

BIODIVERSITY PROMOTION

IN NORDIC FAMILY FOREST MANAGEMENT

A man and a woman are standing in a lush green forest, reaching out to touch the bark of a large tree trunk. The man is on the left, wearing a light blue t-shirt and dark shorts. The woman is on the right, wearing a red t-shirt and grey pants. The forest floor is covered in dense green vegetation, and the background shows more trees and a clear sky.

NSF
NORDIC FAMILY FORESTRY

Members of the Bureau of Nordic Family Forestry Alliance (NSF)

acknowledge the need to halt the loss of biodiversity and to secure the recovery of ecosystems and resilient nature across the EU. Forestry is a livelihood that is based directly on natural resources and the provision of ecosystem services. Therefore, the good condition of nature is crucial for us.

Nordic family forestry is based on centuries-long traditions of sustainable forest management which provides a solid foundation for addressing future challenges.

The success of healthy forest ecosystems and the devotion to further improve ecological sustainability in Nordic family forests are embedded in the evidence-based decision making built on historic records, stemming from some of the longest standing, continuous national forest monitoring systems of Europe.

Nordic Forest Owners have documented their sustainable forest management e.g. through certification, and a positive trend can be identified in national forest statistics for many core indicators for biodiversity. Both the major forest certification schemes PEFC and FSC are continuously developed and together with other practical level measures, an increasing proportion of certified forest will contribute to further promoting and safeguarding biodiversity in forests.



BIODIVERSITY ENHANCEMENT IS A RESULT OF THE COMBINATION OF DIFFERENT MEASURES: BASED ON LEGISLATION AND VOLUNTARINESS

Biodiversity protection in Nordic private forests is achieved through the combination of three main elements:

01

Integrating biodiversity into the multifunctional use of forests and everyday sustainable forest management to support the characteristics important for biodiversity.

02

Well-targeted nature management and restoration.

03

Landowner-based voluntary nature conservation.

Successful outcome requires all of these in a balanced way.

In NSF countries, the legal framework for the protection of biodiversity is enshrined in comprehensive and detailed legislation based on both national and EU requirements. In conjunction with legislation, biodiversity protection has been traditionally enjoying strong support through voluntary measures in the Nordics. The robustness of voluntary measures reflects the longstanding traditions of private forest ownership and the management of forests, supported by science-based advisory networks.



Photo: Marius Lippestad

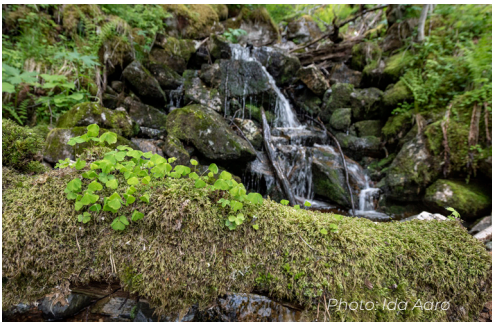


Photo: Ida Aarø

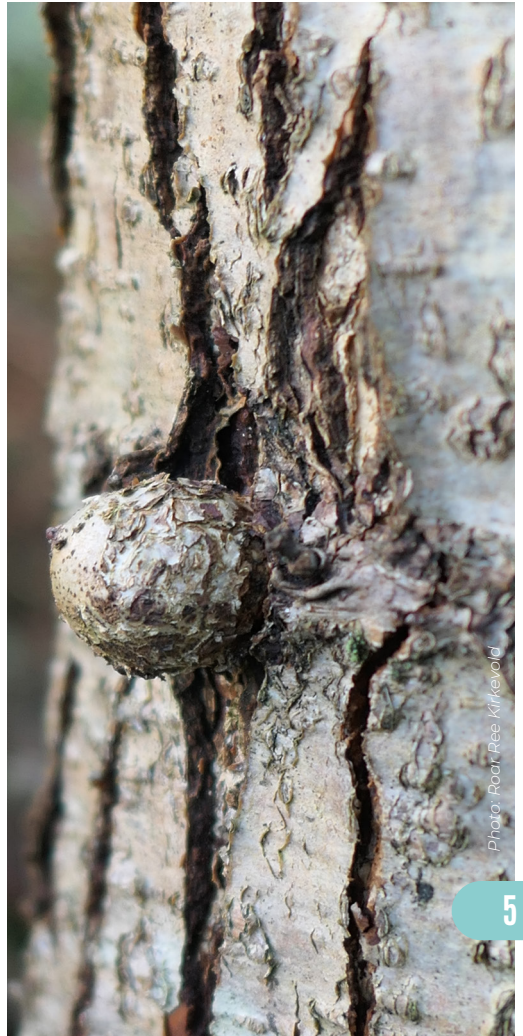


Photo: Røer, Ree, Kirkevold

Biodiversity protection and promotion in private forests concentrate on a wide range of measures that are promoted daily by our members, such as:



Leaving retention trees and increasing the volume of deadwood.



Protecting water strips and water courses with e.g. adequate buffer zones.



Maintaining a growing occurrence of broadleaf tree species and promoting tree species variation.



Using pesticides only in special cases and developing alternative approaches or techniques.



Soil preparation to ensure successful and efficient regeneration.



Use of fire for habitat management and/or controlled burning for silvicultural purposes according to the instructions from the national authorities.



Using continuous cover forestry in suitable conditions.



Voluntary establishment of protected areas and restoration.



Strengthening research on biodiversity in managed forests.



Avoiding unnecessary soil disturbance.



Increasing forest connectivity.



WHY IS VOLUNTARINESS THE WAY TO GO FOR NORDIC FOREST OWNERS?

Incentives, co-designed in public and private partnerships have proved to be among the most efficient approach to engage the large pool of forest owners. Voluntary measures stemming from solid ownership rights are key to preserve forest biodiversity, while providing sustainable rural livelihoods for generations of forest owners. Incentives designed in public-private partnerships, through bot-

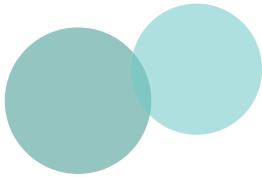
tom-up approaches proved to be efficient tools of biodiversity protection and a good complementary of the Natura 2000 network.

The Bureau of Nordic Family Forestry is continuing engaging with European decision makers and its partner organisations will remain active in the forest-based value chain to create an enabling European policy environment.

The EU policy environment around forestry witnessed a major shift since 2019. Under the European Green Deal, the European Commission's ambitious flagship initiative on the sustainable transition of the EU's economic sectors, an unprecedented number of proposals for legislative and non-legislative instruments were published. The EU legislator and executive branches' political ambition on developing a resource-efficient and sustainable, renewables-based

economic activities put forestry, as a key land-based sector on the central stage of policy discussions with the aim to develop EU-level proposals around a sector which is under Member State competence.

As various legislative initiatives around biodiversity have been published lately as binding regulations (e.g. EU deforestation regulation, Nature Restoration Law, Forest Monitoring Law), the value of voluntariness has been questioned.



However, NSF countries do not support more stringent requirements set by legislation. We find that biodiversity-related measures should be based on voluntary and financial incentives. In addition to government subsidies, market-based solutions - such as a biodiversity premium obtained from the market, as well as cooperation between forest owners are preferred options by Nordic family forest owners. NSF countries are already engaged in various voluntary actions that are showcased in this document.

NORDIC FAMILY FOREST MANAGEMENT AND THE PROMOTION OF FOREST BIODIVERSITY ARE ANCHORED AROUND THE FOLLOWING MAIN PILLARS:

EU and national regulation that promotes practice-oriented and flexible approach on biodiversity.

Strong respect for ownership rights in legislation and in practise (e.g. involvement in different processes).

integrating biodiversity protection into active, sustainable forest management that supports forest owners in their everyday actions for biodiversity.

- Retention trees, deadwood, minimising soil disturbances, not intervening in the most valuable sites, buffer zones along water courses

Economic viability and adequate financial resources and willingness to find market-based solutions.

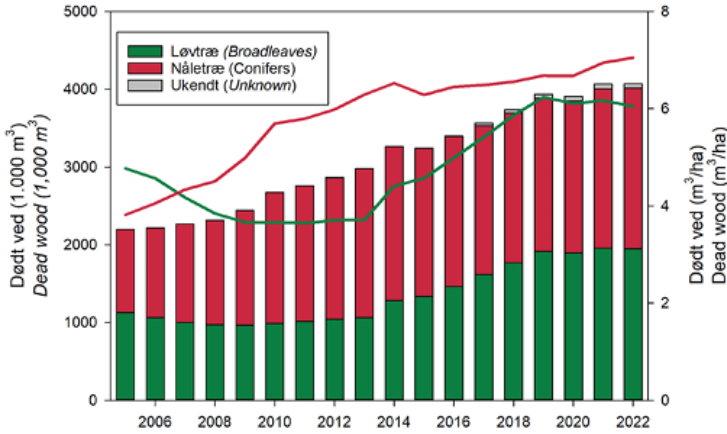
*- Monetary compensations as part of the voluntary protection schemes
- Markets for ecosystem services and natural capital value*





COUNTRY EXAMPLES

As “one size does not fit all” even in the Nordic countries, the following country examples showcase the already existing good biodiversity practices in the Nordics. These examples that are based on the voluntary measures conducted by Forest Owners Organisations and Member States itself, are key in promoting forest biodiversity in the Nordics.



Volume of dead wood in Denmark.
Source: University of Copenhagen Skovstatistik 2022.

DENMARK

Biodiversity protection in Danish private forests stem from a blend of private and public measures, where voluntary result-based schemes play key role. The country's legal framework for the protection of biodiversity is enshrined in the Nature Conservation act and the Forest Act.

Natura 2000 forests in Denmark are largely privately owned. Under the current N2000 planning period, Denmark implements a

set of measures focusing on more natural processes and nature's robustness, including a focus on more extensive management and untouched forests, securing and improving the condition of the existing nature and habitats and combating invasive species. Forest certification schemes -PEFC and FSC - are important pillars of private incentives for voluntary biodiversity protection and are widely applied among Danish Forest owners.



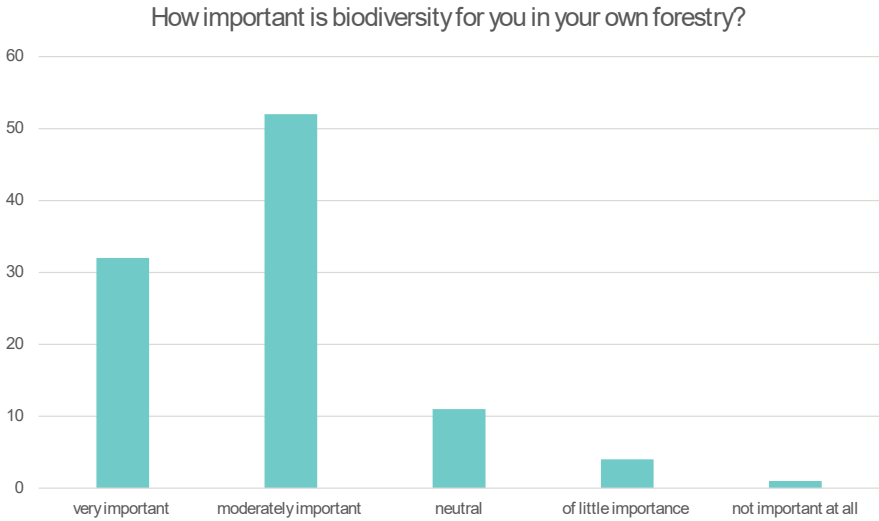
Photo: Carsten Pedersen

FINLAND

The Central Union of Agricultural Producers and Forest Owners (MTK) is strongly committed to halting the loss of biodiversity linked to forestry and putting it on a path to recovery. Together with other actors, MTK is aiming to build a stable, predictable and enabling environment, where promoting biodiversity is an inseparable part of sustainable, responsible and profitable rural livelihoods. MTK shows its ambition and guides its practical actions through Biodiversity Programme (published in 2020) and Biodiversity Roadmap (published in 2024). The Road Map

is based on research information, and it has voluntariness of actions as a starting point. National programmes for voluntary protection and restoration (METSU, Helmi) have shown that incentive-based approaches are ecologically meaningful and widely accepted.

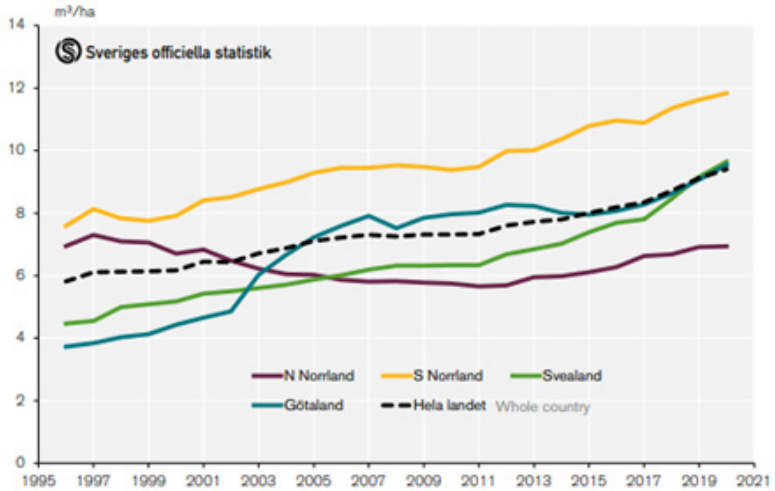
There are detailed goals and measures included in the Road Map to put biodiversity in a stronger role in the activities of all organisational levels of MTK, to create an enabling operating environment, and to promote forest biodiversity in practice.



Source: MTK's & SLC's Biodiversity Roadmap, survey aimed at forest owners in 2023.

Goals regarding safeguarding valuable habitats in forests, strengthening structural features valuable for forest biodiversity, and promoting voluntary protection and restoration of forests are implemented, for example, through improving the services and procedures in the forest management associations. MTK has set as a

target that market economy will be the most significant source of biodiversity funding, and that there will be well-functioning market system for selling and buying nature values. MTK has launched an open website service (www.luontoarvot.fi) to facilitate the interaction between supply and demand of nature values.



Deadwood volume per hectare by region, 1996–2020. Source: Swedish National Forest Inventory.

SWEDEN

Södra, a Swedish forest owner cooperative with over 50 000 members, has introduced a nature conservation premium to reward members for their efforts in preserving natural values. Members who hold a forest certification and set aside more than five percent of their forest land for conservation will receive additional payment from Södra for their timber, up to 25 SEK (approximately 2.15 EUR as of 22 May 2024) per cubic meter of solid wood. The premium does not only reward forest owners who

managed their forests sustainably from an economic point of view, but it also highlights that Södra as a forest owner association sees the value of working with biodiversity - something that has become more important from a value chain perspective. The response to this conservation premium has been very positive, both from forest owners and other stakeholders and it shows the value of members' strong commitment to nature conservation.

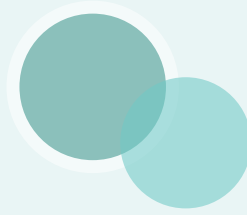
NORWAY

Norway's biodiversity protection measures are built on a research based, comprehensive and periodic habitat mapping. The establishment of key habitats is the base of dynamic nature management and habitat conservation, which follows the ecological principle of a complementarity hot spot inventory. This core approach in the Norwegian practice is part of the Forestry Act and reinforced in forest certification schemes.

Private forests are entirely covered by the two major forest certification schemes (PEFC and FSC), which are the pillars of voluntary biodiversity conservation measures. Also, for strict protection of forests in nature reserves, Norway places special emphasis on voluntary protection measures. The currently applied approach was initiated by the Norwegian Private Forest Owners' Federation in 2000, which the National Assembly's decision made it applicable on national level in 2004.

The voluntary protection of forests is a success, achieving faster progression in conservation of forests with high conservation value and reducing the level of conflict.

Set-aside measures play important role in Norwegian private forests' conservation. While forest fires pose a growing risk for natural disasters, naturally occurring forest fires are recognised as essential part of the rejuvenation of certain ecological important habitat types. When a forest fire occurs in an old-growth forest, an area is set aside for a period of 10 years. Norway's meticulous approach on key habitat mapping and the dynamic approach of creating synergies between active management and nature conservation reflects on sustainable management of diverse forest ecosystems where species often can be found at the extreme north of their European occurrence.



SUMMARY AND TAKE-HOME MESSAGES

The high-quality basic level of biodiversity enhancement is based on legal requirements and voluntary forest certification. On top of that, there are many voluntary practices in use to deliver even more ecologically and economically sustainable forest management in NSF countries.

The well-functioning and delicate balance between current legal requirements and voluntary measures shall be maintained by focusing on strengthening the voluntary approaches that secure not only biodiversity benefits but also acceptability that takes us to the set biodiversity goals and beyond.

Parallel with practical measures, part of efficient biodiversity work, listening to landowners is key. This can be enabled by developing balanced advisory services for forest owners on the ground that requires paying attention to each forest owners' values and preferences.

Also, raising awareness and scientific knowledge on valuable habitats and the long-term character of forestry is essential as usually biodiversity-related policies are to be developed for a rather short time-frame. Also, a balanced cooperation with other stakeholders related to best practices and the need of developing geoinformation-based data are strongly supported by NSF members.

ABOUT THE BUREAU NORDIC FAMILY FORESTRY

The Bureau of Nordic Family Forestry (Nordiska skogägarorganisationernas förbund - NSF) is a close cooperation between the Nordic Forest owners' national organisations founded in 1946. NSF member organisations are Danish Forest Association (Dansk Skovforening), National Forest Cooperative Organisation in Sweden (LRF), Central Union of Agricultural Producers and Forest Owners in Finland (MTK) and Norwegian Forest Owners' Federation (Norsk Skogeierforbund). The presidency of NSF rotates on an annual basis.

NSF have a common strategy and goals for the EU advocacy and works in close collaboration with Confederation of European Forest Owners (CEPF) for strengthening the common voice of forest owners in Europe. NSF has an EU policy advisor who is based in Brussels and works as a part of the Secretariat of the Confederation of European Forest Owners (CEPF).

NSF MEMBERS:



www.danskskovforening.dk



www.lrf.se



<https://www.mtk.fi>



<https://www.skog.no>



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