



NORDIC NATURE – TRENDS TOWARDS 2010



Local contributions to halt the loss of biodiversity

The 2010 Biodiversity Target is a global nature conservation goal. The aim is to halt the loss of biodiversity by the year 2010.

Measures need to be taken in all sectors of society for this target to be reached. Local communities, represented by the municipalities play a central role, since they are the authorities responsible for land use planning, and since they control much of the biological diversity. Local communities are also the natural arena for mobilising and engaging the public.

A Nordic project was launched in 2006, setting up a network of Nordic municipalities to implement specific projects relevant to the 2010 target. The network is intended to form a forum where the local authorities can exchange their experiences, and to demonstrate the necessity of local efforts to reach the 2010 target. The network currently consists of 14 municipalities. The projects range from restoration, nature conservation, the use of municipal plans as instruments and combating alien species to safeguarding species through management. Key features of most of the projects include local participation and providing information on biodiversity.

In order to reach the 2010 target, the municipalities in the network are obliged to conduct projects relevant to the 2010 target. The results of these projects are to be measurable. The municipalities will submit final reports before the end of 2009 and set up websites to publicise information on the projects. If possible, they should also sign the Countdown 2010 declaration.

Hammerfest has placed artificial reefs in the sea to restore marine habitats that have been destroyed. Pipes made of recycled plastic have been fixed to concrete cylinders. These structures offer shelter for fish fry and give seaweed improved living conditions. The aim is to replace the kelp forest that has been excessively grazed by sea urchins.

Stjørdal will employ land use planning to safeguard biodiversity, particularly in shoreline areas where waders and ducks rest. The municipality is supporting a local association, "Færbøgda i lag", which is maintaining a local interest for traditional haymaking. Stjørdal's meadows have many species of plants including harebell, oxeye daisy, sweet vernal-grass, and rarer plants like quaking-grass and greater butterfly orchid.

Trondheim is ensuring that streams near the city centre will be in a good ecological state. The city has an abundance of game animals within its boundaries, but the habitats of many of these species are threatened by fragmentation. The capercaillie is being used as an indicator species for the desired state of the woodland in Bymarka. Systematic landscape management in the Lian-Solem area will safeguard the historical cultural landscape.

Örebro has converted a former landfill and a former oil port into a nature reserve and a lakeland park. More species of birds have since been observed here. The restored area amounts to 600 hectares (14 826 acres) and is very popular with local people and visitors alike.



Map of the participating municipalities.



Haymaking in one of the species rich meadows in Stjørdal. Photo: Ingvild Kalland.

Hedensted will ensure sustainable forestry by certifying the forests flanking Vejle Fjord. An area of wetland covering 85 hectares (ca. 210 acres) will be formed, including a 25-ha (61.7 acres) lake. More varied physical conditions in the River Skjold will have spin-off benefits for sea trout, aquatic insects, ducks and waders. Grazing in open environments will safeguard botanically valuable sites.

Herning is drawing up an environmental policy that will safeguard existing natural assets and create large, continuous natural areas. An action plan for salmon in the River Skjern system will also improve the conditions for several other species of fish. The salmon is a good indicator species, since it makes high demands on the quality of the environment. Herning has also prioritised measures to combat climate change, since it poses a threat to biodiversity. The municipality has initiated several measures that will save energy.

Holstebro has created 55 ponds to improve conditions for great crested newts, moor frogs, common spadefoot toads and natterjack toads. Grazing has been re-introduced to safeguard open landscapes, so that plants which require plenty of light will thrive, and to encourage a rich diversity of insects and birds. Dams are being demolished in rivers to make them more accessible for salmon, trout and lampreys.

Kolding will improve the state of the water in Skærsjø, a lake famed for its water lobelias. The species water lobelia, lake quillwort and shoreweed, are all present and all of them thrive best in clear water that is poor in nutrients. The physical conditions in the River Åkær are being improved by constructing more meanders and placing rocks and gravel along a 17 km long stretch. Wetlands flanking the Åkær are also being restored.

In the Faroe Islands, the neighbouring municipalities of **Nes** and **Runavik** are growing centres of population. Traffic in the area surrounding the lake Toftavatn will be restricted to safeguard areas of heather and the birdlife there. A key feature of this project is providing information on biodiversity.

Porvoo will set up a national urban park embracing a great variety of natural habitats and valuable cultural environments. Maren's meadow, a former pastureland, is one of the most important parts of the proposed park. Tree clearance and grazing will prevent the pasture from becoming overgrown.

Vantaa has a long tradition of nature conservation, and 6% of its total area is protected. In addition to these protected areas, there are areas of special importance for biodiversity, known as "LUO" areas, that are especially valuable on the local level. Special management measures must be introduced in these areas to preserve their biodiversity.

Akureyri is combating alien species on Hrisey. Cow parsley, lupin and garden angelica now cover 11–13% of the island, and seeds are being sown from native Icelandic flora to restore areas with characteristic heather species. The same procedure will enable an area of 30 hectares (ca. 74 acres) at a former landfill site in the valley of Glerárdalur to fit naturally into its surroundings. A former wetland at Naustaborgir is also being restored to provide habitat for birds.

Alftanes is improving habitats for birds by restoring former wetlands close to two lakes, Kasthúsatjörn and Þvottatjörn. An undeveloped area surrounding the official home of the President of Iceland will also help these two areas to function better.



Children take part in the work to safeguard biodiversity by throwing rocks into the River Åkær in Kolding. Photo: Kaare Manniche Ebert.

This Nordic project demonstrates the importance of nature conservation on a local scale, and also the key role of municipalities as the land use planning authorities. The local projects described above all show how measures taken to preserve biodiversity can be worthwhile.

The project will end in 2010. The final report on the project will demonstrate the necessity of local contributions for reaching the 2010 target. The results can motivate other municipalities, so that Nordic municipalities can set an example in local work for biological diversity. The participating municipalities will of course continue their work to conserve biodiversity even after the year 2010. Long term monitoring in the participating municipalities has also been discussed.

The homepage of the project at the Norwegian Directorate for Nature Management: www.dirnat.no/2010-malet