

# **APPLYING IUCN PROTECTED AREA MANAGEMENT CATEGORIES IN FINLAND**

Summary based on the original Finnish document approved by the Ministry of the Environment  
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Isojärvi National Park. Photo: Timo Nieminen.

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## Foreword

Protected areas around the world are the cornerstones for promoting diversity, ecosystem services and human wellbeing. The *Protected Planet 2012 Report* published by IUCN<sup>1</sup> reports protected area coverage of 12.7% of the global terrestrial area and 1.6% of the marine. Virtually every country in the world has set aside sanctuaries for natural and cultural features valued by societies. Protected areas help to preserve diminishing ecosystems and vanishing species, whilst supporting both traditional and modern livelihoods that depend on them. At the same time, national parks and other attractive sites offer opportunities for thrilling nature experiences and relaxing escapes from everyday pressures.

Since the 1930s Finland has systematically built a comprehensive protected area network that has become an important part of the growing terrestrial and marine networks in Northern Europe. In the boreal and alpine regions of Scandinavia and North-western Russia remain some of the few large wilderness areas in Europe. In southern parts of the boreal region protected areas are already squeezed between urban development and growing networks of transport infrastructure and multiple land use pressures. A diversity of protected area types, governance alternatives and conservation measures are still needed to deliver a sustainable green infrastructure around the core of established nature reserves.

Protected areas come in many shapes and sizes, and are established for different purposes and under a multitude of national designation types – over 700 in Europe alone. To speak a common language and allow comparison and monitoring of the protected area developments globally, the parties of the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) have resolved to use the IUCN protected area management categories for classification of the different designation types and report these to the World Database on Protected Areas (WDPA). Though more than 177,000 sites are already registered, the IUCN category has been reported for only a third of them. Of the nearly 10,000 sites reported by Finland, a fraction has met the complete minimum data requirement.

Finland started preparations in 2012 for a systematic application of the IUCN management categories to all established national protected areas. As a part of the process, the national principles for defining protected areas and assignment of categories were compiled by Metsähallitus Natural Heritage Services. The document is based mainly on the IUCN *Guidelines for Applying Protected Area Management Categories* (2008) and extensive discussions with international experts as well as national and regional colleagues and stakeholders.

A shorter version of the original Finnish document has now been edited in English for the benefit of the international community of protected area administrators. Though not a handbook, this may serve as an example of how to go about applying the IUCN management categories to a national protected area system. The background for and the process of category application in Finland are explained in the first two chapters. The purpose and projected use of the categories is elaborated in Chapter Three, and the translation and interpretation of the IUCN definitions described in Chapter Four. Finland's protected areas and their objectives are presented in Chapter Five and the general principles for applying the categories to protected areas in the Finnish context are listed and justified in Chapter Six.

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<sup>1</sup> International Union for Conservation of Nature

## 1 Background

### **A new National Biodiversity Strategy for Finland**

Finland is committed to the objectives of the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD), including the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity, the fair and equitable sharing of the benefits from use of genetic resources, and to intensifying efforts in halting the loss of biodiversity globally, regionally and at national level by 2020. The Council of State approved a revised National Strategy for the Conservation and Sustainable Use of Biodiversity in Finland in December 2012. The National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan (NBSAP), titled *Saving Nature for People*, covers the period 2012-2020.

In 2010 the Parties of the CBD adopted the Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011-2020, including a set of 20 headline targets known as the Aichi Biodiversity Targets. Effective protected areas (PAs) are essential for the achievement of many of these targets, particularly those concerning habitat and species loss (Targets 5 and 12), but most specifically, Target 11 deals with PAs and other area-based conservation measures. In the NBSAP Finland has set the Aichi Biodiversity Targets in the national context. Target 11 for 2020 is formulated in the following way:

**Finland's network of protected areas and the measures applied to conserve biodiversity in the use of other areas together cover at least 17 per cent of the terrestrial environments and inland waters of the country, and 10 per cent of coastal and marine areas. The functionality and coverage of the network have particularly been improved in Southern Finland. Protected areas are suitably managed and are ecologically and regionally representative. They are well connected, and green infrastructure also connects them to wider landscape entities, with regard to the special features of heritage landscapes. Biodiversity also continues to be safeguarded in commercially managed forests.**

### **Tracking progress towards global targets for protected areas**

The Protected Planet Initiative, a collaborative effort of many partners, reviews global progress towards the key elements of Target 11. Many of the indicators underpinning the *Protected Planet Report 2012* are derived from the CBD-mandated World Database on Protected Areas (WDPA), prepared by UNEP-WCMC<sup>2</sup> and the IUCN World Commission on Protected Areas (WCPA). IUCN has also developed a system of PA management categories that helps to classify PAs according to their primary management objectives. The categories have long been used by the UN and governments for PA planning and reporting, including to the WDPA.

The WDPA is the most comprehensive global dataset on terrestrial and marine PAs as defined by IUCN. However, the data is still far from complete. Though more than 177,000 sites are already registered, the IUCN category has been reported for only a third of them. In March 2013 WDPA national data for Finland included 9,885 national PAs, but the management category was reported for only 183 records. Also the governance type as well as the management authority and a link to the management plan were missing in most records.

There is a compelling need to apply the management categories comprehensively to the PAs and update the data deficiencies in the relevant PA databases. In its recent report *Protected Areas in Europe*, the European Environment Agency (EEA) draws attention to the fact that also in the European Common Database on Designated Areas (CDDA) data sets are not all complete or up to date. The EEA has repeatedly appealed to EU member states to update information on

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<sup>2</sup> United Nations Environmental Programme – World Conservation Monitoring Centre

the IUCN categories of national PAs. The UNEP-WCMC receives most of the protected area data of Europe through the CDDA database from the EEA.

### **Revised guidelines for IUCN protected area management categories**

In Finland the IUCN management categories have previously been applied to National Parks and other large State-owned PAs of over 1,000 hectares, following strictly the IUCN guidelines of 1994 and the classification manual introduced by the EUROPARC Federation in 2000. Dispute arose in 2001 about interpretation of wilderness areas and their land use in the North. Smaller areas in the South were also difficult to categorise, as many did not fit into the IUCN definitions at the time. Furthermore, there were no clearly defined and commonly agreed national procedures for assigning and approving categories or governance types to PAs in Finland.

With the revised *Guidelines for Applying IUCN Protected Area Management Categories*, published in 2008, came sharper definitions for PAs and clear explanations for the interpretations of management categories. Some changes were especially relevant in the Nordic context. These pertain to traditional and subsistence land use and to lack of PA management needs in less populated regions.

Pioneering work on applying the revised guidelines and management categories has since been done in many countries, notably in South Korea and elsewhere in Asia, Canada and South America. In Europe the UK and France have been active. Supplementary *Guidelines for Applying the IUCN Protected Area Management Categories to Marine Protected Areas* have also become available from the IUCN WCPA.

In 2012 Finland set the goal in the revised NBSAP to update PA management categories and supplement the data in the WDPA by 2020. The immediate aim was to identify areas that meet the IUCN definition of a PA and agree on the procedure of assigning IUCN management categories and governance types to each of them. In the national PoWPA<sup>3</sup> Action Plan 2012-2020 there is also a measure to update the PA data in both national and international registries.

## **2 Process of Applying the IUCN Management Categories in Finland**

### **Stakeholder seminars**

To start the national process of “putting nature on the map” (as the process of applying categories to PAs has been called in the United Kingdom), the Metsähallitus Natural Heritage Services (NHS), the IUCN National Committee of Finland and the Ministry of the Environment (MoE) jointly organised a seminar *Protected Area Categorisation in Finland* in March 2012, and invited a range of experienced international experts (Nigel Dudley, IUCN WCPA and Charles Besançon, UNEP-WCMC and IUCN WCPA), representatives of national PA management bodies and different stakeholders from ministries, research institutes and NGOs to take part in discussion on how to proceed.

Another seminar was organised in November 2012 by the Barents Protected Area Network (BPAN) with delegates from Norway, Sweden, Finland and NW Russia as well as with

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<sup>3</sup> CBD Programme of Work on Protected Areas

representatives of NGOs and other organisations. Especially land use issues of the northern boreal and arctic area were widely discussed.

### **Class-based principles, site-based assessment**

As the majority of the PA network area in Finland is State-owned and managed by Metsähallitus, it was seen appropriate that the NHS first compiles the principles of applying categories to State-owned protected areas and these are then scrutinised by stakeholders. The proposal was drafted by the NHS and circulated for consultation by the MoE in May 2013.

The national document is based on the IUCN *Guidelines for Applying Protected Area Management Categories* (2008) and IUCN *Guidelines for Applying Protected Area Management Categories to Marine Protected Areas* (2012) as well as extensive discussions with international experts, national and regional colleagues and stakeholders. A detailed account of the development process was written separately (see the Annex to this document for an English summary).

After stakeholder consultation the document was finalised and discussed within the IUCN National Committee in June and in September and approved by the MoE in October 2013. This English version was consequently edited for the IUCN WCPA. Much of the detailed reasoning (based on legislation, etc), which is relevant to domestic discussion, was omitted.

The starting point in Finland has been that the general and PA class-specific principles for the application of the management categories are the basis for the actual assignment process. The national PA designation types are well-defined in national legislation and the Nature Conservation Programme documents. The PA types are reviewed against IUCN definitions and the proposals for appropriate category assignment are made in this document (with less detailed justification than in the original Finnish version, see Chapters 5 and 6).

Once common agreement on the general national principles is reached (being a general approval of compliance with IUCN definitions), PA managers are able to proceed with site-based assessment and the assignment of management categories. Commencing with established protected sites on State lands, the work will continue later with those on private land. Previously categorised sites are reviewed against the present guidelines and the available data. Sites in the CDDA/WDPA databases without category data are supplemented. In the future PAs will be categorised routinely as part of the designation and enactment process.

In many countries there has been a systematic approach to determining the PA management categories with keys involving specific questions for each category (e.g. the UK) and site-specific data sheets (e.g. South Korea). The entire Finnish PA system (State-owned and private) is now administered using an integrated Protected Area Information Database with GIS-based information on site governance, natural and cultural values, visitor use, management plans, conservation measures and impact monitoring. There is enough site-based information available to make judgments on management category assignment to most PAs and the information is public.

### **Approval and verification**

Stakeholder consultation on the proposal for the application of IUCN management categories to PAs in Finland involved all member organisations of the IUCN National Committee and other relevant institutions and NGOs. The proposal was also open for public feedback on the website of the Ministry of the Environment.

Stakeholders having approved the proposal, it has been commonly agreed that no site-specific *Statement of Compliance* (as is proposed in the UK) is needed for applying the IUCN definition of a PA and the management categories to national designation types in Finland. Those sites, whose category now deviates from the one proposed for its PA type, are noted and the information will be made available to the public. Later exceptions to general principles are documented in the Protected Area Information Database.

The IUCN management category for State-owned PAs is first approved by regional steering groups and senior management of the NHS and finally by the MoE. Private PAs can also be approved by the regional environment administration (Centre for Economic Development, Transport and the Environment, ELY Centre). International verification is not needed for site-specific category assignment, but some stakeholders proposed that the general process of category application and assignment in Finland should be evaluated. This may be done in connection with a future PA management effectiveness evaluation at system level.

### **3 Use of Protected Area Categories in Finland**

IUCN sees the PA management categories as an important global standard for the planning, establishment and management of PAs. At national level the misunderstanding of the use and impact of the categories may evoke opposition to their assignment. For this reason it is important to explain the related descriptive and prescriptive policy at national, regional and international level.

In Finland, the assignment of IUCN management categories was initially seen as a precondition for updating of PA data and enhancing its quality, making it comparable in a regional and international context. Updated information will serve development of national and regional PA networks (e.g. gap analysis and broadening the range of protected areas with different management objectives and governance types), and help assessment of the Aichi Target 11. It will also contribute to the national CBD reporting and ultimately to reviewing the global progress in the forthcoming *Protected Planet Report 2014*.

The IUCN management categories are frequently seen as a tool for national administrations to allocate resources or as a lever in international conservation politics. In the Finnish context this kind of use of the categories has not been the original intention. The IUCN management category assigned to a PA is not intended to change the present management or use of the site. Categories are to be assigned based on the existing objectives stated in the Nature Conservation Programmes and in the general legislation on nature conservation, land use, forestry and environmental impact assessment, as well as site-specific statutes, regulations and management plans. Assigned categories simply sum up the management objectives of the individual sites and help in advocating and achieving them.

## 4 Translation and Interpretation of IUCN Definitions

A draft translation of the IUCN 2008 key definitions of protected area, management categories and governance types was ordered by the IUCN National Committee and final proposal realised by the Natural Heritage Services. Proposed translations were presented to stakeholders together with the original English versions. A protected area is defined below and the management categories are presented in Appendix 1.

### Protected area

**A clearly defined geographical space, recognized, dedicated and managed, through legal or other effective means, to achieve the long-term conservation of nature with associated ecosystem services and cultural values.**

After stakeholder consultation the Finnish translations have been approved by the IUCN National Committee of Finland. Swedish translations<sup>4</sup> have been requested from the Swedish Environment Protection Agency (EPA), being the body responsible for PA reporting in Sweden. The Swedish EPA has started the process of updating IUCN PA management categories in 2012.

The complete IUCN guidelines for applying management categories were not translated, but the key points of the guidelines, as well as relevant Finnish legislation and background documents were incorporated into the national document. Interpretation of the definitions in the Finnish, Nordic and NW Russian context was discussed with experts, PA managers and NGOs at the earlier mentioned seminars in 2012. The translations and principles of applying the categories to Finnish PA types were also discussed within the NHS and with the MoE.

Agreement on which national designation types meet the IUCN definition was mostly uniform. Dispute concerned particularly temporarily protected sites (with 10-20 year contracts) and certain so called “forestry-set-asides”, meaning sites “designated” by decision of forestry companies (including State enterprise Metsähallitus Forestry Unit) to fully or partly restrict cutting, but which have no permanent or gazetted status. These were not granted PA status in the sense of the IUCN definition, although they are recognized as an important component of the green infrastructure around core PAs.

Applying the PA concept and assigning management categories to international designations, which often are partly or completely overlapping with national PAs is problematic. Especially sites designated into the European Natura 2000 Sites Network have proved to be difficult. Reasons for this are discussed in Chapter 7.2.

## 5 Finland’s Protected Areas and their Objectives

Each of the designation types of the Finnish PA system were assessed against the IUCN protected area and category definitions by looking at distinguishing features and objectives stated in the national legislation and other documentation (see Appendix 2 and list of references). All the designation types described in the following are considered PAs according to the IUCN PA definition. Primary and secondary objectives of the PA types are briefly explained.

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<sup>4</sup> Swedish is an official language in Finland.



### National Parks and Nature Reserves

The core of the Finnish PA network is formed by National Parks (NPs) and Nature Reserves (NRs) on State lands. These are based on the Nature Conservation Act and have been established over the decades since the 1930s. Presently there are about 550 State-owned NPs and NRs covering 16,800 km<sup>2</sup>. National Parks and Strict Nature Reserves are, by definition, large (over 1,000 ha) and they protect mosaics of typical and threatened Finnish forests and mires, inland and marine waters, as well as fells in the North, with their ecosystems and associated species. Other established NRs protect specific mire, forest and shoreline ecosystems as well as habitats of breeding and migrating water birds. Many protected mire complexes and old-growth forests are extensive (over 1,000 ha), whereas many sites protecting habitats of rare species are small.

Though Finland's Nature Conservation Programmes have mostly already been implemented, there are another 1,700 sites designated by Council of State Decisions in 1976–1996 (see Table 1) that are yet to be statutorily established as Nature Reserves – altogether approximately 1,000 NRs in the following five years. Any action which jeopardises the conservation objectives of a site included in a Nature Conservation Programme is prohibited by the Nature Conservation Act. These actions are specified in the programmes.

Established and pending NRs on State lands are complemented by some 8,700 Private NRs and 1,300 other sites protecting habitats or species on private lands. Over 90% of the private sites are small (less than 100 ha), the largest twenty cover more than 40% of the total area – these are mostly marine and coastal sites.

**Table 1. Nature Conservation Programmes in Finland.** Source: Ministry of the Environment. The Council of State Decisions and supplementary decisions made 1976–2012.

Nature Conservation Programmes	Council of State Decisions
National Parks and Strict Nature Reserves Development Programme	1976, 1980, 1985, 1988
Mire Conservation Programme	1987, 1991
Waterfowl Habitats Conservation Programme	1982
Shoreline Conservation Programme	1990
Herb-rich Forest Conservation Programme	1989
Old-growth Forest Conservation Programme	1993, 1995, 1996
Esker Protection Programme	1984
Natura 2000 Sites (SCI, SPA)	1998, 1999, 2002, 2004, 2005, 2006, 2012

SCI = European Union (EU) Site of Community Importance, SPA = EU Special Protection Area

The “new” Nature Conservation Act (enacted in 1996, repealing the previous one from 1923) emphasises traditional area-based protection with the aim of conserving the entire biodiversity within (from genetic variation to ecosystem level), preserve its ecological integrity (composition, structure and function) and the evolutionary potential. Specific prerequisites of the establishment, as well as provisions and derogations to them, are stated for all NRs. Listed objectives and distinguishing elements of Strict NRs and NPs follow the basic IUCN definitions and management objectives of category Ia as a non-intervention area reserved mostly for scientific research (Strict NRs) and category II as an area protecting large ecosystems and promoting recreation and education (NPs).

As far as feasible, the same provisions regulating land use in NPs and Strict NRs are to be applied to all other NRs whether on State or privately-owned lands. In Finnish NRs there are normally no inhabitants. No forestry, no extraction of peat, land or minerals and no construction of roads or buildings (except for visitor infrastructure) are allowed. Removal of animals or plants is also generally prohibited, with the exception of harmful or invasive species. However, small-scale fishing by rod or angling and picking edible berries or mushrooms are everyman's rights in Finland. Also in the State-owned wilderness areas of Northern Finland, hunting of game is permitted by law to locals. These activities are considered to have little or no effect on primary nature conservation values of the reserves (see chapter 7.1.1 for details).

Nature Reserves and Protected Forests established by Metsähallitus decision are not based on the Nature Conservation Act, but are regarded comparable to statutory NRs and are managed by the NHS using the same principles and guidelines.

### **Other national protected areas**

Wilderness Reserves (WRs) established in Lapland under the Wilderness Act (1991) and National Hiking Areas (NHAs) established in Southern Finland and Ostrobothnia under the Outdoor Recreation Act (1973) are not directly comparable to NRs, as their (statutory) primary objective for the establishment was originally not the protection of biodiversity. The WRs were established first to preserve wilderness and safeguard the culture and subsistence livelihoods of the indigenous Sámi and to allow development of the sustainable use of nature. The NHAs were established to promote outdoor recreation. However, these large areas have also for the most part been designated as Natura 2000 Sites based on the habitats (forest, mire, water types) and the species values listed in the Habitats and Birds Directives of the European Union. As such they are considered PAs in the sense of the IUCN protected area definition.

The total national PA designations in Finland cover over 13,000 sites and 46,000 km<sup>2</sup> (10% of Finland's surface area). The number, coverage and estimated network proportion of each PA type that have been assessed to comply with the IUCN protected area definition, is presented in Table 2. Statistics for sites on privately-owned lands not yet established as NRs are scattered, and a compilation is not available at present. Thus the total PA number and area are somewhat inaccurate.

**Table 2. Finland's protected area number, surface area and area type proportion of the network 1.1.2013.**

Source: Metsähallitus. The protected areas presented comply with the IUCN protected area definition.

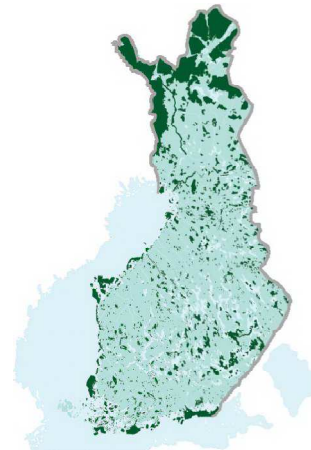
PROTECTED AREA TYPE	NUMBER	SURFACE AREA (KM <sup>2</sup> )	PERCENTAGE OF NETWORK	COMMENT
Strict Nature Reserves	19	1,535	3	Established by site-specific law, over 1000 hectares
National Parks	37	9,796	21	Established by site-specific law, over 1000 hectares
Old-growth Forest Reserves	91	97	< 1	Special protected areas based on the old Nature Conservation Act (1923-1996)
Mire Reserves	171	4,617	10	See above
Herb-rich Forest Reserves	51	12	< 1	See above
Other Nature Reserves on State lands	45	667	1	Includes 7 Seal Reserves, not part of the Nature Conservation Programmes
Private Nature Reserves on State lands	114	85	< 1	Private Nature Reserves acquired for the State
Nature Reserves (Metsähallitus)	24	8	< 1	Based on Metsähallitus decision, under 100 hectares
<b>TOTAL NATURE RESERVES ESTABLISHED ON STATE LANDS</b>	<b>552</b>	<b>16,817</b>	<b>36</b>	<b>Nature Reserves established by statute based on the Nature Conservation Act</b>
Nature Conservation Programme sites on State lands	1,714	7,704	17	Based on Council of State Decision, will be established as statutory Nature Reserves
Protected Forests	327	514	1	Based on Metsähallitus decision
Other Protected Sites on State lands	721	3,588	7	Habitat and species protection sites, sites protected in land use plans, Natura 2000 Sites without national PA designation
Wilderness Reserves	12	14,891	32	Based on Wilderness Act (1991), established on State land
National Hiking Areas	7	355	< 1	Based on Outdoor Recreation Act, established on State land
<b>OTHER PROTECTED AREAS ON STATE LANDS</b>	<b>2,781</b>	<b>25,651</b>	<b>58</b>	
<b>TOTAL PROTECTED AREAS ON STATE LANDS</b>	<b>3,333</b>	<b>43,869</b>	<b>94</b>	
Private Nature Reserves	8,717	2,634	6	Based on Nature Conservation Act, established by ELY decision
Habitat or Species Protection Areas	1,306	25	< 1	Based on Nature Conservation Act, established by ELY decision
Nature Conservation Programme sites on private lands	Statistics not available	Statistics not available		Based on Council of State decision, acquisition to State and established as NR, or established as Private Nature Reserve
Other Protected Sites on private lands	Statistics not available	Statistics not available		Sites protected in land use plans, Natura 2000 Sites without national PA designation
<b>TOTAL PROTECTED AREAS ON PRIVATE LANDS</b>	<b>&gt;10,000</b>	<b>&gt;2,600</b>	<b>ca. 6</b>	
<b>TOTAL PROTECTED AREAS</b>	<b>&gt;13,000</b>	<b>&gt;46,000</b>	<b>100</b>	

ELY = Centres for Economic Development, Transport and the Environment

### Natura 2000 Sites

The Birds Directive requires member States of the European Union to assign Special Protection Areas (SPAs) for birds. The Habitats Directive similarly requires Special Areas of Conservation (SACs) to be designated for habitats and species other than birds that are of Community importance (altogether about 200 threatened habitat types and 1,000 species are listed for EU territory). Together the SPAs and SACs make up the Natura 2000 network of PAs.

In Finland altogether 1,865 sites have been designated as Natura 2000 Sites by seven Council of State Decisions made 1998 to 2012. The total surface area covered is about 49,000 km<sup>2</sup> equalling 15% of Finland's territory (see Figure 1).



**Figure 1. The Natura 2000 Sites Network in Finland.** Source: Metsähallitus.

The Natura 2000 Sites Network in Finland is almost entirely based on the national designations: the established and pending NRs, Wilderness Reserves, National Hiking Areas and other PAs described above. The conservation objectives of the Natura 2000 Sites (or parts of them) which are not already designated as PAs will be realised by land use regulations (Acts on forest, water, building and land use, land extraction, environment protection; see Appendix 2). Most of this area protects inland waters and shores, and coastal or marine biotopes. Any activity which may threaten the conservation values, for which these sites are designated, is subject to environmental impact assessment and requires a permit from the regional environment administration (ELY Centre).

### Protected area objectives

To enhance operational coherence and promote the best practices, the Natural Heritage Services has drafted a document *Principles of Protected Area Management and Use*. These guidelines were first written already in 1992 and have been updated many times, the latest update being in 2010. This document lays out the general strategic and legislative basis of PA conservation (and other) objectives and management planning. The handbook includes a matrix of management objectives and the IUCN management categories. Each IUCN category has by definition primary and secondary management and use objectives. Certain objectives are not applicable to some of the categories (see Table 3).

The site-specific assessment and assignment of management categories must also consider management plans. Such plans are statutory for Finnish NPs and certain other NRs as well as Wilderness Reserves and National Hiking Areas. Management plans already cover nearly 80% of the national PA network area. Plans for the remaining sites are drafted, if considered necessary. The need is determined by site condition assessment. Many large and remote PAs need no active management, have few visitors or significant threats, and thus have no need for a detailed management plan – as long as conservation values are retained.

**Table 3. IUCN protected area management categories and objectives of management and use.**

Source: Principles of Protected Area Management and Use. Metsähallitus Natural Heritage Services.

1 = primary objective, 2 =secondary objective, 3 = possible objective, – = not applicable

	Protected area management category						
	Ia	Ib	II	III	IV	V	VI
Management and use objective	Strictly protected area	Wilderness area	National park	Natural monument	Habitat/species protection and management area	Protected landscape	Natural resource management and protection area
Scientific research	(1)	3	2	3	2	3	3 (2)
Wilderness protection	2	1	2	–	–	–	2 (1)
Preservation of habitats, species and genetic diversity	1	2 (1)	1	2(1)	1	2	2 (1)
Maintenance of ecosystems and their services	2 (1)	1	1	–	2 (1)	2	1
Protection of specific natural/cultural features	(2)	–	2	1	2 (3)	1	1
Recreation and tourism	–	3	1 (2)	2 (1)	3	1	3 (2)
Education	–	–	2	2	3	3	3
Sustainable (traditional) use of natural resources	–	3(2)	3	–	(2)	2	1
Maintenance of cultural /traditional landscape features	–	(2)	(2)	(2)	(2)	1	2

## 6 Protected Area Governance and Management

With respect to who holds the decision-making and management authority and responsibility for PAs, IUCN distinguishes four broad governance types: A. governance by government (national, regional, local), B. shared governance, C. private governance and D. governance by indigenous peoples and local communities. IUCN encourages national authorities to recognise the existing and to promote different governance options in building balanced PA systems.

In Finland, the present PA network is mostly governed by a government agency, the Metsähallitus Natural Heritage Services, but it is increasingly supported by privately-owned sites. Ownership is not always coupled with the governance and management responsibility. The national and regional authorities consult and work together with stakeholders, local communities and landowners. The Government is also looking to find new options for PA governance types in the future (NBSAP of Finland 2012-2020).

### Network core owned and managed by the Government

Over 90% of Finland's PA network area is State-owned and managed by the Natural Heritage Services. In the past decade Government policy has been to concentrate PA management on

State lands in the hands of one organisation. The NHS operates in the whole country and is organised in three Regional Units (Southern Finland, Ostrobothnia and Lapland). Some Natura 2000 Sites which are not established as Nature Reserves or Protected Forests are managed by the Metsähallitus Forestry Unit.

### **Complementary privately-owned Nature Reserves**

Some 6-7% of the PA surface in Finland is privately owned. Over 8,700 Private NRs have already been established. Private NRs are owned by municipalities (urban and rural), private non-profit organisations (such as church communities), corporate owners (such as forestry companies), as well as trusts and individual or multiple landowners. Unlike in many other countries, Private NRs in Finland retain their designation as private NRs when ownership is transferred. For this reason some of them are actually State-owned today.

There are many ways of managing private protected sites, often depending on the location and type of PA, as well as site-specific conservation values and management objectives. There is much variation in the specification of conservation objectives and protection provisions. Especially older site designations and regulations can be rather vague. Site designations in the Conservation Programmes are often more articulate (see Table 1).

The majority of Private NRs have also been designated as Natura 2000 Sites and the relevant objectives of the Birds and Habitats Directives apply to these. The regional environment administrations (ELY Centres) coordinate the management planning and implementation of Natura 2000 Sites, but on the ground joint collaborative management is often essential. Municipalities operate as a local public body together with local stakeholders. The NHS works especially with private forest owners. Small private sites are often coupled up in larger integrated management plans drafted by the NHS. Management measures can also be delegated from the regional administration to the private owner by contract. Subsidies are available for agricultural measures and restoration of forest biotopes.

### **Indigenous peoples and local communities involved**

There are no listed Indigenous or Community Conserved Areas (ICCA) in Finland. Almost 80% of the indigenous Sámi Homeland Area in Lapland (see Figure 2) has been statutorily protected. There are Wilderness Reserves, National Parks and other large Nature Reserves within the territory.

In Finland land use planning at different levels, including PA management planning is always participatory. Stakeholders and local communities are involved throughout the planning process. Within the Sámi Homeland Area, the Saami Parliament and local Reindeer Herders' Associations are regularly consulted. The management planning process of PAs within the territory follows the CBD Akwé: Kon Guidelines. Finland has been the first country to implement these guidelines in practice.

### **Recording governance types**

State-owned PAs are almost entirely administered and managed by the NHS. Differentiation between the property ownership and the responsibilities for site administration (information management and reporting), and the management planning or operational implementation and the monitoring of ground measures, is usually applicable only when protected sites are

privately owned. However, regardless of the arrangements, governance type for the individual sites is recorded together with all other site information in the Protected Area Information Database. The process of assigning the management category and governance type may vary, but the nature conservation administration (the NHS Regional Units and the ELY Centres together) is responsible for the data. Once in the national database, the relevant data is delivered to the European Environment Agency for the CDDA database and from there to the UNEP World Conservation Monitoring Centre for the WDPA.

## **7 General Principles of Applying IUCN Management Categories in Finland**

In the boreal and alpine regions of Scandinavia and Northwest Russia remain some of the few large wilderness areas in Europe. The following recital summarises discussions on the particular land-use issues in these northern areas that are most relevant to the application of the IUCN management categories, also in Finland. Other general issues and criteria are briefly discussed in the following chapter. Indicative IUCN management categories for different PA types are presented with reasoning behind the proposals.

### **7.1 Land Use Issues**

The protected area is markedly centred in the northern part of Finland (see Figure 1). The population, however, is concentrated more in the South, where land use pressures are numerous and much more intensive than in the North. Of a total population of 5.4 million, only 183,000 (3.4%) live in the northern Province of Lapland, covering over 100,000 km<sup>2</sup>, and a third of them are in the urban area of Rovaniemi (Statistics Finland, 31.12.2012).

The Finnish legislation, the traditional Nordic public access policy and the subsistence livelihoods define natural resource and land use in the North, also in protected areas, unlike in Southern Finland. The hunting and fishing laws allow local traditions of game and fish catching for household use to continue. Commercial land and resource use pressures vary in different parts of the country.

#### **7.1.1 Nordic Public Access and Land Use Based on It**

The tradition of “everyman’s right” (today the policy of public access) entails the right to move, stay and temporarily to camp, as well as to collect certain products of nature on State or private land without consent. In wider perspective the principle extends to activities not requiring statutory consent of the landowner, permission of an authority or that are not otherwise prohibited.

However, using the everyman’s rights may not cause harm to nature or the landowner. Consequently any activity which potentially does so is subject to consent or permit. Normally hunting, fishing, off-road traffic and extraction of land or minerals are such activities. Exceptions to this are written in pertinent laws and elaborated in the following.

The public access is not a right specifically written in law, although nature conservation and other land use legislation regulates certain activities in protected areas. The Ministry of the Environment has recently published a compilation of existing legislation and suggestions for best practices on the everyman’s right and the code of conduct on private land.

In the Nordic countries responsible muscle-powered recreation and observation of nature is generally not seen as threatening to nature conservation priorities in PAs and is considered acceptable. The public access to most State-owned NRs is generally allowed (but in most areas not actively encouraged by building infrastructure), excluding the Strict NRs (some have limited access on marked trails), unless the conservation of specific habitats or species otherwise requires. Access restrictions in National Parks are written in site-specific regulations and marked on the ground in the PAs. Access to and (traditional) use of biological resources in wilderness areas of the North is less restricted than in southern parts of Finland.

Recreation, education and research use are important secondary objectives of many State-owned PAs. These activities are in principle compatible with the public access policy, as long as they do not endanger conservation objectives. Management plans are always drafted for National Parks and other attractive sites, where recreation and nature tourism is actively encouraged and visitor facilities built for it. Visitor flows are directed away from areas with sensitive conservation values and impacts of visitation are monitored. The local Park Districts of the NHS make collaboration contracts with entrepreneurs, in which they agree to follow the principles of sustainable nature tourism. Research that requires access to restricted areas, and biological or geological sampling necessitate a permit in PAs. Activities that are illegal, unlicensed or otherwise violate site regulations are kept under surveillance.

#### 7.1.2 Traditional Use of Biological Natural Resources in Northern Finland

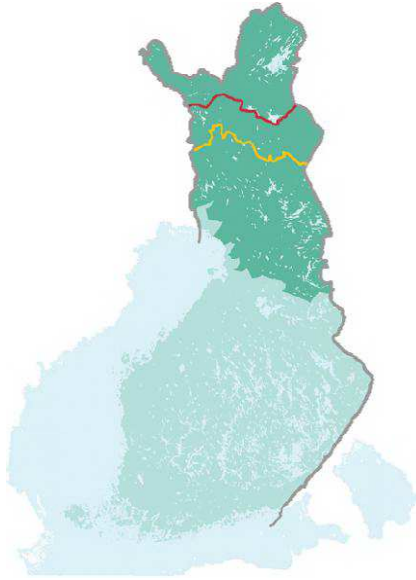
The IUCN *Guidelines for Applying Protected Area Management Categories* from 2008 allow for a less strict interpretation of category Ib compared to the 1994 definitions and interpretations in subsequent guidelines (e.g. EUROPARC and IUCN 2000). There is now wide international agreement that the subsistence, or other local traditional or non-industrial and relatively low-pressure use of natural resources, such as reindeer herding, hunting and fishing or picking of berries and mushrooms, which does not threaten the functioning of ecosystems or viability of species, can be allowed. The Barents Protected Area Network (BPAN) cooperation group has concluded that category Ib could or even should be applied to most large and remote PAs of the taiga and tundra zones that have insignificant pressures, no need for management or restoration and minimal recreational use based on public access. These include also the Wilderness Reserves in Finland (which previously were assigned category VI).

##### **Reindeer herding**

In Finland, Sweden and Norway, reindeer herding is considered a basic part of the indigenous Sámi culture. In Finland it is a substantial livelihood for the inhabitants of the northern municipalities. One third of Finland's surface area (114,000 km<sup>2</sup>) is included in the Reindeer Herding Area, where reindeer herding is allowed and organised in Districts of Herders' Associations. Of ca. 7,000 Finnish Sámi, some 4,000 live in the 35,000 km<sup>2</sup> Sámi Homeland Area, where the Saami Parliament must be consulted on land use issues. (See Figure 2.)

Although the earlier ecological role of the Wild Mountain Reindeer (*Rangifer tarandus tarandus*) is recognised, there is fear that the growth of the modern counterpart reindeer stocks and the pressure on natural pastures may threaten the fragile and slowly recovering ecosystems in the North. Reindeers are fully banned only from Malla Strict Nature Reserve, in which many Red-listed habitats and species occur. Most other PAs in Northern Lapland remain important pastures for the herded reindeer. In the southern forested part of the Reindeer





Herding Area the semi-domesticated reindeer may hinder the recovery of the native Wild Forest Reindeer (*Rangifer tarandus fennicus*).

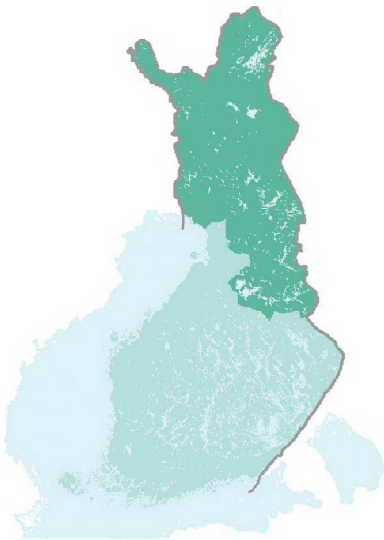
Traditional reindeer husbandry has changed in the past decades, as modern infrastructure, motorised vehicles and winter feeding has become a part of it. The legislation on reindeer husbandry and off-road traffic controls the land use connected to reindeer herding. Despite recognition of some adverse effects, reindeer herding in the northern part of Finland is still regarded as a subsistence livelihood, which supports the Sámi culture and can thus be accepted also in PAs. Further research on the ecological effects of reindeer husbandry in PAs should be conducted nevertheless.

**Figure 2. The Reindeer Herding Area and the Sámi Homeland Area.**

The Reindeer Herding Area is depicted in green. The area above the yellow line is the Special Reindeer Herding Area, where other land use by the State may not hinder it and that above the red line is the Sámi Homeland Area, where the Saami Parliament must be consulted on land use issues.

### Hunting, fishing and picking of berries and fungi

Legal hunting does not threaten game species in Finland. PAs preserve important habitats for game species, but very few PAs have been established primarily for them. The Hunting Act together with monitoring (by the Finnish Game and Fisheries Research Institute) provides the basis for the sustainable use of game populations, and hunting of species that are Red-listed or specially protected (e.g. by EU directives) is only allowed in exceptional situations.



The Finnish hunting legislation allows residents of municipalities of Northern Finland to hunt small game on State lands in their home municipality without a specific hunting permit (see Figure 3). This right extends also to the large wilderness areas (Wilderness and Nature Reserves) and National Parks, but excludes the Strict Nature Reserves. In the Sámi Homeland Area hunting is regarded as part of the local cultural heritage. Many northern PAs are also partly open to game hunting by visitors, and this is based on game quotas and controlled by permits. The low hunting pressure on game species roaming in vast remote areas is not seen as a significant impact on conservation or other objectives of these sites. Poaching of large carnivores has been an issue in some parts of the Reindeer Herding Area, also in PAs, but it is kept under supervision by game wardens.

**Figure 3. The area of hunting rights for locals specified in the Hunting Act (8§).** Residents of the municipalities of Northern Finland have the right to hunt game in their home municipality without a specific hunting permit.

In Southern Finland hunting is much more restricted. In small NRs (under 100 ha) hunting will normally not be allowed, except for invasive or otherwise harmful species. In larger (over 100 ha) and less visited reserves as well as on Natura 2000 Sites restricted hunting under license or permit may be allowed, if this does not hinder conservation objectives of the site.

Rod fishing and angling is considered a traditional everyman's right and is allowed in most PAs in Finland. For other forms of fishing, such as fishing with nets, traps or seines as well as trolling, permission is required from the owner of the water areas. In municipalities of Northern Lapland subsistence fishing is allowed to locals. In some State-owned NRs there are certain fishing waters to which lure or net permits are sold. In National Hiking Areas recreational fishing is one of the management objectives and fish populations are also supplemented. Elsewhere introduction of foreign stocks to PA waters is not allowed.

Non-commercial picking of edible berries and mushrooms is also considered an everyman's right and is allowed by the Nature Conservation Act in most PAs. For harvesting in commercial scale in PAs on State lands, permission is needed from the landowner (this is not statutory, but recommended by Metsähallitus). This allows control over any harmful impacts on conservation values.

### 7.1.3 Commercial Use of Natural Resources

Large-scale industrial extractive use of natural resources in Finland means forestry and peat extraction, sand and gravel extraction, mining and production of renewable energy (using wind and water resources). All these activities are normally prohibited in Nature Reserves and National Parks. In certain other PAs and Natura 2000 Sites some of these activities may be allowed or require a license or permit. However, all actions that may reduce conservation values inside PAs are prohibited by legislation pertaining to nature conservation and are subject to environmental impact assessment. Environmental authorities and management agencies endeavour to halt harmful undertakings and reduce impacts by influencing land use planning and development schemes outside PAs.

## 7.2 Criteria of Protected Area Categories and Types

While working on the IUCN 2008 guidelines for PA management categories, a scoring system was drafted to help in selecting appropriate categories. Though the scoring matrix was not used for the formulation of the principles for applying the categories in Finland, nor will it be used for the actual assignment of site-specific categories, the matrix proved useful in discussions about issues that are relevant in the process. Such key issues for a PA type or individual site include naturalness, scale and connectedness, biodiversity viability, management requirements and regeneration potential, as well as environmental services and social values, tourism, resource extraction, people and nature interactions.

In general, for most of the Finnish PA network the main objective is to maintain PAs in, and when necessary restore them to, a more-or-less natural state. Technically a site is considered large enough to conserve an ecosystem, when it is at least 1,000 hectares, although in reality habitat and species requirements may vary greatly, and often connectivity to similar habitats may be decisive. Many large PAs do not need any active management, whereas small sites protecting specific habitats often do.

The protected area management categories are based foremost on the primary management objectives, but often multiple designations and secondary objectives can make a difference between the options. Designated sites are mostly treated as one entity, interpreting management objectives and category by the “75% rule”. Even when strictly protected statutory core areas or zones exist within large protected areas, it is practical to apply a less strictly managed category to the whole area (such is the case in some National Parks and certain Nature Reserves).

In principle, applying a management category to a PA is not affected by the ownership or governance type of the area, and the same rules apply whether the sites protect land or sea. Because national and international designations are often fully or partly overlapping, the conservation objectives and management situations in individual PAs can be complex. Natura 2000 Site designations may protect specific features, and enable activities not possible under a national designation.

In the following, the recommendations and justifications to the application of the IUCN management categories to each of Finland’s PA types that were assessed to meet the IUCN protected area definition (listed in Table 2) are presented. The indicative IUCN management categories for PA types on State lands in Finland are presented in Table 4. The same principles apply to corresponding private PAs. Finally, the reasoning for refraining from applying the IUCN management categories to international designations is discussed.

#### **Strict Nature Reserves**

Altogether 19 Strict Nature Reserves have been established on State land from 1956 to 1982 to safeguard undisturbed natural development, and for scientific research or education. With a few exceptions, the Strict NRs are large areas of at least 1,000 hectares. Passage off marked trails or paths is allowed only with a special permission. All the Strict NRs have previously been assigned to IUCN management category Ia. All but one still meets the category definition. Karkali Strict NR is a small site of only 100 ha in Southern Finland in which visitors are allowed on marked trails. It is also an area where active management is practiced to maintain the herb-rich forest biotopes and species, and thus a typical category IV site.

Several Strict NRs are located in Lapland and Ostrobothnia within the Reindeer Herding Area (see Figure 2) and grazing is known to affect sensitive vegetation especially in Malla Strict NR (where statutory banning has not been effective). However, a management planning process in the area is presently looking for ways to restrict grazing and diminish impacts on conservation values. By law the NHS may impose restrictions on the grazing of reindeer in a Strict NR for scientific research or some other special purpose.

#### **National Parks**

To date 37 National Parks (NPs) have been established on State land, the first ones in 1938 and the latest two in 2011. The NPs are large areas of at least 1,000 ha with diverse natural and cultural values that are significant at national, often even international level. Statutorily NPs also “should hold general interest as a natural attraction, or with respect to raising general awareness of or interest in nature”. Today they are the backbone of the PA system and embodiment of the Finnish nature brand. They are essential to nature tourism and bring significant economic and other benefits at national and local level.

**Table 4. Indicative IUCN management categories for protected area types on State lands in Finland. Source: Metsähallitus (MH) 2013.**

LAND USE TYPE CODE	PROTECTED AREA TYPE	PROTECTED AREA CATEGORY size usually > 1000 ha	PROTECTED AREA CATEGORY size usually < 1000 ha	COMMENT
201	Strict Nature Reserves	Ia	IV Karkali	If accessia allowed, only in a small area and on marked trails
202	National Parks	II ( Lemmenjoki NP category Ib)		Lemmenjoki NP is a very large in area and wilderness-like, recreational zone is only ca. 5%
203	Other Nature Reserves	Ib (some areas Ia)	IV (some areas III)	Category III sites are established for a natural or nature-based cultural feature
204	Old-growth Forest Reserves	Ib	IV	Special Nature Conservation Area based on old Nature Conservation Act (1923-1996)
205	Mire Conservation Reserves	Ib	IV	
206	Herb-rich Forest Reserves		IV (some areas Ia)	Sites with extensive access restrictions, possibly Ia
207	Nature Reserves (Metsähallitus decision)		IV	Metsähallitus no longer makes NR designations after 2005
211	Nature Conservation Programme sites (Council of State decision)	Ib (some areas Ia)	IV	Established as Nature Reserves, category approved with statute/regulation. Sites with extensive access restrictions, possibly Ia
221	Protected Areas designated in land use plans (Regional Council decision)		IV	Established as Nature Reserves, category approved with statute /regulation. (mire, shore, island sites)
231	Other protected areas on State lands		IV	METSO or other habitat/species protection sites, Natura 2000 Sites with no other national designation
232	Protected Forests (MH)	Ib	IV	Considered PAs when managed by the NHS
301	Recreational sites (MH)		IV	Protected area, if in the Natura 2000 Site Network (mainly shore sites)
302	Wilderness Reserves	Ib		Protected area, also in the Natura 2000 Site Network
312	National Hiking Areas	II tai V		Protected area, because in Natura 2000 Site Network
313	Recreational forests (MH)	V (Inari Hiking Area)	IV	Protected area, if in the Natura 2000 Site Network (Inari Hiking Area covers 89 % of total area in land use class)

METSO = Forest Biodiversity Programme for Southern Finland 2008–2016

The Nature Conservation Act sets the general protection provisions, and derogations to them, for all National Parks. Practice of reindeer herding and subsistence livelihoods may be allowed in the northern NPs, provided this does not jeopardise the purpose for which they were established. The site-specific legislation specifies the conservation and other objectives, which guide the management and use of the parks. Rules and regulations are drafted for each of the NPs as well as plans for park management and use, defining zones for strict protection and visitor access, and specifying the measures necessary for attaining the conservation objectives.

Previously all of Finland's southern NPs have been assigned IUCN category II and those in the North, that are situated in the area allowing reindeer herding and local hunting, assigned category VI. As argued in Chapter 7.1.2, the impacts on the conservation objectives are not seen significant in view of the amount and type of pressure imposed on them. Thus, also these northern NPs meet category II status. Lemmenjoki NP is largest of the Finnish national parks, covering over 280,000 ha. It has low visitation (ca. 15,000 visits annually), and the recreational zone is less than 5% of park area. Gold panning in the Lemmenjoki NP is still going on, but affects only a small part of the park (meeting the 75% requirement) and will be discontinued by 2020. Most of the NP area is comparable to the Finnish Wilderness Reserves, and it may thus be assigned IUCN management category Ib. Sarek NP in Northern Sweden is also comparable to Lemmenjoki NP and has been assigned the same category.

#### **Other Nature Reserves and Nature Conservation Programme sites**

In addition to the National Parks and Strict Nature Reserves about 500 other Nature Reserves have been established on State lands and another 8,700 on private lands, mostly implementing the Nature Conservation Programmes (see Tables 1 and 2).

The NRs are very different in size and character, and have varying conservation objectives and management needs. Sites include large (over 1,000 ha) Old-growth Forest and Mire Reserves with wilderness qualities, few visitors and no need for active management. These meet the definition of the management category Ib. Numerous smaller NRs have been established for the protection of herb-rich forests, shoreline biotopes and bird waters that need restoration or active management measures. These are typically assigned category IV (habitat or species management area). When sites and their core features are strictly protected with access restrictions they may be assigned category Ia.

Category IV sites include also seven Seal Reserves established in 2001, different types of forest and shore sites protected by Metsähallitus decision as well as habitat and species conservation sites designated by decisions of regional authorities (ELY Centres). These do not necessarily need active management, but this no longer is a requirement of the category IV by definition. A few NRs that have been established around natural monuments or nature-based cultural features meet the definition of category III (e.g. waterfalls, sacred sites, defined "national landscapes").

Awaiting proper enactment, there are still over 1,700 PA sites designated by Council of State decision in the Nature Conservation Programmes or by Regional Council decisions in provincial land use plans. These are managed by the same principles as gazetted areas. They fall congruently with corresponding established sites into management categories Ib and IV.

### **Wilderness Reserves**

All twelve Wilderness Reserves, established in Lapland, were previously assigned IUCN PA management category VI on account of local reindeer herding and other land use seen incompatible with the 1994 IUCN management category definitions. However, as argued about the revised 2008 interpretation of a wilderness area (in Chapter 7.1.2), and in line with the proposal above for northern National Parks, it is reasonable to reassign category Ib to the Wilderness Reserves.

All of the Wilderness Reserves are large areas (15,000–295,000 ha) with long-term ecological integrity, and where natural forces and processes predominate. They are undisturbed by significant human activity (no inhabitants, few visitors), mostly without modern infrastructure (such as roads, power lines, etc) and free of commercial extractive activity (forestry, mining, hydropower). According to the original Wilderness Act, selective timber cutting was allowed in some areas. However, after the Wilderness Reserves were designated as Natura 2000 Sites in 1998, and management plans drawn for the sites, timber extraction is no longer practiced.

In line with the 2008 IUCN category Ib guidelines, the Wilderness Reserves enable the indigenous Sámi and local communities to maintain their traditional wilderness-based lifestyle and customs, using natural resources in ways compatible with the conservation objectives. They also protect relevant cultural and spiritual values and non-material benefits to the indigenous and non-indigenous populations. The Wilderness Reserves allow public access at levels and types which will maintain the wilderness qualities of the area. The legal use of off-road vehicles may cause some local damage to vegetation, but affects a small part of the total PA surface. Limited motorised access is granted to reindeer herders and to others on marked routes. In most Wilderness Reserves routes are limited to an area estimated much less than 10% of the total.

### **National Hiking Areas**

The seven National Hiking Areas established in Southern Finland and Ostrobothnia have previously not been reported as PAs and thus have not been assigned any IUCN category. They are now generally accepted as PAs (as defined by IUCN) and tentatively assigned category II as areas comparable to National Parks or category V as Landscape Protection Areas.

National Hiking Areas are relatively large (1,150–9,000 ha). They protect and sustain landscapes and the associated nature conservation and other values created by (traditional) forest management practices of the previous decades. As areas partly or fully designated as Natura 2000 Sites they contribute to broad-scale conservation objectives by maintaining species associated with prioritised forest and mire habitats. Selective timber extraction is allowed in some Hiking Areas as long as it does not affect their conservation objectives. Many have potential for ecological restoration and linking valuable habitats to PAs close by. In addition, the Hiking Areas provide opportunities for recreation and tourism activities, well-being, socio-economic activity, natural products and other ecosystem services.

Similar recreational designations by Metsähallitus, such as certain Recreational forests that have also been partly or fully designated as Natura 2000 Sites (e.g. proposed Inari Hiking Area), can be considered PAs and could be assigned IUCN management category V. However, as the

Hiking Areas are in Finland seen somewhat controversial as nature conservation areas, it has been agreed that, at the moment, they will not be assigned a PA management category.

### **Natura 2000 Sites and other international designations**

In the context of the WDPA registry, Natura 2000 Sites of the European Union are considered an international designation. In Finland, as in most other EU member countries, domestic designations coincide with those of the Natura 2000 Site Network. Some overlapping areas would not necessarily have been merited a PA status on domestic designation alone (e.g. certain protected rapids, eskers and agricultural landscapes), but when assessed together with the objectives of the Habitats and/or Birds Directive, they are. Especially coastal Natura 2000 Sites in Finland are often a complex mosaic of national protected sites with multiple owners and governance types. Also those Natura Sites or parts of them with no domestic PA designation are considered valid as PAs, even though they may not fulfil the conservation status of NRs.

Many of the national PAs and Natura 2000 Sites have also been designated to other international networks, such as the Ramsar Sites based on the Ramsar Convention on Wetlands of International Importance. There are 49 such sites in Finland covering a total area of 7,860 km<sup>2</sup>. Two sites have been declared in the UNESCO Man and Biosphere (MaB) Programme and one admitted on World Heritage List as a Natural Heritage Site. These have a more strictly protected core (National Park or Nature Reserve) and a buffer area around it with some inhabitants and more permissive land use.

Another 23 sites are designated as Baltic Sea Protected Areas (BSPAs) under the Helsinki Convention on the Protection of the Marine Environment of the Baltic Sea Area. According to the Helsinki Commission (HELCOM), the BSPA sites cover a total 10.2% of the Finnish territorial waters and 6.7% when the Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ) is considered. When all Natura 2000 Sites with a marine component are included, the territorial coverage adds up to 12.7% and 8.3% when the EEZ is considered.

In general, the same principles of category assignment apply to international designations as to the national designations, although the objectives set by the relevant conventions are to be taken into account in site-specific assessment. When Natura 2000 designations incorporate national sites, each is assigned its proper management category. However, the possibly remaining area is problematic (borders do not always coincide), although the principles of PA category assignment may be clear in *theory*. For example, the buffer zones around MaB core areas or the marine components of Natura Sites that are not part of the national network would often be easily assigned category V.

In *practice* assigning an appropriate category to the entire Natura 2000 Site is not possible at the present. None of the databases, domestic or international, which maintain Natura Site information, cater for the IUCN PA management category. For this reason (among others) no EU member state has applied the IUCN categories to Natura 2000 Sites as separate entities. The basic information, including geographic information on these sites is transferred from EEA to UNEP-WCMC, however, so the coverage of the Natura 2000 network can be calculated and compared in the regional context.

Finland has founded quite a few transboundary PAs along the northern border together with Norway and especially along the eastern border with Russia. An example of internationally acclaimed collaboration is the twin Oulanka-Paanajärvi National Park, which began twenty years ago. Such parks may be managed in co-operation, but each must be assigned a protected area management category independently according to national guidelines and site specific assessment of management objectives.



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<http://www.ymparisto.fi/default.asp?contentid=418505&lan=fi> (17.1.2013)

UNEP-WCMC 2013: WDPA Country Data Status Report: Finland. March 2013. 4 p.

UNEP-WCMC. World Database on Protected Areas.  
Information on the database: <http://www.wdpa.org/>, Database found: <http://protectedplanet.net/> (14.1.2013)

World Heritage: <http://whc.unesco.org/> (14.1.2013)

## **Appendix 1. IUCN Definition of a Protected Area and Management Categories**

**Source: Guidelines for Applying IUCN Protected Area Categories (2008)**

### **Protected area**

A clearly defined geographical space, recognised, dedicated and managed, through legal or other effective means, to achieve the long-term conservation of nature with associated ecosystem services and cultural values.

### **Protected area management categories**

#### **Category Ia: Strict nature reserve**

Category Ia are strictly protected areas set aside to protect biodiversity and also possibly geological/geomorphological features, where human visitation, use and impacts are strictly controlled and limited to ensure protection of the conservation values. Such protected areas can serve as indispensable reference areas for scientific research and monitoring.

#### **Category Ib: Wilderness area**

Category Ib protected areas are usually large unmodified or slightly modified areas, retaining their natural character and influence, without permanent or significant human habitation, which are protected and managed so as to preserve their natural condition.

#### **Category II: National park**

Category II protected areas are large natural or near natural areas set aside to protect large-scale ecological processes, along with the complement of species and ecosystems characteristic of the area, which also provide a foundation for environmentally and culturally compatible spiritual, scientific, educational, recreational and visitor opportunities.

#### **Category III: Natural monument or feature**

Category III protected areas are set aside to protect a specific natural monument, which can be a landform, sea mount, submarine cavern, geological feature such as a cave or even a living feature such as an ancient grove. They are generally quite small protected areas and often have high visitor value.

#### **Category IV: Habitat/species management area**

Category IV protected areas aim to protect particular species or habitats and management reflects this priority. Many category IV protected areas will need regular, active interventions to address the requirements of particular species or to maintain habitats, but this is not a requirement of the category.

#### **Category V: Protected landscape/seascape**

A protected area where the interaction of people and nature over time has produced an area of distinct character with significant ecological, biological, cultural and scenic value: and where safeguarding the integrity of this interaction is vital to protecting and sustaining the area and its associated nature conservation and other values.

#### **Category VI: Protected area with sustainable use of natural resources**

Category VI protected areas conserve ecosystems and habitats, together with associated cultural values and traditional natural resource management systems. They are generally large, with most of the area in a natural condition, where a proportion is under sustainable natural resource management and where low-level non-industrial use of natural resources compatible with nature conservation is seen as one of the main aims of the area.

## Appendix 2. National Legislation and European Union Directives Pertaining to the Management of Protected Areas in Finland

(Links are to legislation in Finnish, from site link to English translation if available)

Act on Environmental Impact Assessment Procedure (468/1994)  
<http://www.finlex.fi/fi/laki/ajantasa/1994/19940468> (11.2.2013)

Act on Protection of Rapids (35/1987)  
<http://www.finlex.fi/fi/laki/ajantasa/1987/19870035> (11.2.2013)

EU Birds Directive. Directive 2009/147/ec of the European Parliament and of the Council of 30 November 2009 on the conservation of wild birds  
<http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=CELEX:31979L0409:FI:HTML> (11.2.2013)

EU Habitats Directive. Council Directive 92/43/EEC of 21 May 1992 on the conservation of natural habitats and of wild fauna and flora  
<http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=CELEX:31992L0043:EN:NOT> (17.4.2013)

Fishing Act (286/1982) and Amendment (270/2011)  
<http://www.finlex.fi/fi/laki/ajantasa/1982/19820286> (11.2.2013)  
<http://www.finlex.fi/fi/laki/kokoelma/2011/20110270.pdf> (11.2.2013)

Forest Act (1093/1996)  
<http://www.finlex.fi/fi/laki/ajantasa/1996/19961093> (18.1.2013)

Hunting Act (615/1993)  
<http://www.finlex.fi/fi/laki/ajantasa/1993/19930615> (18.1.2013)

Land Extraction Act (555/1981)  
<http://www.finlex.fi/fi/laki/ajantasa/1981/19810555> (18.1.2013)

Land Use and Building Act (132/1999)  
<http://www.finlex.fi/fi/laki/ajantasa/1999/19990132> (18.1.2013)

Mining Act (621/2011)  
<http://www.finlex.fi/fi/laki/alkup/2011/20110621> (11.2.2013)

Nature Conservation Act (1096/1996) and Decree (160/1997)  
<http://www.finlex.fi/fi/laki/ajantasa/1996/19961096> (18.1.2013)  
<http://www.finlex.fi/fi/laki/ajantasa/1997/19970160> (11.2.2013)

Off-road Traffic Act (1710/1995)  
<http://www.finlex.fi/fi/laki/ajantasa/1995/19951710> (18.1.2013)

Outdoor Recreation Act (606/1973)  
<http://www.finlex.fi/fi/laki/ajantasa/1973/19730606> (18.1.2013)

Reindeer Husbandry Act (848/1990)  
<http://www.finlex.fi/fi/laki/ajantasa/1990/19900848> (18.1.2013)

Water Act (587/2011)  
<http://www.finlex.fi/fi/laki/ajantasa/2011/20110587> (18.1.2013)

Wilderness Area Act (62/1991)  
<http://www.finlex.fi/fi/laki/ajantasa/1991/19910062> (18.1.2013)

## **Annex. Process of Applying IUCN Protected Area Management Categories in Finland**

The process of applying the IUCN protected area (PA) management categories was initiated by a stakeholder seminar "*Categorisation of Finland's Protected Areas*" in Helsinki, March 2012. The seminar was organised by the Metsähallitus Natural Heritage Services together with the IUCN National Committee of Finland and the Ministry of the Environment, which also financed the seminar. The aim of the seminar was to go through the Finnish PA system and its objectives as well as the definitions of the IUCN management categories and the principles of applying them. Another objective was to make a common resolution on how to go forth with the work in Finland.

A wide range of representatives from different administrative and stakeholder organisations were invited and about 50 persons attended the seminar. Key speakers were Mr. Nigel Dudley (Equilibrium Research and IUCN World Commission on Protected Areas) and Mr. Charles Besançon (UNEP-WCMC World Conservation Monitoring Centre and IUCN World Commission on Protected Areas). Nigel Dudley has a long background in working with the categories and has edited the 2008 *Guidelines for Applying Protected Area Management Categories* and co-edited the *Guidelines for Applying the IUCN Protected Area Management Categories to Marine Protected Areas* in 2012. Nigel Dudley was also in the expert team that evaluated the management effectiveness of the Finnish protected areas in 2004 and knows the PA system well. At the time of the seminar Charles Besançon was Head of the Protected Area Programme at the UNEP-WCMC, where the World Database of Protected Areas (WDPA) is based. The two gentlemen are also members of the IUCN World Committee on Protected Areas (WCPA).

Other speakers at the seminar were Dr. Rauno Väisänen (Director of the Metsähallitus Natural Heritage Services, NHS) and Ms. Aulikki Alanen (Ministry of the Environment). The NHS is the organisation that manages all of the State-owned protected areas in Finland and the Ministry coordinates the development of the whole protected area system. At the seminar it was decided that the NHS will take the first step by compiling a proposal for general principles of IUCN management category application to protected areas in Finland, consulting experts and stakeholders on the way, and the Ministry will circulate the proposal.

In addition to the seminar, the NHS organised two separate discussion forums with Nigel Dudley and Charles Besançon. One was with NHS managers on the issues concerning State protected areas in Finland. The other was with experts of the BPAN Project (Barents Protected Area Network) on the category issues in Norway, Sweden and Northwest Russia. The latter led to another seminar on PA management categories, organised by the project in November 2012. Especially issues of traditional land use and pressures threatening protected areas in the Barents Region were discussed. Ms. Sanna-Kaisa Juvonen (Metsähallitus NHS) was also invited to a workshop in Petrozavodsk, Russia to hear and discuss NGO views on the use of the IUCN categories.

Based on the IUCN guidelines and the discussions described above, the Metsähallitus NHS compiled a proposal on the principles of IUCN management category application in Finland. Further discussions on procedure and contents were carried out with the Ministry of the Environment and members of the IUCN National Committee in February 2013. It was agreed that the Finnish translation of the IUCN definitions for the protected area and management categories should be approved by the National Committee after stakeholder consultation and that an

extended summary of the document should be drafted in English and sent to IUCN WCPA after its approval. This account on the national process was to be annexed to the document.

The following people took part in the discussions leading to the drafted proposal:

- Mr. Martti Aarnio, Metsähallitus NHS
- Ms. Aulikki Alanen, Ministry of the Environment
- Mr. Arto Ahokumpu, Metsähallitus NHS, IUCN WCPA member
- Mr. Charles Besançon, CBD Secretariat, IUCN WCPA member
- Mr. Nigel Dudley, Equilibrium Research, IUCN WCPA member
- Mr. Jan Ekeboom, Metsähallitus NHS
- Mr. Timo Halme, Metsähallitus NHS
- Ms. Mervi Heinonen, Metsähallitus NHS
- Ms. Sanna-Kaisa Juvonen, Metsähallitus NHS, IUCN WCPA member
- Mr. Kari Lahti, Metsähallitus NHS, IUCN WCPA member
- Dr. Tapio Lindholm, Finnish Environment Institute
- Mr. Seppo Manninen, Metsähallitus NHS
- Mr. Jyri Mikkola, Finnish Nature League
- Mr. Mikko Rautiainen, Metsähallitus NHS, IUCN CEESP/SSC member
- Dr. Aimo Saano, Metsähallitus NHS
- Mr. Jyrki Tolonen, Metsähallitus NHS
- Mr. Markku Vickholm, Metsähallitus NHS
- Dr. Rauno Väisänen, Metsähallitus NHS Director, IUCN WCPA and WPALF member

The proposal on the ***Application of the IUCN Management Categories in Finland*** was drafted in March and sent to stakeholders for official consultation from the Ministry of the Environment in May 2013. In addition, the proposal was on the website of the Ministry for open consultation for six weeks.

The proposal was circulated to organisations represented in the IUCN National Committee of Finland:

- Finnish Association for Nature Conservation (FANC)
- Finnish Society for Nature and Environment (Natur och Miljö)
- WWF Finland
- Finnish Wildlife Agency
- Ministry for Foreign Affairs
- Ministry of Forestry and Agriculture
- Finnish Environment Institute (SYKE)
- The Helsinki Zoo

The proposal was officially circulated also to the following organisations:

- Ministry of Employment and the Economy
- Centres for Economic Development, Transport and the Environment (ELY Centres)
- Finnish Forest Research Institute (Metla)
- Statistics Finland
- Metsähallitus Forestry Unit
- Universities of Helsinki, Joensuu, Jyväskylä, Oulu, Rovaniemi and Turku
- Central Union of Agricultural Producers and Forest Owners (MTK)
- Saami Parliament.

After feedback was received, the document was finalised, then discussed within the IUCN National Committee in June and September, and finally approved by the Ministry of the Environment in October 2013.

The site-specific assignment and revision of IUCN categories to established protected areas on State-owned lands started in October 2013. The aim of the Metsähallitus Natural Heritage Services is to have this work completed by the end of December 2013. Site-specific categories will be assigned based on the class-specific (meaning national protected area designation type) principles and approved first by the regional steering groups and senior management of the NHS, and finally by the Ministry of the Environment. Justification of exceptions to the general principles will be documented and the information made available to the public.

Decisions on how to proceed with protected areas on private lands will be taken later together with relevant organisations and stakeholders. At the national level the goal set in the National Biodiversity and Programme of Work on Protected Areas (PoWPA) Action Plans 2012-2020 is to have all protected sites assessed, IUCN management category assigned and reported to national and international databases (CDDA and WDPA) by 2020.