

### Fair is the blooming meadow

Traditional landscapes are critical for many endangered plants and animals. The project studied and described the similarities of traditional land use in the Nordic and Baltic countries. Field inventories, combined with interviews of landowners, were conducted in seven countries. The report presents successful projects, best practices, and underlines the significance of adequate financial incentives. The importance of local historical and cultural values, as well as the biological basis for conservation and management is highlighted. You can find the report at [www.norden.org](http://www.norden.org), search for "2004:564"

### Status of wintering water bird populations in the Baltic Sea (SOWBAS)

The project updates the status of wintering waterbird populations in the Baltic Sea. Management implications are assessed in relation to international monitoring, marine resource use and conservation strategies. It enables a better monitoring of the consequences of climate change, eutrophication, fisheries, and the expanding energy and transport sectors in the Baltic. The report will be published in 2009 and will present updates of the status of species distributions and numbers, habitats and sensitivity assessments in relation to human activities and pressures in the Baltic Sea. It will also give recommendations and guidelines for management. More information at [sowbas.dhigroup.com](http://sowbas.dhigroup.com)

NORDIC EFFORT  
TO HALT THE LOSS  
OF BIODIVERSITY

More information on the Nordic Council of Ministers' environmental work can be found on [www.norden.org](http://www.norden.org). For more information on specific projects, you may contact Gudrun Schneider ([gus@md.dep.no](mailto:gus@md.dep.no)), co-ordinator, or Dr. Stig Johansson ([stig.johansson@metsa.fi](mailto:stig.johansson@metsa.fi)), chairperson for the Working Group on Terrestrial Ecosystems.

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Implementing the Convention on Biological Diversity is a key issue in the Nordic environmental cooperation. This brochure highlights a number of projects dealing with some of the major themes under the Convention: Halting the loss of biodiversity by 2010, Climate change and biodiversity, Invasive species, and Sustainable use.

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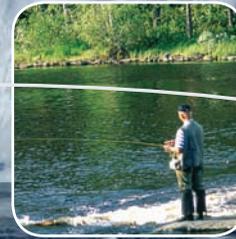


The Nordic countries, with a population of 25 million, consist of Denmark, (including the Faroe Islands and Greenland), Finland (including Åland), Iceland, Norway and Sweden. The Faroe Islands, Greenland and Åland are self-governed regions within Denmark and Finland. The long-standing Nordic co-operation is based on added common value, and is implemented within the Nordic Council and the Nordic Council of Ministers. The Nordic co-operation is also extended to include the Baltic States and North-west Russia.

The purpose of environmental co-operation is to conserve nature and improve the quality of the environment and life in the Nordic countries. Furthermore, the aim is to ensure that Nordic nature and environmental protection policies make an impact in a European and a global context.

The Nordic countries are all signatories of the Convention on Biological Diversity and the Council of Ministers has initiated or contributed to several projects supporting the implementation of the Convention. In this folder we present some of these projects. We hope that these may be useful examples for other regions to consider.





### Halting the loss of Biodiversity by and beyond 2010

Halting the loss of biodiversity by and beyond 2010 is a high priority goal in the Nordic Council of Ministers' environmental policy. Conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity is therefore the central theme of several ongoing or recently concluded projects:

#### *Nordic nature – trends towards 2010*

This is an ongoing biodiversity assessment and communication project involving all Nordic countries. The project identifies and communicates trends and status for selected species and habitats. It provides recommendations on required actions to the authorities and the public. Best practices are presented in fact sheets showing successes and promising experiences. Likewise, challenges and negative developments are shown. A number of fact sheets on priority topics have been completed so far, i.a:

- o Cod and Herring stocks in the Northeast Atlantic
- o Baltic Cod and Herring stocks
  - changing interactions between predators and prey
- o The triumphant return of the white-tailed eagle
- o Can Nordic amphibians be saved?
- o The polar bear – top arctic predator dependant on sea ice

More information at [www.environment.fi/nordicnature](http://www.environment.fi/nordicnature)

#### *Local communities' participation in Countdown 2010*

In the Nordic countries municipalities are important authorities influencing agriculture, forestry and biodiversity conservation mainly through spatial planning. Their role, as the administrative unit representing local communities, can provide an important contribution to the achievement of the 2010-target. The project has established a network of fourteen municipalities in Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Norway, Sweden and The Faroe Islands. Each municipality highlights one or more examples on how local people can make a difference. They cover all types of measures, ranging from conservation to restoration, management and sustainable land use. Results will be reported by 2010. More information at [www.dirnat.no/2010-malet](http://www.dirnat.no/2010-malet)

#### *Indicators for status and development of biodiversity in the Nordic countries (NordBio 2010)*

The project has aimed at evaluating the 2010 target by developing relevant indicators for the state and trends of biodiversity in the Nordic countries. The project's final report has been published in 2009: "State of biodiversity in the Nordic countries – An assessment of progress towards achieving the target of halting biodiversity loss by 2010" (TemaNord 2009:509). The report's general conclusion is that it is highly unlikely that the target can be achieved by the Nordic countries. However, not all trends are negative. The report establishes a number of indicators measuring quantity and quality of biodiversity in different types of nature. You will find the report at [www.norden.org](http://www.norden.org).

#### **Climate change and biodiversity**

Climate change has rapidly become a high priority issue in Nordic co-operation. Several projects supported by the Nordic Council of Ministers have a specific focus on the linkages between climate change and biodiversity. Two of those are:

#### *Nordic Nature Indicators of Climate Change Effects – NICC*

The project develops a common Nordic set of indicators for monitoring the effects of climate change on nature. Apart from developing a monitoring tool it will standardize data analysis across the region. The set is primarily based on existing national and international monitoring programmes, such as the Habitats Directive and SEBI 2010. The project explains why we need to and how we can monitor the impact of climate change on the Nordic nature. The project results will be presented in a report in 2009.

#### *Conservation of Nordic nature in a changing climate – NoNaKlim*

This was the first Nordic project dealing with the impact of climate change on conservation. A report, presenting a set of tools and strategies to address and to minimize the adverse effects of climate change on nature, was published in 2005, and made headlines in media as far as Taiwan and China. The tools are based on strengthening nature's own capacity for adaptation, resilience and robustness. Such tools are

for example to secure the migration of flora and fauna; to keep coastal areas as buffer zones against rising waters; to ensure structurally heterogeneous forest; and to contain alien invasive species. More information at [www.norden.org](http://www.norden.org), search for "2005:572"

#### *Seabirds in the West Nordic Region*

Climate related, complex ecological changes have disrupted the food web in Nordic waters. The number of fish-eating birds has decreased, and regeneration has drastically dropped since 2003. These changes underline the need for a comprehensive approach addressing factors such as commercial fisheries, oil spills, seabird harvest and environmental pollutants, which influence seabird populations. The affected area includes the sea north of the UK to the coasts of Iceland and the Norwegian west coast. Seabird and marine experts presented the conclusions in a meeting on the Faeroe Islands in October 2007. The project was initiated in a joint meeting of Nordic nature conservation NGOs in 2006. The report has been published in 2008, and will be followed up by an action plan.

More information at [www.norden.org](http://www.norden.org), search for TemaNord "2008:573"

#### **Invasive species**

Invasive species are one of the major threats to biodiversity and also closely linked to the challenges of climate change. Several Nordic projects try to develop tools for better management against invasive species. The main project dealing with invasive species is:

#### *North European and Baltic Network on Invasive Alien Species – NOBANIS*

The NOBANIS web-portal is a gateway to information on alien and invasive species in north and central Europe. The database is updated by each participating country on a regular basis. It can be used to identify invasive species or potential threats. The database also contains fact sheets for the most invasive species in the region, providing information on pathways of invasion, distribution of the species, habitats that may be affected, the ecological and socio-economic effects, and possible management approaches. It also includes references to relevant scientific literature and experts. NOBANIS has

established the foundation for the development of an early warning system for invasive alien species. More information at [www.nobanis.org](http://www.nobanis.org)

#### **Sustainable use**

Sustainable development is an important overriding issue. The Nordic Council of Ministers has a cross-sectoral Strategy for Sustainable Development. A revised strategy for the following years is presently being drafted. There are several projects, dealing with sustainable use of natural resources, which aim at supporting the implementation of this strategy.

#### *Land degradation and sustainable grazing*

The project compiled knowledge on soil erosion in the rangelands of Iceland, Greenland, the Faroe Islands, and northern Scandinavia. The effects of grazing of sheep, horses and reindeer in these fragile habitats were studied. The results, aimed at land managers, are presented in a booklet with guidelines on range monitoring by reading simple signs from nature, including changes in vegetation at various degrees of grazing pressure. The booklet is published in Danish, Finnish, Faroese, Greenlandic, and Sami, with an English summary. More information at [www.norden.org](http://www.norden.org), search for "2006:586"

#### *Bottom trawling and scallop dredging in the Arctic Region*

Fish stocks are declining and several species endangered. The project studied fishing for Northern shrimp and Icelandic scallop in the North-East Atlantic. The report deals with the vulnerable arctic sea environments, including the deep-sea coral reefs, their biological diversity and ecological importance. The impact of human activity, especially fishing, is also analyzed. The report contains recommendations for management and further research, such as mapping sea beds, archaeological finds and vulnerable habitats, and the need to establish marine protected areas.

More information at [www.norden.org](http://www.norden.org), search for "2006:529"