



Strasbourg, 10 February 1998
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PE-S-DE (98) 57

**COMMITTEE FOR THE ACTIVITIES OF THE COUNCIL OF EUROPE
IN THE FIELD OF BIOLOGICAL AND LANDSCAPE DIVERSITY**

CO-DBP

Group of specialists - European Diploma

Store Mosse National Park

(Sweden)

Category A

RENEWAL

Expert report by
Mr Pierre HUNKELER
(Switzerland)

This report was produced without the participation of a representative of the Council of Europe Secretariat.

Appendix I contains Resolution (93) 18 awarding the European Diploma; in Appendix II, the Secretariat presents a draft resolution concerning a possible renewal in 1998.

INTRODUCTION

The Store Mosse National Park was awarded the European Diploma, Category A, in June 1988. The Diploma was renewed in 1993. I visited the Park on 5 and 6 August 1997 in connection with the next renewal, scheduled for 1998.

Mr Lennart Fritz, Park Director, and Mr Johann Uhr, Director of Nature Conservation of Jököping County, together with his colleagues Ms Ulricha Berglund and Mr Fredrik Lündin, took part in the visit, as well as Mr Dan Damberg, naturalist.

We toured the main peatland areas and the managed parts of Lake Kävsjön, saw the main tourist reception sites and examined closely the sensitive sections of the Park's outer limits and surrounding areas.

The organisation of the visit was excellent and we must warmly thank all those who helped to make it pleasant both by their helpfulness and through their wise choice of itineraries.

SITUATION AND VALUE OF THE PARK

Situated in the southern central part of Sweden, approximately 70 km south of Jönköping, the Store Mosse National Park covers 7,740 ha. It is made up of a patchwork of extensive peatland, large areas of low-lying marshland, lakes and pine forests. The presence of morainic islands and elongated sand dunes means that the countryside and vegetation are varied.

The Kälvasjön and Kävsjön Lakes are permanent, while Haradssjön and Hörsjön Lakes are temporary. The level of Lake Kävsjön was greatly lowered by artificial means in the 19th century in order to reclaim swath and pastureland, a change which made the site more attractive for water fowl.

Vegetation is typically that of acid peat and sandy areas, with the exception of the Björnakullen region, where water supplies with more nutrient and calcium content encourage a different type of vegetation with several rare species.

The Park includes the most important peatland complex in southern Sweden. The site has other assets besides its vegetation, being of great interest for fauna, especially birds. It is home to a remarkable combination of northern and southern species. At least 100 species reproduce in the Park, including the crane (*Grus grus*), the wild swan (*Cygnus cygnus*) and the jack-snipe (*Lymnocyptes minimus*). It is also a stopping-place for migratory birds, attracting large numbers. The Store Mosse National Park is on the Swedish list of internationally important wetlands and also figures on the list of sites covered by the Ramsar Convention.

Evidence of human presence includes a series of old farms surrounded by pastureland which is still partly in use, where it is not being wooded, together with peat pits which have already been well recolonised by sphagnum. Around Lake Kävsjön, mowing and grazing in the marshland areas, abandoned at the end of the century, have now been resumed over a limited area.

MANAGEMENT

Unfortunately, the management plan has made virtually no progress since 1992. It is still being finalised, but should be completed by the end of 1997. However, its main principles are already been established and have been implemented for several years.

A geological map and a geomorphological map on a scale of 1 to 50,000, containing interesting information were published recently. A vegetation map is almost completed.

The Jönköping County administration now plays a more active role in the Park management. Financing is primarily by the State Nature Conservation Service.

It should be borne in mind that the entire Park is State property, this being a legal obligation for Swedish national parks.

In an important new development, a Governing Board bringing together all interested parties has just been created. It is made up of representatives of the Park and Jönköping County, the three municipalities concerned (one representative) the farmers' union, the Society for Heritage Conservation, the Friends of Store Mosse and the Association for the Promotion of Outdoor Life.

AssiDomän, a private company which emerged from the reorganisation of the state forestry services, continues to be entrusted with the Park's management. This situation, for which there are historical and personal reasons, will certainly change in 1998 with the retirement of the current director. Direct responsibility will probably devolve upon Jönköping County.

Staff is currently made up of one director, employed full-time, and one deputy, employed half-time.

3.1. General objectives

Generally speaking, the Park should be left to evolve naturally while allowing visitor access in those areas where their presence does not run counter to the objectives of conserving and protecting the environment. These principles correspond perfectly with the requirements of the European Diploma, Category A.

3.2. Peatland and marsh

These are left to develop naturally without any interference. The Björnakullen marsh, which has been cleared and mown, and the area surrounding the Lake Käsvjön observation tower, which has been grazed and mown to maintain open areas, are exceptions to this rule.

A project is under way to speed up the revitalisation of the former peat pits around Kittla Kull. It is planned to block off a number of drainage canals in order to raise the water level. This will be done as soon as approval has been obtained from the company that owns the railway which runs close by.

3.3. Forests

The principle of avoiding any action is in keeping with the objectives for the Park. The exceptions (retaining certain meadows, maintenance of edges of roads and canals) are perfectly justified.

To date, the forest has never burned, but the risk exists. Principles for taking action in the event of fire are under discussion in order to strike a balance between the need to protect property adjacent to the Park and the possibility of allowing fires to burn in the protected area.

3.4. Farming land

The land concerned includes the virtually abandoned fields and grazing land at Svänö and Lövä, lake edges and the Björnakullen meadows. It should be noted that following a localised clearing in the latter area, remarkable populations of orchids have reappeared.

The activities undertaken in the vicinity of the observation tower are carefully explained to visitors.

3.5. Wetland areas and hydrology

No management is planned apart from occasional cleansing operations on the Fläsebäcken (outlet from Lake Kävsjö).

In our last report, we suggested that this position should be re-examined after a study of the general hydrology of the Park, as it conditions the evolution of all the wetlands.

It was decided not to take any action at the current time, apart from flooding the Kittla Kull peat pits.

We suggest leaving open the question of the Park's general hydrology, in particular management of the level of the lakes, the Park's dependence on external water supplies and the impact of peat digging on the outer edges of the Park.

3.6. Fauna management

There is a ban on hunting in the Park. Fishing rights still exist for Lake Kävsjön, but are being phased out, with the exception of one person who continues to enjoy his traditional rights.

No particular management measures are planned apart from monitoring water fowl populations and food for the ospreys and golden eagles so as to reduce their consumption of pesticides.

The monitoring of birds should be concurrent with management measures around Lake Kävsjön. If the means can be found, an inventory of other fauna groups, such as insects, might offer useful indications of the value and evolution of certain habitats, such as meadows and forests.

3.7. Public access

The Park is very well equipped for this purpose. There are several excellent observation towers and a quite remarkable network of paths and planked trails in the peat bogs, now extending nearly 40 km. The network is well maintained and has just been expanded by a new 5.6 km itinerary that runs from Lövö to Björnakullen.

The main tower, on the edge of Lake Kävsjön, is very well equipped with an exhibition, information centre and telescopes. A nature trail for children has just been set up and is a great success.

The question of staff has not yet been resolved. Since 1993, the Park can no longer count on the co-operation of ten persons working as an alternative to military service. The main work is now commissioned outside. Visitor information at the observation tower is now provided by the recently created Association of Friends of Store Mosse.

This volunteer assistance is useful and necessary, but it would be better employed if the balance between professionals and volunteers were improved.

The buildings within the Park boundaries - which are of some architectural and historical interest - have all been very remarkably well restored and fitted out. They are used to accommodate overnight visitors or rented for short stays; there are about one thousand overnight stays annually.

Park surveillance is limited. Fortunately, visitors to the Park are well-behaved and there have been hardly any serious problems. The advent of new sports, such as mountain biking, has not created any problems. The sole incident worth noting in recent years was the case of an off-road vehicle which had got "lost" in the Park in August 1997 and had got stuck, a great effort for its removal.

3.8. Park limits and buffer zone

There are still plans to continue to purchase land around the limits when opportunities arise, to expand the Park and in particular to include the interesting peatland lying to the north-east. This action is not regarded as urgent. This peatland is already protected by other provisions, and purchases pose delicate problems of financing and of the loss of hunting rights. It should be borne in mind that under Swedish law, a parcel of land may only be included in a national Park if it is owned by the state.

There is no buffer zone proper, but on the whole, the situation is satisfactory. A large part of the perimeter is surrounded by forest, most of it publicly owned, which acts as an excellent buffer zone.

In the Södratorp - Björnekullen region, the approaches to the Park are wooded or extensively farmed. Moreover, a watercourse flowing into Lake Herrestads acts as a boundary and prevents any fertiliser or pesticide from filtering into the peatbogs. A similar situation exists to the north-east of the Park, whilst in the north, large areas of peatland adjoining the Park are protected.

Adalen continues to be the most sensitive region, where major peat digging work is under way on the basis of rights which existed before the Park was set up. The operating licence has just been renewed for ten years, ie until 2005, which is regrettable, but will have hardly any effect on the current impact. With peat pits stretching as far as the Park boundary, the buffer zone is effectively inside the outer limits. The scope for limiting the drainage effects on the peatlands in the Park should be studied as well as restoration measures to be introduced once operations stop.

Near Törestorp, to the west of the Park, noise can still be heard inside the Park from a sort of Wild West amusement park.

The development plans of the municipalities concerned are under review. The new drafts will be considered by the County, which will see to it that the uses planned for the area surrounding the Store Mosse Park are compatible with its conservation.

3.9. Scientific monitoring

A bird list has recently been updated (Damberg, Dan. 1995. Store Mosse Nationalpark och dess Faglar). The list contains all known sightings and includes nearly 230 species.

Botanical observations are regularly made by interested amateurs, and Dan Damberg has just added *Goodyera repens* to the list of Park orchids. There is regular monitoring of the vegetation in the maintained areas.

In view of the Park's interest, it would be useful to encourage bigger research activities, notably in applied ecology. The Park should also be more closely involved in the work carried out and informed of the results.

3.10. Cultural aspects

Work is under way on combining existing information on historical and cultural aspects of the Park so as to add to information for visitors and make it more interesting.

3.11. Roads and railway lines

A road and a railway line cross the Park at its narrowest point. Their impact is acceptable. The speed limit on the road has now been set at 70 km per hour. For safety reasons, a pedestrian crossing has just been built over the railway line, which is now used by high-speed trains.

4. CONCLUSION

By way of conclusion, we unreservedly recommend the renewal of the European Diploma, Category A, for the Store Mosse National Park. The value of the site and its size, its remarkable state of preservation and existing facilities for the public testify to its European interest.

The renewal should be accompanied by a rider concerning the following recommendations, which are meant to improve protection of the Park's natural and landscape values in the long term:

1. finalise without delay the management plan and the vegetation map;
2. ensure a better balance between professionals and volunteers involved in Park management and visitor information;
3. verify that regional development plans being drawn up by the municipalities concerned take due account of the Park's conservation requirements;
4. more actively encourage scientific research in the Park, notably studies that are useful for its management.
5. monitor the Park's general hydrology, notably the management of the main canal and the level of the lakes, the flooding of the disused peat pits near Kittla kull and the dependance of the central area on external water supplies;
6. monitor the impact of peat digging on the outer edges of the Park and make provision in good time for a restoration plan.

COUNCIL OF EUROPE

COMMITTEE OF MINISTERS

RESOLUTION (93) 18

ON THE RENEWAL OF THE EUROPEAN DIPLOMA AWARDED TO THE STORE MOSSE NATIONAL PARK (SWEDEN)

*(Adopted by the Committee of Ministers on 3 May 1993
at the 493rd meeting of the Ministers' Deputies)*

The Committee of Ministers, in accordance with Article 15.a of the Statute of the Council of Europe,
Having regard to Resolution (65) 6 instituting the European Diploma;

Having regard to Resolution (88) 11 on the award of the European Diploma to Store Mosse National Park (Sweden);

Having regard to the proposals of the Steering Committee for the Conservation and Management of the Environment and Natural Habitats (CDPE),

Renews the European Diploma, Category A, awarded to the Store Mosse National Park until 13 June 1998;

Attaches the following recommendations to the renewal:

1. take stock of the park's general hydrology, especially the management of the main canal, lake level management, opportunities for re-flooding disused peat pits near Kittla Kull and the park's dependence on external water supplies;
2. guarantee a constructive and efficient transition between the team (conscientious objectors) currently responsible for receiving visitors and carrying out most maintenance work and the new team to be employed on these activities;
3. pursue more actively projects for enlarging the park as and when opportunities arise;
4. ensure that the park management authorities can oppose any drastic changes in the conditions in which timber is worked and for farming on the park limits or any other development projects which would be incompatible due to their proximity to the park;
5. try to find ways of limiting the influence of peat extraction which is still authorised on the park limits;
6. set up more detailed scientific surveillance of the natural habitats in the park, for instance by producing a vegetation map as a reference base.

CONSEIL DE L'EUROPE

COMITÉ DES MINISTRES

RÉSOLUTION (93) 18

CONCERNANT LE RENOUELEMENT DU DIPLÔME EUROPÉEN OCTROYÉ AU PARC NATIONAL DE STORE MOSSE (SUÈDE)

*(adoptée par le Comité des Ministres le 3 mai 1993,
lors de la 493^e réunion des Délégués des Ministres)*

Le Comité des Ministres, en vertu de l'article 15.a du Statut du Conseil de l'Europe,

Vu la Résolution (65) 6 instituant le Diplôme européen;

Vu la Résolution (88) 11 concernant l'octroi du Diplôme européen au Parc national de Store Mosse (Suède);

Vu les propositions du Comité directeur pour la protection et la gestion de l'environnement et du milieu naturel (CDPE),

Renouvelle jusqu'au 13 juin 1998 le Diplôme européen octroyé au Parc national de Store Mosse dans la catégorie A;

Assortit le renouvellement des recommandations suivantes:

1. faire le point sur l'hydrologie générale du parc, notamment sur la gestion du canal principal, la gestion du niveau des lacs, les possibilités de remise en eau des anciennes fosses d'exploitation vers Kittla Kull et la dépendance du parc en apports d'eau extérieurs;
2. garantir une transition constructive et efficace entre l'équipe (objecteurs de conscience) actuellement chargée de l'accueil des visiteurs et de la majorité des travaux d'entretien et la nouvelle équipe qui va être engagée pour prendre en charge ces activités;
3. poursuivre plus activement les projets d'agrandissement du parc, en fonction des opportunités;
4. assurer que les responsables de la gestion du parc puissent s'opposer à d'éventuels changements drastiques des conditions d'exploitation des forêts ou terres agricoles en limite du parc, ou à des projets de développement incompatibles avec le voisinage de celui-ci;
5. rechercher les éventuels moyens de limiter l'influence de l'exploitation de la tourbe, encore autorisée en limite du parc;
6. mettre en place une surveillance scientifique plus détaillée des milieux naturels du parc, notamment en établissant une carte de la végétation comme base de référence.

APPENDIX II

DRAFT RESOLUTION

**on the renewal of the European Diploma
to the Store Mosse National Park**

The Committee of Ministers, under the terms of Article 15.a of the Statute of the Council of Europe,

Having regard to Resolution (65) 6 instituting the European Diploma;

Having regard to Resolution (93) 18 on the award of the European Diploma, Category A, to Store Mosse National Park;

Having regard to the proposals of the Committee for the Activities of the Council of Europe in the Field of Biological and Landscape Diversity (CO-DBP);

Renews the European Diploma, Category A, awarded to the Store Mosse National Park, until 13 June 2003;

Attaches the following recommendations to the renewal:

- Finalise without delay the management plan and the vegetation map;
- Ensure a better balance between professionals and volunteers involved in Park management and visitor information;
- Verify that regional development plans being drawn up by the municipalities concerned take due account of the Park's conservation requirements;
- More actively encourage scientific research in the Park, notably studies that are useful for its management.
- Monitor the Park's general hydrology, notably the management of the main canal and the level of the lakes, the flooding of the disused peat pits near Kittla kull and the dependance of the central area on external water supplies;
- Monitor the impact of peat digging on the outer edges of the Park and make provision in good time for a restoration plan.