishing, mushroom-gathering or berry-picking and invite a friend along through Facebook. Tips passed on through social media have encouraged many people to attend outdoor events, starting in early summer when schoolchildren were able to go fishing for free and learn how to prepare delicious fish dishes.

The largest special event was the first ever annual Finnish Nature Day, on 31<sup>st</sup> August, designated as a day to celebrate Finland's unique natural assets. The day was blessed with fine weather, and a total of 62 events organised around the country attracted more than 9,000 enthusiastic participants.

Our Outdoors.fi website is an excellent resource for groups of friends looking for a great place for an outing. It covers some 250 natural areas managed by Metsähallitus. More than a million users visited the site last year. More detailed maps of destinations can be viewed and printed using the Excursionmap.fi web service, which

is also becoming increasingly popular, attracting 1.6 million hits over the year.

Since the beginning of 2013 hunters and fishers have been able to use the website Eräluvut.fi to purchase permits for fishing, hunting and snowmobiling from Metsähallitus. The website also features places to go hunting and fishing, explains permit procedures, and describes how we manage state-owned hunting lands and fishing waters to provide valuable amenities for outdoor recreation. The site has already proved popular, attracting some 400,000 users. Permit-holders were also encouraged to send more feedback about their fishing catches and hunting bags. Feedback was obtained from a record high of 40% of holders of permits for the hunting of smaller game animals and birds.

Our newest website is a virtual guide to the Bothnian Sea at [www.selkameri.fi](http://www.selkameri.fi), offering information and impressions to encourage people to explore Finland's newest national park. Beautiful 360° panoramic photographs of the park are linked to informative texts and audio soundscapes. Links to local firms providing services for visitors are also included. This free guide has been produced in collaboration with local municipalities as an EU-funded project.

**You can rediscover nature every day or make completely new discoveries at any time. Our natural settings are open to everyone all year round. They're worth protecting every day of the year, and also well worth celebrating annually on the last Saturday in August.**

JENNI HAUKIO  
FINLAND'S FIRST LADY  
PATRONESS OF FINNISH NATURE DAY

# Dedicated to protecting wildlife

**Metsähallitus Natural Heritage Services surveys the habitats of valued species in forests, in traditional agricultural environments, on the arctic fells of Lapland and beneath the waves. Our findings help us to plan land use and nature conservation measures effectively.**

**D**uring 2013 we increased awareness of endangered species and their conservation by highlighting on a monthly basis a single species and one of our staff whose work helps protect the species. This campaign showed the great efforts our dedicated conservation biologists go to, diving in cold

waters, walking on thin ice to survey seal dens, or climbing high trees to examine eagles' nests.

Metsähallitus is responsible for the conservation of several threatened bird species in Finland. White-backed woodpeckers bred well again, with more than 100 nests observed. With invaluable help from dozens of volunteer birdwatchers our staff again conducted annual surveys of the territories of peregrine falcons, gyrfalcons, golden eagles and white-tailed eagles. Finland's very small gyrfalcon population suffered due to low numbers of willow grouse, their main prey species, and only produced six fledglings. Breeding

success rates were normal for white-tailed eagles and peregrine falcons but poor for golden eagles.

– The cold spring and food shortages are probably the main factors explaining why we only found 113 golden eagle fledglings of suitable age for ringing, compared to much better figures for 2012 when we ringed 180 eaglets, explains our veteran eagle expert **Tuomo Ollila**. The eagles need to be monitored to calculate the compensation paid to local reindeer-herders working in eagle territories, as well as for conservation reasons.

The volunteers and their representative **Jarmo Ahtinen**, a veteran golden eagle

*Metsähallitus's dedicated conservation biologists go to great lengths to collect ecological data. Panu Oulasvirta is leading an international project surveying the habitats of endangered freshwater pearl mussels in Northern Fennoscandia. PHOTO: PANU OULASVIRTA.*



surveyor, were given our special award as Volunteer Naturalists of the Year 2013.

## EU support for the protection of the Saimaa ringed seal

To obtain information on the breeding success of the critically endangered Saimaa ringed seal, our surveyors must examine the seals' breeding dens after the mothers and pups leave them during the spring thaw. The seal experts and their volunteer assistants bravely get out onto the melting ice of the frozen lake, backed up with careful safety planning and equipment including a hydrocopter.

– The total Saimaa seal population still stands at just over 300 individuals, with 62 pups born in 2013. We hope to help the seals' numbers to rise to 400 by 2025. This is considered only the bare minimum size for a viable population, report senior advisor **Tero Sipilä** and conservation biologist **Tuomo Kokkonen**, who have dedicated their working lives to the conservation of these unique lake seals.

The annual spring-early summer ban on the use of fishing nets that endanger young seals was largely observed. By the autumn a total of 29 dead Saimaa ringed seals were found, however, including 5 that had drowned in fishing nets and 11 pups that had died in their dens. A new project was launched in 2013 to enhance the lake seals' conservation with the help of the largest single sum granted to a Finnish project by the EU LIFE programme, which will provide almost four million euros towards the project's estimated total budget of 5.26 million euros.

## Enhanced monitoring of hunting lands and fishing waters

In addition to overseeing the fishing restrictions imposed to protect Lake Saimaa's seals, our rangers and wardens monitored many other issues during 2013,

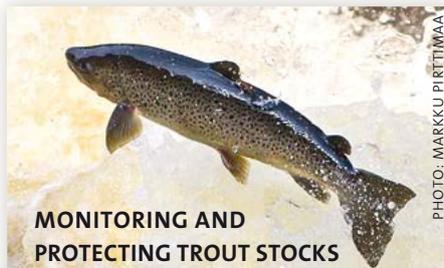


PHOTO: MARKKU PIIRTTIMAA

### MONITORING AND PROTECTING TROUT STOCKS

*The River Oulankajoki and its tributaries are home to a genetically unique population of migratory brown trout which has recently declined alarmingly. The fish are affected by conditions in their spawning waters and in rivers where young fish live in Finland, but they also need suitable conditions to enable them to grow to maturity in lakes downstream in Russia.*

*The EU is funding a project that aims to organise the future collaborative Finnish-Russian management of this unique fish population so that fish numbers will rise to levels where recreational fishing can be truly sustainable.*

including observance of recently revised fishing regulations. To assist our wardens we hired extra seasonal staff. In NE Finland our professional rangers monitored fishing in both state-owned and private waters under a special agreement made

between Metsähallitus and local fisheries to enhance the supervision of fishing.

A new trial supervision scheme was launched in private hunting lands in Northern Finland. Metsähallitus's rangers patrolled these areas together with locally appointed game management association representatives. Earlier our rangers had only patrolled state-owned lands.

A joint borderlands task force of various authorities was set up to co-ordinate the monitoring of areas in Eastern and Central Finland. Metsähallitus's 11 game and fisheries wardens were involved in a total of 352 collaborative actions together with other officials, and several serious hunting offences were investigated.

## Best practices for the ecological restoration of peatlands

We published an extensive handbook for the ecological restoration of drained peatlands, reflecting Finland's pioneering role in restoring boreal forest and peatland habitats and re-establishing their natural features and species. During 2014 an English-language version of the handbook will be published featuring best peatland restoration practices from Finland.

– So far we have restored hydrological conditions in peatland sites in Finnish pro-



*The wild forest reindeer, the rare wild cousin of the domesticated reindeer of Lapland, still survives in undisturbed parts of Finland including Salamajärvi National Park. PHOTO: METSÄHALLITUS / JUHA SAHLGREN*

We are using EU funding to restore rare ecosystems like traditional agricultural habitats. Trees have been cleared and cattle will be put out to graze.

PHOTO: METSÄHALLITUS / JARI KOSTET



tected areas with a total area of 20,000 hectares, says conservation biologist **Maarit Similä**. – We still need to restore a further 17,000 hectares to improve the biodiversity of our peatlands.

Peatland restoration involves blocking drainage ditches, building dams and peat embankments to redirect water flows, and removing trees that have grown on drained sites. Produced by a team of experts, the new handbook compiles the lessons learnt over the last 25 years from practical experiences.

The wide-ranging Boreal Peatland EU LIFE Project, led by Metsähallitus Natural Heritage Services, also produced educational materials for schoolchildren.

## New species found by surveyors

Ecological surveys conducted in Lapland again led to surprising discoveries. A fungus never observed in Finland before was

found in Pallas–Yllästunturi National Park, while a new moss was discovered in Urho Kekkonen National Park, and just south of the park the fungus gnat species *Boletina hymenophalloides* was observed for the first time in Europe.

In Central Finland, our conservation biologist **Teemu Rintala** made a valuable discovery when he observed *Pytho kolwensis*, an endangered beetle found only in old-growth spruce forests. This demanding beetle is a good indicator of conditions in forest habitats.

We have also been conducting ecological surveys of Finland's marine waters. During 2014 data was compiled on species and conditions observed on the sea bed in coastal waters all the way from the Eastern Gulf of Finland to the Bothnian Bay. – This data will help us to identify the special features of different parts of Finland's coastal waters, which will be

important when planning decisions are made that could directly or indirectly affect these waters, says conservation biologist **Anu Riihimäki**.

## Valuable contributions from volunteers

During the summer of 2013 more than 60 voluntary events for people keen to help us manage natural areas were held in national parks and other protected areas.

Volunteer nature-lovers regularly help Metsähallitus Natural Heritage Services to manage protected areas and the habitats of threatened species.

Managing traditional agricultural habitats such as manually mown meadows requires considerable expertise in traditional skills. In a special series of Senior Ranger events held in national parks around Finland, older people with valuable knowledge about traditional farmwork



*The former military island of Vallisaari (foreground) is located near Helsinki's famous Suomenlinna island fortress, a World Heritage Site. Vallisaari is now being developed into an attractive destination for visitors interested in nature and history.* PHOTO: METSÄHALLITUS /

TUOMO HÄYRINEN

methods were enlisted to train people from younger generations in these important skills. These events, organised together with local pensioners' associations, formed part of our Species-rich EU LIFE Project, through which traditional agricultural habitats are being managed in 59 sites.

#### **NATURE CONSERVATION IN NUMBERS 2013**

- 2,212 hectares of forest and mire habitats restored
- 4,137 hectares of traditional agricultural biotopes managed
- 101,665 hectares of terrestrial biotopes surveyed
- underwater biotopes surveyed by videocameras at 9,365 checkpoints
- species surveyed on 3,527 hectares
- 2,380 ancient cultural heritage sites and 312 protected buildings in care of NHS

Our NGO partners – notably including WWF Finland, regional branches of the Finnish Association for Nature Conservation, Keep Lapland Tidy and local associations for friends of our national parks – play a vital role in helping us to organise activities for volunteers.

The Arkipelagia association, for friends of the Archipelago National Park, helps us to protect the natural and cultural heritage of this unique region. A commemorative event was organised in 2013 to mark the park's 30th anniversary. A new friends association was established for the Bothnian Sea National Park, aiming to help us manage and develop the park with the help of volunteers.

#### **New care and recreational use for cultural heritage**

In addition to managing natural areas Metsähallitus Natural Heritage Services looks after sites of historic interest which

date back to periods ranging from the Stone Age to the 1960s.

From the beginning of 2014 Natural Heritage Services will have 29 new cultural heritage sites to manage, including castle ruins and the island fortress of Svartholm in Loviisa. The areas that we manage already include over 300 protected buildings and more than 2,300 ancient sites.

We have also taken over several significant sites from Finland's defence forces. The two islands of Vallisaari and Kuninkaansaari, which lie off Helsinki near the island fortress of Suomenlinna, a Unesco World Heritage Site, are internationally significant for their military history and nature. Restoration work is being planned to give visitors safe access to the areas of greatest interest while protecting the islands' valuable natural features.

The island of Örö in the Archipelago Sea, which served as a military base for a

century, will also be developed as a centre for nature tourism, and become part of our Archipelago National Park in 2015. The park already brings almost four million euros a year to the local economy, and the development of Örö will enable co-operation with local tourism service providers to be expanded.

## Managing architectural heritage – many hands make light work

We are always keen to find new ways to restore and maintain valuable old buildings within the protected areas. In addition to their historical importance such buildings are often popular attractions.

An international team of volunteers has helped us to repair an old fisherman's cottage in the Bothnian Sea National Park. We have also been planning to maintain many unique cultural heritage sites in Finnish Lapland together with various partners.

The Kultala Gold Village in Lapland dates back to the gold rush in the 1870s when it was built for official supervisors. This popular attraction in the Hammas-tunturi Wilderness Area has now been restored with the help of EU funding. In

### WORKING FOR NATURE

*Half of our employees work in Southern Finland, a quarter work for our Ostrobothnia regional unit and a quarter work in Finnish Lapland. The total work input over the year amounted to 578 person-years. We continued to provide work for inmates from open prisons, amounting to 45 person-years.*

*Volunteers contribute greatly to our nature conservation work. In 2013 our volunteers worked a total of 18 person-years.*

the Urho Kekkonen National Park in NE Lapland restoration work has been done on a nearby Skolt Sámi homestead, as part of the wider ABCGheritage Project. Led by Metsähallitus and involving ten partner organisations based across Finnish, Norwegian and Russian Lapland, this project aims to increase the use of nature reserves in border regions of Northern Lapland for sustainable nature tourism.

In Pyhä-Häkki National Park, for instance, a new sauna has been built for visitors to rent. Metsähallitus has a long record of providing beneficial employ-

ment for the inmates of open prisons. The superintendent of Laukaa prison **Tuula Tarvainen** emphasises that the experience gained through such projects is of great benefit to convicts preparing to return to working life.

## Participatory planning

Metsähallitus conducts land use planning for the areas we administer. This planning is typically realised through collaboration with many other stakeholders, including local residents.

Information and opinions about the Archipelago National Park have been compiled through a map-based internet survey. Respondents were asked to mark on the map places and landscapes that they value, and to suggest possible actions. Respondents specified more than 2,000 locations in all. The survey was jointly conducted by Metsähallitus and the University of Turku, and published through the Harava service. Funded by the Ministry of the Environment, this service aims to give citizens and organisations improved opportunities to shape planning decisions that will affect their surroundings. Adding the findings of more conventional visitor surveys and interviews to such GIS data can give us a better picture than ever of visitors' needs and desires for specific localities.

Our proposals for hiking routes and facilities for the Sipoonkorpi National Park, established in 2011, were made available for public comment in summer by means of the Pehmo-GIS map service. This enabled respondents to mark on the map specific places for which they had ideas or wishes. The survey responses were used during the finalisation of the park's management plan.

### FINLAND APPOINTED TO THE UNESCO WORLD HERITAGE COMMITTEE



*Finland will be a member of Unesco's World Heritage Committee for the next four years. Finland's representatives in the committee are the Director of Metsähallitus Natural Heritage Services Rauno Väisänen, and Director General of the National Board of Antiquities Juhani Kostet.*

*The committee's main tasks are to decide which new cultural and natural heritage sites should be added to the world heritage list each year. The choice of new sites is of great interest, not least because world heritage site status is a major asset when promoting tourism.*

*Finland's seven world heritage sites include six cultural sites and one natural site: the Kvarken Archipelago, which is managed by Metsähallitus. Together with its partner world heritage site Sweden's High Coast the Kvarken Archipelago contains unique geological features associated with land uplift and emergent coasts.*



**A.** This park has many natural harbours ideal for mooring your boat or canoe. Its islands can be explored on day-trip cruises that start just over an hour's drive from Helsinki. The park's larger islands have forest trails and cultural landscapes typical of southernmost Finland.

## Which Finnish National Park?

ANSWERS ON P. 13.

**C.** The wild wooded hills of this Northern Ostrobothnian park provide great settings for many activities. In winter visitors can explore magical snow-covered forests on skis or snowshoes. In summer mountain bikers can pedal up hill and down dale along specially designated routes.



**B.** This geological wonder took many millions of years to form. Places formerly sacred to the indigenous Sámi people still enchant travellers today. Deep gorges and high fell-tops can be seen on a day-long hike or toured on a longer trek.



# 75 years of national parks – for nature and people

Finland's national parks preserve our most beautiful and ecologically valuable natural attractions, and make them freely accessible to everyone. Our first national parks were established in 1938 at Pallastunturi and Pyhäntunturi. Metsähallitus's Natural Heritage Services unit manages all of Finland's national parks and about 500 other protected areas.

We provide a wide range of services and amenities for people who enjoy outdoor recreation in natural settings, including more than 7,000 kilometres of marked trails and about 3,000 maintained picnic sites and approximately 30 customer service points, as well as extensive websites with associated map services. These well-planned services make it easy for people to discover and enjoy Finland's natural treasures. In 2013 our natural areas welcomed a total of some 5.4 million visitors, including almost 2.3 million visits to our 37 national parks

Our facilities represent vital resources for firms who provide nature tourism services around Finland. National parks are particularly significant economic assets in this respect. Research has shown that every euro invested by the government in our parks adds an average of ten euros to local economies through visitors' spending. In 2013 our parks boosted local economies providing an estimated total income of 115.5 million euros and employment amounting to 1,484 person years.

Visitor numbers were highest in Pallas-Yllästunturi as in previous years. Visitor numbers in Nuuksio National Park rose by an impressive 43% to 267,400.

National parks are set up both to protect nature and to benefit people. During 2013 we prepared reports for the Ministry of the Environment assessing opportunities to establish four new national parks at Teijo (in Salo), Etelä-Konnevesi (in Central Finland & Northern Savo), Olvassuo (in Northern Ostrobothnia & Kainuu) and in the High Fells of Käsivarsi in NW Lapland.

# Managing our natural areas in 2014

We cherish Finland's natural heritage by effectively managing our national parks, cultural heritage sites and sustainable fish and game stocks. Below are examples of actions we plan to realise during 2014:

## Increasing the value of our national heritage

- We will start preparing for the founding of two new national parks at Teijo and Etelä-Konnevesi.
- New measures to assess the impacts of our nature conservation work will be taken into use.
- We will continue to plan and realise developments on the islands of Vallisaari and Kuninkaansaari off Helsinki.

## Recreational and well-being benefits from natural areas

- Our Outdoors.fi website will be revamped to make it easier for users to find attractive destinations.
- We will devise indicators to evaluate the health and well-being benefits enjoyed by people visiting our national parks.
- We will further improve amenities and information to promote recreational fishing around Finland.

## Partnerships to promote increasing tourism

- We will improve our services designed to benefit our Russian visitors.
- New measures identifying the economic benefits of our services for hunters and fishers will be taken into use.
- We will reinforce our position as a significant actor in tourism in the Helsinki region.

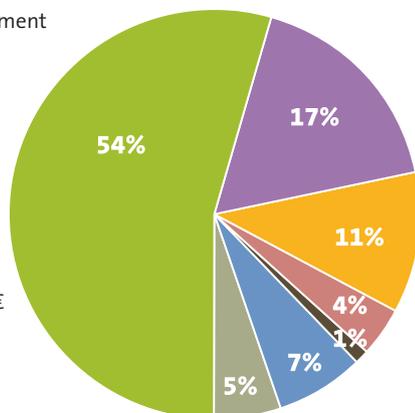
## Looking to the future

- We will provide employment for about 150 jobless young people.
- A new information system compiling useful geographical and ecological data will be taken into use.
- Using scenarios we will systematically assess the threats, opportunities and success factors likely to shape our future work.

## NATURAL HERITAGE SERVICES' FINANCES IN 2013

*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 rents.*

■ Ministry of Environment	33.4 mil. €
■ Income	10.5 mil. €
■ Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry	6.8 mil. €
■ Ministry of Employment and the Economy	2.5 mil. €
■ Ministry of Justice	0.8 mil. €
■ European Union	4.6 mil. €
■ Other funding	3.2 mil. €



**Total: 61.8 mil. €**

## METSÄHALLITUS'S PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION FUNCTIONS

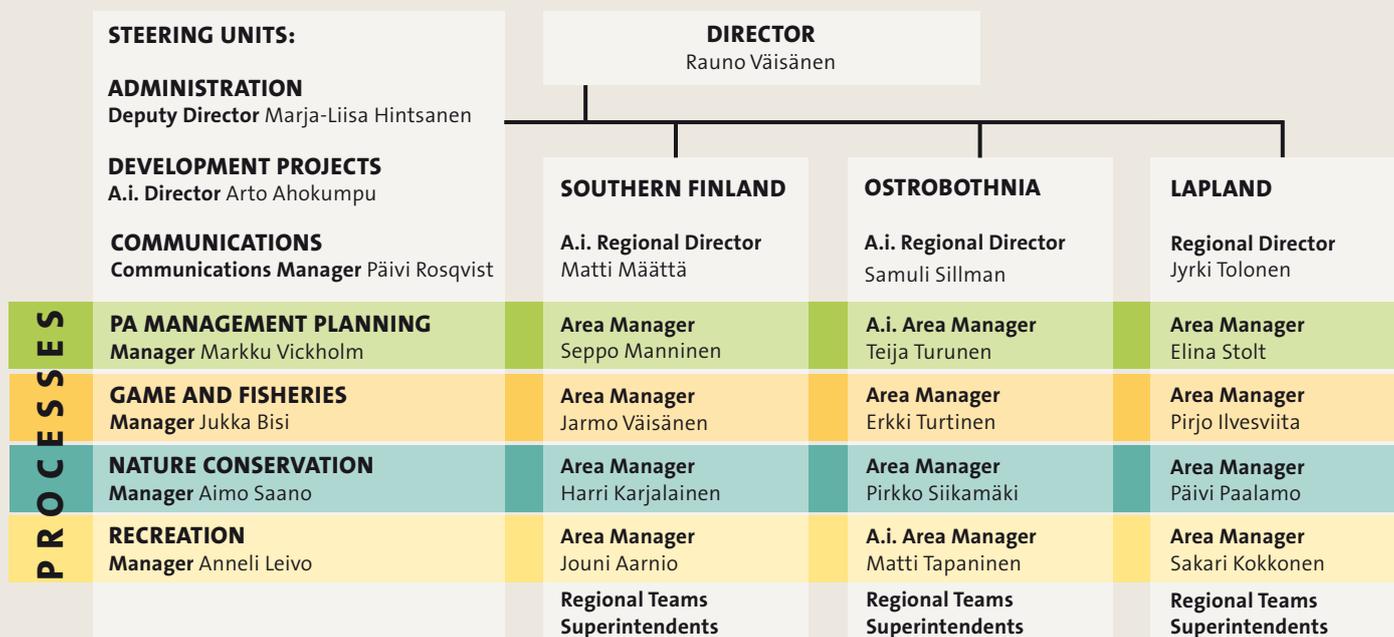
*Metsähallitus is a state-owned enterprise that provides services related to natural resources. Metsähallitus's activities are divided into commercial operations (including forestry and real estate deals) and the public administration services provided by Natural Heritage Services (including nature conservation, 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 2013

*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 1.1. 2014





Metsähallitus visitor centres and customer service points 2013. Contact information and services: [www.outdoors.fi](http://www.outdoors.fi) > Customer service.

### CUSTOMER SERVICE IN NUMBERS 2013

- 5.4 million visits to areas managed by Metsähallitus Natural Heritage Services
- 1.013 800 visits to customer service points
- 63,868 participants in client groups provided with guidance
- 1.110 905 visitors at the [Luontoon.fi](http://Luontoon.fi) (Outdoors.fi) websites
- 1.648 422 visits to the [Retkikartta.fi](http://Retkikartta.fi) (Excursionmap.fi) website
- 71,267 fishing permits purchased
- 56,389 hunting permits purchased
- customer satisfaction ratings averaging 4.3 (on a scale of 1–5)
- satisfaction ratings among fishers 3.7 and among hunters 3.8 (on a scale of 1–5)

### ESTIMATED NUMBERS OF VISITS TO VISITOR CENTRES AND CUSTOMER SERVICE POINTS IN 2013

(total: 1. 013 800 visits)

Service point	Visits
Blåmusslan	14 600
Ekenäs	15 600
Fell-Lapland	28 400
Hailuoto	14 500
Haltia	95 900
Hautajärvi	9 000
Hossa	39 300
Häme	15 600
Ivalo	12 800
Kalajoki	29 800
Karhuntassu	22 000
Kellokas	79 000
Kiehinen	47 700
Kilpisjärvi	9 100
Koilliskaira	13 800
Korvatunturi	7 500
Liminganlahti	56 000
Naava	89 500
Nestori	34 500
Oskari	10 100
Oulanka	60 100
Pallastunturi	35 300
Petola	11 100
Ruunaa	6 300
Seitseminen	30 200
Siida	104 300
Syöte	32 000
Teijo	16 400
Terranova	18 400
Ukko	55 000

### ESTIMATED NUMBERS OF VISITS TO NATIONAL PARKS IN 2013

(total: 2.259 800 visits)

National park	Visits
Archipelago	59 100
Bothnian Bay	8 800
Bothnian Sea	41 200
Eastern Gulf of Finland	16 400
Ekenäs Archipelago	53 000
Helvetinjärvi	20 900

Hiidenportti	11 600
Isojärvi	11 800
Kauhaneva–Pohjankangas	6 200
Koli	140 600
Kolovesi	8 700
Kurjenrahka	32 100
Lauhanvuori	11 000
Leivonmäki	14 300
Lemmenjoki	12 100
Liesjärvi	23 200
Linnansaari	31 900
Nuuskio	267 400
Oulanka	174 600
Pallas–Yllästunturi	488 400
Patvinsuo	12 900
Petkeljärvi	21 600
Puurijärvi–Isonsuo	8 000
Pyhä–Häkki	15 300
Pyhä–Luosto	105 500
Päijänne	14 200
Repovesi	93 200
Riisitunturi	23 000
Rokua	17 800
Salamajärvi	14 700
Seitseminen	39 700
Sipoonkorpi	96 400
Syöte	35 600
Tiilikkajärvi	8 500
Torransuo	17 900
Urho Kekkonen np	292 600
Valkmusa	9 600

### ESTIMATED NUMBERS OF VISITS TO NATIONAL HIKING AREAS IN 2013

(total: 369,000 visits)

Hiking area	Visits
Evo	68 100
Hossa	52 400
Iso-Syöte	29 300
Kylmäluoma	27 100
Oulujärvi	37 900
Ruunaa	84 600
Teijo	69 600

# Metsähallitus Natural Heritage Services

Metsähallitus is a state-owned enterprise that provides services related to Finland's natural resources. Natural Heritage Services is a unit of Metsähallitus, providing public administration services which are largely financed from the national government budget.

## Natural Heritage Services

- manages national parks, strict nature reserves, wilderness areas, national hiking areas and most of the state-owned public waters of Finland
- protects and manages species, habitats and cultural heritage in state-owned protected areas
- provides outdoor recreation services for hikers
- sells permits for hunting, fishing and snowmobiling.

[www.metsa.fi/naturalheritage](http://www.metsa.fi/naturalheritage) – information on the activities and organisation of Natural Heritage Services

[www.outdoors.fi](http://www.outdoors.fi) – information on the protected areas and services for hikers

[www.excursionmap.fi](http://www.excursionmap.fi) – hiking-destinations and hunting and fishing areas on a map

[www.eraluvat.fi](http://www.eraluvat.fi) – web service for purchasing hunting and fishing permits (will be available in English in 2014)

[www.haltia.com](http://www.haltia.com) – Finnish Nature Centre Haltia: all of Finland's nature under one roof and closer to the visitor in the Helsinki region.

-  National park
-  Strict nature reserve
-  Wilderness area
-  National hiking area
-  State-owned public water
-  World Heritage Site



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