

Forest and Nature in Northwest Russia

Finnish-Russian Development Programme on Sustainable Forest Management and Conservation of Biological Diversity in Northwest Russia

NEWSLETTER GAP-analysis

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Photo: Roman Polshvedkin

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The Finnish-Russian development programme on sustainable forest management and conservation of biodiversity in Northwest Russia began in 1997. In Finland the cooperation has been governed by two ministries: Ministry of the Environment and Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry. In Russia the highest authorities involved have been the Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment and the Federal Forestry Agency (Rosleshoz) - although the names of the responsible organisations in Russia have varied over the past fourteen year. For the most part, the forestry and nature conservation sections of the programme have had their own focuses of interest as well as different partners in Northwest Russia. However, during the years there have also been projects where the interests of the sections have coincided and the cooperation has been productive.

Now the third phase of the Finnish-Russian nature conservation programme is completed. Even though both countries have found the cooperation successful, the programme was closed down during the first half of 2011. It followed the streamlining of the Finnish-Russian cooperation, governed by the Finnish Ministry of the Environment and coordinated by the Finnish Environment Institute, SYKE. However, this does not mean that the cooperation, and projects on nature conservation are ending. On the contrary, an external evaluation assessing the work and results of the third phase of the programme was carried out by the consultancy company Niras Ltd in 2011, and the evaluation report offers recommendations for future cooperation on nature conservation, drafts of joint projects and suggestions for future funding. On this basis the co-operation continues in 2012.

The programme has carried out more than 50 Finnish-Russian cooperation projects on biodiversity conservation in Northwest Russia. As a result, protected areas have been established, joint publications have been released, research methods have been harmonised and active networks have been created. A lot of Russian and Finnish experts from different authorities, scientific institutions and non-governmental organisations have worked hard for the benefit of nature, which knows no man-made boundaries.

During the last four years two comprehensive projects were carried out jointly with six administrative regions: Murmansk, Arkhangelsk, Vologda and Leningrad Regions, Republic of

Karelia and the City of St. Petersburg. One of the projects, Development of Regional Protected Areas in Northwest Russia, aimed to develop administrative structures, train personnel and make management plans for regional protected areas. As the regions had recently become responsible for the management of these territories, the timing was good.

Another major project was GAP-analysis in Northwest Russia – assessment of the representativeness and deficiencies of the protected area networks in the same six regions. The project produced an enormous database of existing and planned protected areas and analysed information on currently unprotected high conservation value areas. The results of the project are presented in paper and electronic publications as well as comprehensive cartographical and GIS material available to everyone. The information has been welcomed by regional decision makers who are committed to using it in decision making on land use.

Already the work has been continued. Bilateral cooperation is turning into multilateral activities: In a three-year project on the development of the Barents Euro-Arctic Region Protected Area Network (BPAN), Norway, Sweden, Finland and Russia are working together to meet the requirements of the Programme of Work on Protected Areas within the international Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD). Another inevitable outcome of the Finnish-Russian cooperation on nature conservation has been the signing of a memorandum of understanding on the development of the Green Belt of Fennoscandia between Norway, Finland and Russia in 2010. Also, the English Edition of the final publication of GAP analysis in Northwest Russia will be edited and published in 2012. Ministries for Foreign Affairs and Ministry of the Environment of Finland co-finance these projects.

Our editorial team would like to thank you, Dear Reader, for your feedback and support during these years! Much remains to be done, but with the strong will and expertise of our partners and supporters in Russia and Finland, the good work for our common nature continues.

Riitta Hemmi
Project Manager of the Programme
Consul on environmental affairs in the Consulate
General of Finland in St Petersburg since May 2011

GAP-analysis in Northwest Russia 2007–2011

Finland and Russia have a long history of nature conservation, studying and protecting endangered species and ecosystems in the Finnish-Russian border area. **The Finnish-Russian working group on nature conservation** was established for the purposes of this cooperation.

As a result of the cooperation, protected areas (PAs) have been established on both sides of the border. Since the 1990s the Finnish-Russian working group has participated in the development of the such prominent PAs, like Friendship Park (which includes Kostomukshsky nature reserve and five small protected areas in the Finnish side), Vodlozersky, Paanajärvi and Kalevala national parks, as well as regional protected areas in the Murmansk, Arkhangelsk and Leningrad Regions and the Republic of Karelia. Between 1997 and 2011 research, inventories and publication projects were carried out within the **Finnish-Russian development programme on sustainable forest management and conservation of biodiversity in Northwest Russia**.

Both Finland and Russia are parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD, Rio de Janeiro 1992). In accordance with its programme on protected areas, in 2004, participating countries commit to carrying out a gap analysis: identifying gaps in national networks of protected areas. In order to use the experience and results of the Finnish-Russian cooperation, professors Ludmila Kuleshova and Rauno Ruuhijärvi proposed a joint **GAP-analysis** to analyse and optimise the network of protected areas in Northwest Russia.

The Finnish-Russian GAP project was implemented between 2007 and 2011 in six administrative regions of Northwest Russia. The project assessed the representativeness of the protected area network by identifying areas of high conservation value, such as old-growth forests and mire massifs, as well as rare and endangered species. It also gave recommendations for the development of the protected area network, and lists of the natural objects that are in the urgent need of protection in every region.

The project was coordinated by the Finnish Environment Institute (SYKE) with technical support from the non-profit organisation Transparent World. Regional coordinators organised regional working groups, consisting of representatives of regional administrations, scientific institutes and nature conservation NGOs. The project was implemented by using methods developed by the GAP

working group, also involving Finnish nature conservation experts. Norwegian and Swedish colleagues supported the project within the international Habitat Contact Forum (HCF) and the Working Group on Environment of the Barents Euro-Arctic Council (BEAC WGE).

The results of the GAP-analysis offer important tools for sustainable local, regional and federal land-use planning. Furthermore, the results are useful to ecologists, conservationists, biology and ecology students as well as the wider public. During the project, we conducted a number of seminars, working meetings, training events and field trips which were attended by dozens of representatives from government authorities, research institutes and public organisations. The GAP-analysis project has played an important educational role, which will undoubtedly manifest itself in the future.

The results of the analysis were published in 2011 in a joint publication on the representativeness of the protected area network in Northwest Russia, as well as in more detailed regional publications. Please click here (<http://kola-nature.org/GAP.pdf>) to download an electronic version of the joint publication (in Russian). An interactive map of the analysis can be found here (<http://gis.transparent-world.ru/en/gapnw>).

Although the project has ended, work identifying gaps in the nature conservation systems continues on regional, national and international levels. We hope that our regional partners continue to work together in future projects, for which there are still many materials yet to be published. In the following articles the regional coordinators present the results of the GAP analysis from the regional point of view.

The Finnish GAP Working Group wishes to sincerely thank all the participants of the project. The work has taught us all a lot. It has given us the goals toward which we should continue, taught friendship and understanding, and provided an unforgettable opportunity to share experiences. We hope that our work will continue with the Ministry of Natural Resources and Ecology of the Russian Federation as well as the regional governments. The experts who have participated in the project are still available for future cooperation. ■



Developing the network of protected areas in Karelia

Between 2007 and 2011, Karelian nature conservation NGO SPOK and the Karelian Research Centre of the Russian Academy of Sciences participated in the project **GAP-analysis in Northwest Russia**.

The analysis of the network of protected areas as well as the recommendations for its improvement were based on a three-level approach to biodiversity conservation:

- **Intact forest landscapes:** extensive areas of forest (over 50 000 ha) with high conservation value on national and international levels
- **Unique, threatened forest landscapes and forest ecosystems:** smaller areas of valuable ecosystems (100 - 50 000 ha), important at regional and local levels
- **Key habitats:** local areas (under 100 ha) of particular conservation value

Increasing the area of protected areas

There are nine federal protected areas in Karelia, of which the total area covers 450 000 hectares, about 2,5% of the Republic of Karelia. In addition, there are 136 regional protected areas covering 350 000 hectares, which is 2 % of the republic. At the same time, the area of existing protected areas in the Republic of Karelia is the smallest (4,5%) of the regions in Northwest Russia.

However, it is worth noting that the Republic of Karelia has approved a regional land-use plan (*Shema territorialnogo planirovaniya respubliki Kareliya*) in 2007. According to this document, further development of the network of protected areas includes the establishment of 60 new protected areas. As a result, the total area of protected areas should increase to 1,5 million hectares, or 9% of the forest area in Karelia, thus improving conservation efforts in the republic.

Improving management of protected areas

Within the project we also assessed the management regimes of existing protected areas in the Republic of Karelia. We found that in 92 of the 136 protected areas in Karelia only some forms

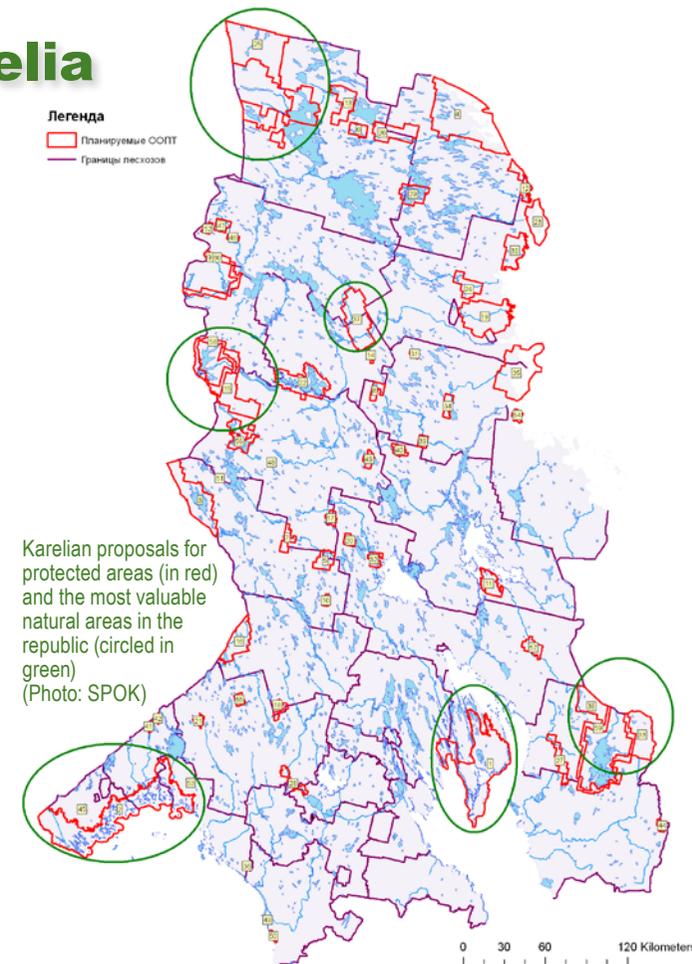


Nature conservationists Aleksandr Markovsky, Elena Pilipenko and Andrei Rodionov (Photo: SPOK)

of land transformation were prohibited (e.g. forest logging and mining), whereas in 50 protected areas there were no restrictions to such activities. Due to differences in management regimes, protected areas have risk to lose their main purpose: conservation of both unique and characteristic natural areas and features in the region. Thus, further development of the network of protected areas in Karelia should be focused not only on increasing the area of protected areas, but also on improving their management regimes.

Identifying areas of high conservation value

For the purpose of identifying areas of high conservation value outside of protected areas, we analysed the representativeness of areas of conservation value within the existing network of protected areas. We found that even the most valuable natural areas like intact forest areas, intact forest massifs, intact wetland massifs and important bird areas are poorly represented in the Republic of Karelia: about 36%, 13%, 10% and 28% respectively.



Within the project GAP-analysis in Northwest Russia, the following **planned protected areas** in the Republic of Karelia were identified **with international conservation value**:

- **Large intact forest landscapes:** Pyaozersky forest (protected landscape area Pyaozersky), Muezersky forest (protected landscape area Spokoiny and the buffer zone of the Kalevala national park) and the Ileksa river basin (protected landscape areas Yangozero and Chukozero)
- **Ypäyssuo mire ecosystem** (protected landscape area Ypäyssuo)
- **Archipelagos** (Ladoga Skerries national park and Zaonezhsky nature park) ■

Identifying conservation gaps in the Arkhangelsk Region

In the Arkhangelsk Region the project GAP-analysis in North-west Russia was carried out jointly by the Directorate of regional protected areas, WWF Arkhangelsk, Pomor State University, Roslesinform Arkhangelsk, Institute of ecological problems of the North, and several other organizations. For the first time in the project, we managed to join efforts of different stakeholders in identifying gaps in the network of protected areas in the Arkhangelsk Region.

The analysis was performed in the following directions:

- Assessment of landscape representativeness in the network of protected areas
- Inventory of biodiversity
- Development of legislation concerning regional protected areas
- Integration of the network of regional protected areas into socio-economic development, and preservation of historical and cultural heritage
- Development of effective methods of managing protected areas

Collecting information about nature and people

In the framework of the project, we agreed on criteria for areas of high conservation value and listed the most valuable natural areas in the Arkhangelsk Region. Identifying threats to biodi-

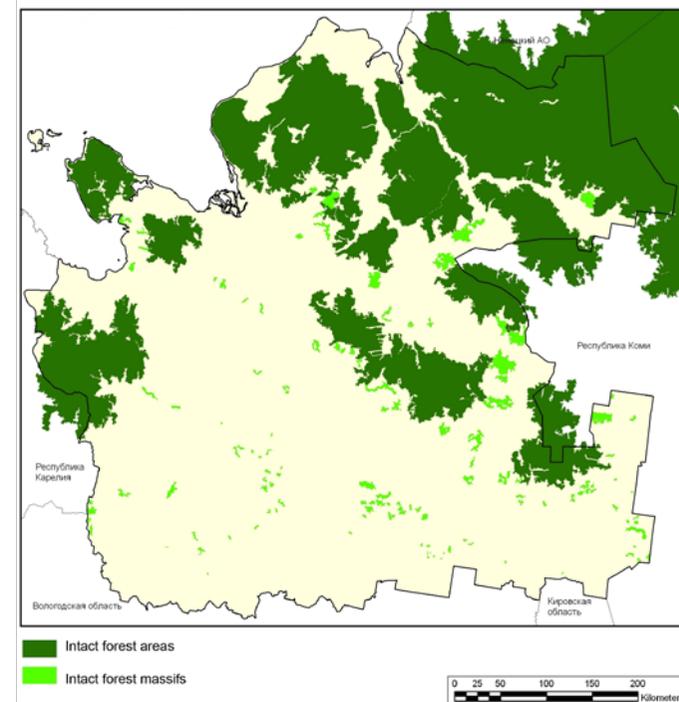
versity and rating them allowed us to choose the areas in urgent need of protection.

We prepared detailed GIS maps which allowed us to indicate the exact locations, borders and sizes of valuable habitats. For the first time, old-growth forests, aapa mires, large mire ecosystems and natural floodplains were mapped in the Arkhangelsk Region.

In the framework of the project, field inventories were conducted in 17 protected areas in 13 districts of the Arkhangelsk Region. It allowed us to close gaps of information in the Arkhangelsk Region and collect important scientific information on the nature of the region. As a result of the project, a list of rare and threatened species of plants, animals and fungi has been prepared and the Red Data Book of the Arkhangelsk Region has been published.

Owing to the project, we gained experience in socio-economic evaluation of areas adjacent to protected areas (e.g. Shilovsky nature reserve). In addition, we collected normative and methodological material on the protected areas of the Arkhangelsk Region, gathered information on conservation measures outside protected areas and drafted proposals for changes and additions to both regulations on nature reserves and federal legislation. ►

Intact forests of Arkhangelsk Region



River Severnaya Dvina in the village of Krasnoborsk (Photo D. Dobrynin)



Old-growth forests along River Yuras (Photo: D. Dobrynin)



Expedition to old-growth forests (Photo: WWF)



GAP project meeting in Arkhangelsk (Photo: WWF)



Identifying conservation gaps in the Arkhangelsk Region

Work continues

Proposals for further development of the network of regional protected areas in the Arkhangelsk Region could be considered as the most significant result of the project. These proposals have been used when preparing the Forest code of the Arkhangelsk Region and the Development concept for the protected areas in the Arkhangelsk Region and the Nenets Autonomous District. Altogether 24 new protected areas, from vast landscape reserves to tiny nature monuments, are planned in the Arkhangelsk Regions. In case all these protected areas are established, the total area of protected areas in Arkhangelsk Region will rise from 7,5% to 11,7% of its land area.

Finally, it should be mentioned that the recommendations of the GAP-analysis in Northwest Russia can be successfully implemented only if local governments and land users take them into consideration in decision making as well as economical activities. ■

GAP project meeting in Arkhangelsk. (Photo: WWF)



Planning new protected areas in the Murmansk Region



In awe of the old-growth forests of Kaita (Photo: Kola Biodiversity Conservation Centre)

In the Murmansk Region, the circumstances for the project GAP-analysis in Northwest Russia were different from the other participating regions. Mainly, many elements of a gap analysis had already been completed before the beginning of the project. Previous studies, although not comprehensive, allowed us to set priorities for planning new protected areas. For this reason - in addition to identifying gaps in conservation of species and habitats - we set ourselves the task of planning new protected areas and including them in official plans and government decisions in the region.

Conservation as a part of regional development

This task has been implemented. Owing to the quality of new information, as well as the participation of the leading environmental institutes Polar-Alpine Botanical Garden and Institute of the North Industrial Ecology Problems of the Kola Science Centre, the authorities in the Murmansk Region had no doubts about the scientific background of the project. Furthermore, careful planning of new protected areas allowed us to minimise conflicts with the development of forestry and mining industry in the Kola Peninsula. ►



Konstantin Kobayakov at the coast
(Photo: Kola Biodiversity Conservation Centre).

As the chairman of the Committee on industrial development, Oleg Krapivin, summed up:

“This project, carried out simultaneously with the Development plan for the network of protected areas in the Murmansk Region, has provided us with a solid scientific background for prioritising the establishment of new national and nature parks, nature reserves (zakaznik) and nature monuments. In addition, it has enabled us to see that the protection of species and habitats is not in conflict with the industrial development of the region, but both can be achieved.”

All proposed protected areas in the Murmansk Region have been included into regional development and nature conservation plans. Already in 2008, based on the results from the first phase of the GAP-analysis, most of the proposed protected areas in boreal forests were included in the Forest Code of the Murmansk Region 2009-2018. In 2011, after the completion of the project, the government of the Murmansk Region approved the Development concept for the protected areas in the Murmansk Region until 2018. All the proposed protected areas are included in this development concept, as well as the Regional development plan, approved by the government of the Murmansk Region in December 2011.

Areas of high conservation value

In the framework of the GAP-analysis, some of the planned protected areas were assessed as areas of high conservation



Be prepared, Victor Petrov!
(Photo: Kola Biodiversity Conservation Centre).

value not only in Northwest Russia, but also internationally, including:

- **Khibiny** national park - the largest mountains in the Murmansk Region
- **Kutsa** nature park (proposed part of the Paanajärvi national park) - old-growth forest in an area of recreational potential
- **Laplandski les** nature reserve (zakaznik) - one the the largest areas of mountain tundra and old-growth boreal forests in Europe
- **Pori les** nature reserve - uniquely preserved boreal forests, mires and mountain tundra
- Rearrangement of **Kolvitski** nature reserve: including old-growth forest in the nature reserve
- Rearrangement of **Ponoiski** nature reserve: complete protection of the wetland areas in accordance with the Ramsar Convention
- **Gorodetskie bird colonies** (Skorbeevskaya Bay, Eina Bay, cliffs of Sredny Peninsula)

All above-mentioned territories are in need of urgent protection, which due to the results of the GAP-analysis can be realised. Already in April 2011 the government of the Murmansk Region signed a decree on the establishment of the regional nature reserve Laplandski les.

The rearrangement of Pori les, Kutsa and Kolvitski nature reserves is planned by the end of 2013. By then also territories of Hibiny national park as well as a nature park protecting the



Olga Petrova
(Photo: Kola Biodiversity Conservation Centre).

unique ecosystems of Rybachy and Sredni peninsulas should be protected. Only the rearrangement of the Ponoiski nature reserve – where there is no immediate threat from industrial activities – is planned after 2013. ■

Next steps

Now the main task of those who participated in the GAP-analysis in the Murmansk Region is to work toward establishing the proposed protected areas within set time frames. In addition, it is necessary to identify and close the gaps in the conservation of tundra ecosystems in the Murmansk Region, as the completed project concentrated mainly on boreal forest ecosystems.

Next on the agenda: protection of vulnerable tundra ecosystems
(Photo: Kola Biodiversity Conservation Centre).



Assessing the network of protected areas in St. Petersburg and the Leningrad Region

Since the middle of the 1990s, systematic work has been carried out to expand the network of protected areas in St Petersburg and the Leningrad Region. Between 2007 and 2010 these activities were continued in the framework of the project GAP-analysis in Northwest Russia. In both regions comprehensive data on flora, fauna and ecosystems was compiled using geographic information systems (Arc GIS).

The analysis was conducted at three levels: species, habitat and landscape diversity. On species level we analysed the distribution of species included in the regional, Russian and international Red Data Books. Also, intensive field studies were carried out in order to assess changes during the past 10-30 years. On habitat level we analysed the distribution of the ten main habitat types using the EUNIS habitat classification system.

Looking for valuable habitats

The value of habitats was assessed using a set of ecological criteria, such as high biological diversity, natural state, age and importance in harboring rare and endangered animal and plant species. Habitats with large seasonal concentration of animals (e.g. stopovers for migratory birds, wintering grounds, spawning grounds) were considered separately.

In the analysis of widespread habitats we used materials on natural resources, including forest surveys, and information about peat deposits and fisheries. For updating the information we used Google satellite images. As a result, we identified old-growth forests, mire complexes, lakes, shallow waters and rivers. Also, field studies were carried out on several habitat groups: broadleaf forests, fens, cliffs and caves, dunes, karst, spawning grounds for salmon, staging sites for migratory birds, and others.

In St Petersburg and the Leningrad Region the following valuable habitats were identified: forests, wetlands, lakes, shallow waters and rivers with spawning grounds for salmon. Four unique landscapes call for the establishment of federal protected areas: (1) Gulf of Finland, (2) Lake Ladoga, (3) the boundary between the Baltic Shield and the Russian Plateau, and (4) the Neva Bay.

Recommendation for new protected areas

As a result, we recommend more than doubling the area of the network of regional protected areas in the Leningrad Region, presently consisting of 39 protected areas and covering 323 410 hectares. The existing two federal protected areas do not cover all the unique landscapes of the region. Resulting from the analysis, we recommend the establishment of three new pro-

ected areas: Ingermarlandsky strict nature reserve (zapovednik) and Plavni Nevskoi Guby and Severnaya Vouksa national parks.

We also recommend more than doubling the areas of the network of regional protected areas in St Petersburg, presently consisting of eight protected areas and covering 2 542 hectares.

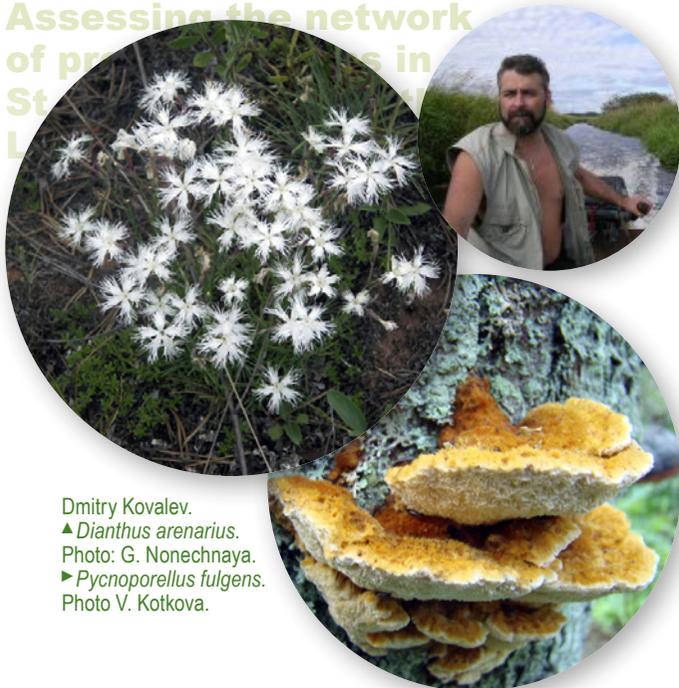
Preserving a unique region

Information from the inventories of protected areas and valuable habitats, presented in GIS format, forms the basis for establishing a balanced network of protected areas in the Leningrad Region. This network should include both federal and regional protected areas, covering the diversity of habitats and preserving the habitats of threatened species in the region. ►



Professor Georgy Noskov.

Assessing the network of protected areas in St Petersburg



Dmitry Kovalev.
 ▲ *Dianthus arenarius*.
 Photo: G. Nonechnaya.
 ► *Рычнопореллус fulgens*.
 Photo V. Kotkova.

It is extremely important that this information is used to preserve unique traits of the region, including:

Water ecosystems from Lake Onega through River Svir, Lake Ladoga and River Neva to the Gulf of Finland, including wetlands and streams

Old-growth forests with both habitat-forming species, and rare and protected species

The most valuable geological formations and associated ecosystems (coastal terraces of Littorina and Yoldia Seas, eskers, skerries etc.)

The most important staging areas, as well as other strategically important areas, along the bird migration route from the White Sea to the Baltic Sea

The biggest problem in the Leningrad Region is the authorities' reluctance to use an integrated approach to develop the network of protected areas and, thus, fundamentally change the existing systems of conservation and management of protected areas. ■

Development of regional protected areas in St Petersburg

Between 2006 and 2010 the Finnish-Russian programme on sustainable forest management and conservation of biodiversity in Northwest Russia carried out the project **Development of regional protected areas in Northwest Russia**. The main project partners were Metsähallitus Natural Heritage Services, Finnish Environment Institute, Baltic Fund for Nature and the administrations of regional protected areas in six Russian regions.

The project had particular relevance and importance to the Russian regions due to the situation with regional protected areas: nature reserves (zakaznik), nature monuments (pomyatnik prirody) and nature parks (prirodny park). Whereas federal protected areas have a separate administrative structure under the Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment, regional protected areas follow different regional legislations under different regional authorities. Hence, each region is solving conservation management problems turning only to their own experiences.



Welcome to a new protected area in St Petersburg!
 (Photo: Directorate of protected areas in St Petersburg).



Resulting from the project, six Russian regions gained new information about the management of protected areas in Finland and Russia and made contacts for further cooperation. Working seminars were arranged in all of the regions included in the project. During the time spent in seminar rooms and protected areas, the participants were able to discuss common problems and work out solutions and common approaches to future work.

Guidelines for new protected areas in St Petersburg

During the past decades, Russian regions have started to create administrative structures specialising in the management

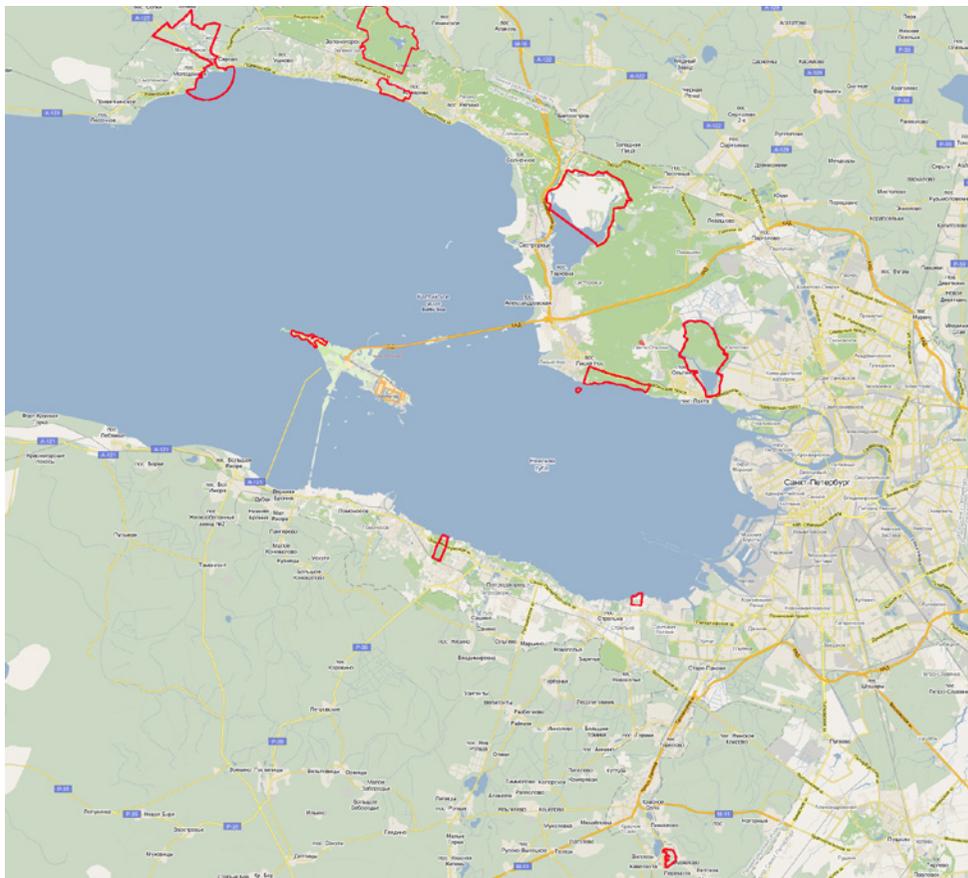
of protected areas. In 2007 the City of St Petersburg became one of the first regions where such organisation - Directorate of protected areas in St Petersburg - was established. Hence, in comparison with the other five partner regions, St Petersburg already had some experience in the management of protected areas. At the same time, it was encountering a large number of unanswered questions and problems arising from the management of protected areas in an expanding city. This made the project particularly important for St Petersburg.

In the framework of the project Development of the regional protected areas in Northwest Russia, pilot projects were carried out in each region. In St Petersburg the pilot project was

aimed at improving the management of the network of regional protected areas by establishing new and developing existing protected areas.

In the beginning of the project, there were six protected areas in St Petersburg. However, further 20 protected areas were projected in the general plan for the development of the city. As the Directorate of protected areas did not have experience of establishing protected areas, its first task was to work out general guidelines for protected areas in St Petersburg, which would be used as a basis for the establishment of each individual protected area. These guidelines helped in preparing documents for the new nature reserve on the northern shore of the Neva

Protected areas within the city of St Petersburg (Picture: Directorate of protected areas in St Petersburg).



Baltic coast (Photo: Directorate of protected areas in St Petersburg).



Bay, Severnoe poberezhje Nevskoj guby nature reserve, established in 2009.

Protecting species and habitats in Gladyshevsky

Another important part of the project was to develop a management plan for one of the existing protected areas. In contrast with Finland, management planning for Russian protected areas, especially regional ones, is poorly developed. Therefore, when making the decision about the management plan, the Directorate of protected areas in St Petersburg relied on the Finnish experience, discussed in one of the seminars and demonstrated in Pihlajavesi nature reserve. For the pilot project, the Directorate chose the most challenging protected area: Gladyshevsky nature reserve, situated on the northern coast of the Gulf of Finland within both St Petersburg and the Leningrad Region.

In the turn of the 20th Century, summer cottages and gardens were built along River Vammeljoki by rich citizens of St Petersburg. Although most of the wooden cottages have not been preserved, the abundance of introduced species of trees and shrubs now characterise the plant cover of the area.

The Gladyshevsky nature reserve was established here in 1996 in order to preserve spawning sites of Atlantic salmon and habitats of freshwater pearl mussel in the rivers. At present the population of freshwater pearl mussel is extremely small (29 living individuals, most of which are 50-60 years old), therefore the recovery rate of the population is very slow too. Also, the salmon population is threatened by illegal fishing and habitat loss.

The main problems of the Gladyshevsky nature reserve are:

- the amount of land users (recreational and military use, homes and garden plots)
- fragmentation by roads and forest clearings (three major roads, railway and power lines)
- traditional land use (illegal fishing, illegal logging and sand extraction)
- 90% of the nature reserve is situated in the Leningrad Region where there is a different approach to land management

The five-year management plan of the Gladyshevsky nature reserve comprises of (1) proposals for conservation and restoration of high conservation value areas and species, (2) programme for re-establishing rare aquatic species and (3) draft regulations for the Gladyshevsky nature reserve within St Pe-



Gladyshevsky nature reserve is important for the protection of Atlantic salmon and freshwater pearl mussel. (Photo: Directorate of protected areas in St Petersburg).

tersburg. The first steps towards the implementation of these goals have been made: an illegal fishing village in the mouth of the river Vammeljoki has been removed, local people have been informed about the nature reserve, and cooperation has been launched between the local administration and federal authori-

ties controlling fishing. This work is important not only for the development of one protected area in the region, but it could serve as an example to the local authorities of what could be done for regional protected areas, both existing and planned. ■

Promoting a representative network of protected areas in the Barents Region (BPAN)



BPAN

Barents Protected Area Network

BPAN project was prepared along the finalization of the GAP-analysis project, under the Barents Euro-Arctic Council, subgroup on nature conservation, in 2009-2010. The results achieved in the GAP project, especially the created GIS database, are utilized in the BPAN project. In the BPAN project, the unified transboundary analysis of the protected area network covers the whole Barents Region, including besides the Northwest Russia, also northern Finland, Sweden and Norway.

The countries of the Barents Euro-Arctic Region (Russia, Norway, Sweden and Finland) face common challenges in nature conservation in order to protect areas critical for maintaining northern ecosystems and species. Consequently, the Barents environment ministers highlighted the need to establish a representative and effectively managed protected area network in the Barents Region in their meeting in February 2010 in Tromsø, Norway.

The unique boreal and arctic ecosystems of the Barents Region represent important natural heritage of global significance that require protection and careful management. The Barents Region boasts one of the largest remaining intact forest ecosystems on Earth. At the same time the region is under increased pressure from land use, exploitation and climate change.

The aim of the BPAN project is to promote a representative network of protected areas for conservation of boreal and arctic nature, especially forests and wetlands. Establishing a representative network of protected areas is an important tool for achieving the internationally agreed biodiversity target of the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) Programme of Work on Protected Areas (PoWPA): to halt the loss of biodiversity by 2020, including the conservation target of 17% of terrestrial and inland water and 10% of marine and coastal areas. Protected areas are important also in climate change adaptation and mitigation. Furthermore, many northern indigenous peoples and lo-

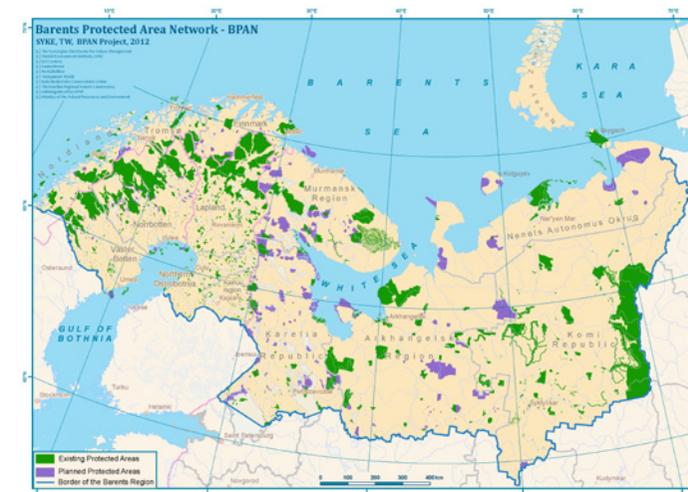
cal communities depend on nature to maintain their traditional way of life.

The BPAN project is being implemented between years 2011 and 2013 in all the 13 administrative regions of the Barents Region with the support of the Nordic Council of Ministers, governments of Russia, Norway, Sweden and Finland, and the WWF Russia Barents Sea Office. It is a key project of the Barents Euro-Arctic Council's Nature Protection Subgroup. The BPAN steering committee and expert working group have been working since 2010. The committee and the working group consist of representatives from Russian, Norwegian, Swedish and Finnish regional and national authorities, scientific institutes and NGOs. The BPAN project is coordinated by the Finnish Environment Institute (SYKE) with the support of WWF Russia Barents Sea Office in Northwest Russia. (lause siirretty lopusta)

The BPAN project evaluates the Barents protected area network and provides recommendations for its further development. Each country has their own protected area regulations, and for united maps protected areas are being classified according to their protection regimes. Representativeness of the network is being analyzed by using the GIS methods. Also regional evaluation of protected areas within the CBD Programme of Work on Protected Areas framework is being carried out.

In 2012, also regional pilot projects on threatened high conservation value areas in five regions of Northwest Russia are implemented in the following territories:

- Planned Dvinsky Forest Nature Reserve (zakaznik), Europe's largest area of old-growth spruce forest situated between the rivers Northern Dvina and Pinega (Arkhangelsk Region)
- Planned Jonn-Njygojaiv Nature Reserve (zakaznik), old-growth pine forest between Laplandskiy Strict Nature Reserve



(zapovednik) and Laplandskiy Les Nature Reserve (zakaznik) in Russian side, and Urho Kekkonen National Park in Finnish side (Murmansk Region)

- Proposed Tsilemsky Nature Reserve (zakaznik), the most important habitat of wild reindeer in the Tsilma River basin (Republic of Komi)
- Planned Zaonezhnye Nature Reserve (zakaznik), valuable natural and cultural landscapes of the Zaonezhskyye Peninsula (Republic of Karelia)
- Monitoring biological diversity in the Nizhnepechorsky Nature Reserve (zakaznik) (Nenets Autonomous Okrug)

The first preliminary results of the BPAN project were presented in the meeting of the Barents Ministers of the Environment in Umeå, Sweden, in autumn 2011 and welcomed by the Ministers. The ministers stressed the need for more effective ways of promoting the preservation of natural habitats in the Barents Region. The final recommendations will be presented in the next meeting of the Barents Region Environment Ministers in northern Finland in 2013.

You can read more project and regional conservation news at: www.bpan.fi

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Useful links

Russia

Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment of the Russian Federation

www.mnr.gov.ru/english

WWF Russia, Barents Sea Office

www.wwf.ru/barents

Baltic Fund for Nature

<http://www.teia.org/ecology/maineng.htm>

St. Petersburg State University

<http://eng.spbu.ru/>

Karelian nature conservation organisation

SPOK <http://spok-karelia.ru/en/>

Karelian Research Centre www.krc.karelia.ru

Kola Science Centre www.kolasc.net.ru/english

Vologda State Pedagogical University

<http://en.vologda-uni.ru/>

Transparent World www.transparentworld.ru/en

Russian high conservation value forests

<http://hcvf.net/>

Atlas of Russia's Intact Forest Landscapes

(2002) www.forest.ru/eng/publications/intact

Finland

Cooperation on nature conservation in Northwest Russia

<http://www.ymparisto.fi/default.asp?node=15079&lan=en>

Finnish Environmental Administration (Finnish Ministry of the Environment, Finnish Environment Institute) www.environment.fi

Finnish Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry

www.mmm.fi/en

Metsähallitus www.metsa.fi

The Finnish Association for Nature Conservation

www.sll.fi/english

Finnish Forest Research Institute (Metla)

www.metla.fi/index-en.html

Finnish Game and Fisheries Research Institute

www.rktl.fi/english

Information about Russian forests (in Finnish and Russian)

www.idanmetsatieto.info

International Cooperation

EU cooperation with Russia & Eastern Neighbours

http://ec.europa.eu/environment/enlarg/russianis_en.htm

Barents Info www.barentsinfo.org

Barents Euro-Arctic Council www.beac.st

Norwegian Directorate for Nature Management

<http://english.dirnat.no/>

Swedish Environmental Protection Agency

www.naturvardsverket.se/englis



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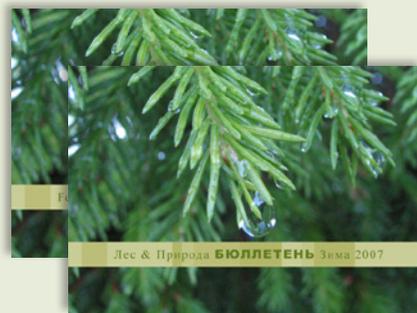
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