

**Resolution CM/ResDip(2008)1
on the revised regulations for the European Diploma for Protected Areas**

*(Adopted by the Committee of Ministers on 20 February 2008
at the 1018th meeting of the Ministers' Deputies)¹*

Appendix 5: Model plan for annual reports

Annual report for the year

Annual reports should describe the changes that have taken place since the previous year in dynamic terms of management and function and not be limited to basic data. Any new text or map introducing a change in the situation of the area should be attached to the annual report.

State: Finland

Name of the area: Ekenäs Archipelago National Park

Year and number of years since the award or renewal of the European Diploma for Protected Areas:
renewal year 2021 (Diploma extended until 2024 due to COVID), 3 year

Central authority concerned:

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¹ As amended by Resolution CM/ResDip(2014)2 on 2 July 2014 at the 1204th meeting of the Ministers' Deputies.

1. **Conditions:** List here all conditions which were attached to the award or the renewal of the European Diploma. Explain either how the conditions have been totally complied with or detail the progress in complying with the conditions. Please also indicate any unresolved difficulties that you have encountered.

1. within one year finalise and complete the approval process of the management plan (master plan), which itself will include plans to enlarge the national park.

Management plan was accepted year 2012, after which the area has been managed accordingly. Management plan included plans to enlarge the national park. The Finnish Ministry of Environment started the enactment process of nature reserves in Uusimaa region. The planned enlargement area of the National Park, Segelskär (appr. 6200 ha to be established by a government statute) next to national park, was included in the process. The enactment process of the areas on land were finalized in May 2021. Marine areas including Segelskär were however left for further preparation, and they are still waiting for the approval.

2. Recommendations: List here all recommendations which were attached to the award or the renewal of the European Diploma. Explain either how the recommendations have been totally complied with or detail the progress in complying with the recommendations. Please also indicate any unresolved difficulties that you have encountered.

1. make efforts to implement all aspects of the new management plan;

Complying as planned. Implementation of the management is described in the following sections.

2. inform the Secretariat of the results of the management effectiveness evaluations (Report on the state of the parks) which will be made at regular period five-year intervals;

Totally complied. Ekenäs archipelago NATA (Natura state assessment) was finalized in March 2022. Assessment covers the entire Natura 2000 area (Ekenäs and Hangö Archipelago and Pojo Bay, FI0100005). Ekenäs archipelago NP was chosen as a pilot area for the Protected Area Management Effectiveness evaluation (PAME) conducted in Finland in year 2023. The detailed assessment of the Ekenäs archipelago NP was done via METT approach (Management Effectiveness Tracking Tool) as a part of this assessment.

3. continue the management of habitat types and species; particular attention should be paid to:

- the inventory of marine habitats and the improvement of the methods involved; and
- the restoration of damaged communities and the control of alien invasive species;

Management of terrestrial habitats was continued in year 2023 including:

- Continuation of the pasture management with a new grazing entrepreneur in Näset, Jussarö and Rödjan. Pasture in Rödjan was expanded to the approx. 2.7 hectares.
- Clearing of young trees/junipers and burnouts in the Gaddarna island group to manage open natural habitats (meadows, moors) and to enhance conditions for endangered species (namely marine birds and butterfly *Parnassius apollo*)
- Removal of alien species, namely *Acer pseudoplatanus*, *Rosa rugosa* (remaining growths) and alien predators mink and raccoon dog
- Clearing of young alders in the coastal meadows in Fladalandet and Näseörarna
- Removal of white-tailed deer from Jussarö

*Two potential eelgrass (*Zostera marina*) restoration sites called Skyffelskär and Mossklobben were inventoried in more detail by the EU project Biodiversea LIFE IP (actions A9/C6) in year 2023. Sites were recognized as historical habitats for eelgrass and new transplantations would thus strengthen the eelgrass population in the NP. New transplantations are planned to be implemented in summer 2024.*

The Ekenäs Archipelago NP was recognized as a potential monitoring site for many indicators, which measure particularly the state of important habitat forming key species in Biodiversea project (actions A6/C4). Due to historical inventories conducted in 1993, combined with up-to-date underwater VELMU-data and new planned monitoring inventories in the future would enable long time series. Planning of the monitoring continues in spring 2024.

4. continue to pay close attention to the recreational facilities and educational issues, in particular:

- improve the safety, quality and quantity of the infrastructure;
- further develop customer service and interpretation; and
- raise the public's awareness of nature conservation in Ekenäs Archipelago National Park;

Complying as planned. Number of visits to the NP in year 2022 was approx. 65 000, of which Rödjan and Jussarö covered 9 700 and 11 800, respectively. Wooden duckboards and signs were renewed on the island Jussarö and signs renewed in Rödjan.

5. review and where necessary renew the regulations of the national park within two years;

Totally complied. Regulations given in year 2013.

6. deepen and promote the collaboration with local stakeholders, especially nature tourism operators.

Complying as planned. Several collaborative events between P&W Finland and local stakeholders have been organized during the year. Entrepreneur on Jussarö enhanced the possibilities for the island visitors to sort their wastes.

3. Site Management: List here any changes to the European Diploma holding site management, in relation to both terrestrial and aquatic environments (as appropriate), and in relation to staff and finances, since the last annual report was submitted to the Council of Europe. Please also indicate any unresolved difficulties that you have encountered.

No changes. Management continued according to the accepted management plan. Funding from the Helmi-program brought resources to National Park and P&W Finland was able to continue important habitat restorations. Actions related to Biodiversea project were also conducted in Ekenäs archipelago NP.

Parliamentary elections were organized in Finland in March 2023, after which new government and national budget were formed. Reductions for appropriations for P&W Finland were presented, which may limit resources also in the Ekenäs archipelago NP in the coming years. There is also an organizational reform in progress in P&W Finland. It is yet uncertain how these affect the management of the NP.

4. Boundaries: Give details of any changes to the boundaries of the European Diploma holding site since the last annual report was submitted to the Council of Europe. If there are any changes, please attach an appropriate map to this report. Please also indicate any unresolved difficulties that you have encountered.

No changes

5. Other information: List here any other information about the European Diploma holding site which you consider should be provided to the Council of Europe.

The logo of the European Diploma is presented in the information boards at the national park and in the National Park brochure. The logo is also presented in the webpage of the National Park.

In June 2023, the Ekenäs Archipelago NP had an honour to receive an expert from the Council of Europe (Mrs. Blanca Ramos) for the on-site appraisal for the renewal of the Diploma. The appraisal visit was acknowledged by local newspapers, e.g. Västra Nyland and Åbo Underrättelser.

Representatives of Ekenäs archipelago NP participated in the EUROPARC Conference 2023 in Leeuwarden on the 3-6th October.

The following sections of the form should only be filled in if your area is in the year before a renewal of its European Diploma for Protected Areas, i.e. year 4 after the award of the European Diploma or year 9 after its renewal

6. Natural heritage (general abiotic description: geomorphology, geology and hydrogeology, habitats, flora, fauna, landscape) – State of conservation

6.1. Environment: changes or deterioration in the environment, of natural or anthropic origin, accidental or permanent, actual or anticipated – *Eutrophication of the Baltic Sea and the island overgrowth (NO_x & CO₂) are the main factors which affect terrestrial and marine environment in the NP. Many terrestrial habitats and traditional rural biotopes (meadows, heathland, wooded pastures etc.) require continuous management to avoid the overgrowth.*

Eutrophication is been the biggest threat in the Baltic Sea. Excess nutrients mainly from land (agriculture, forestry) cause eutrophication, which accelerates growth of annual filamentous algae and changes the species composition of marine habitats. The inner and middle Ekenäs archipelago have no strong currents, which would enable mixing of the stratified water layers. Instead, nutrients build up in the water causing eutrophication, which can be observed in increased blue-green algae blooms and anoxic conditions on sea floor. Filamentous and other algae also drift on shore, which accelerates overgrowth (e.g. excess growth of reed).

Climate change is another significant threat, but its effects on the Baltic Sea and marine environment are not yet fully known. It is however predicted that Nordic winters become warmer and moister causing the Baltic Sea to become warmer and less saline. Also shortening of winter ice can have an impact on the coastal habitats in the NP.

6.2. Flora and vegetation: changes in the plant population and in the vegetational cover; presumed causes – *Eutrophication and overgrowth are the dominant factors which cause degradation of terrestrial and marine habitats and their rare and endangered fauna. Impacts of eutrophication and overgrowth has been mitigated in the terrestrial habitats via clearing of young trees and junipers, burnouts in the meadows and moors, grazing of pastures. This work needs to be continued periodically to maintain positive situation. Forest restoration and management of broad-leaved deciduous forests was also*

continued in recent years. The biggest effort in forest and mire restoration have however been done already in 2008-2014.

There are only small chances to tackle eutrophication locally in the marine environment. Regional and national actions are however needed to reduce nutrient flows. The first attempts to restore old eelgrass meadows via implantations were done in 2020. Tests have been successful and they will be continued as a part of Biodiversea project. Restoration of flads and lagoons will also be developed and tested in the project.

Invasive species *Rosa rugosa* has been effectively removed from the NP and only small growths have been found in recent years. Species however occasionally appears in the archipelago outside NP. Regular monitoring and actions to remove new growths are thus needed.

- 6.3. Fauna: changes in the sedentary or migratory populations; congregating, egg-laying and breeding grounds – *Management of open island habitats and traditional rural biotopes safeguards the living conditions of many endangered species as well.*

The biggest threat for marine birds are alien predators, namely mink and raccoon dog. Also increasing number of white-tailed eagles has had negative effect on birds like eider or geese. Marine bird populations have also shifted closer to mainland due to increased predation. P&W Finland has no regular bird monitoring in the NP. Inventories are rather jointly conducted with research facilities and Birdlife Finland. Thorough studies of the marine bird fauna in the outer Ekenäs archipelago were conducted in 2008 and 2020. There is a need for regular bird monitoring in outermost archipelago, which is the most vulnerable area for changes.

Invasive predators, mink and raccoon dog, have been removed from the Ekenäs archipelago to protect the marine bird fauna. Both species are however still present and further work is needed. The removal of invasive predators has been done in cooperation with local hunters. Removal of white-tailed deer was continued in Jussarö. Removal is based on permits granted by P&W Finland.

7. Cultural heritage and socio-economic context

7.1. Cultural heritage

- 7.1.1. Changes concerning cultural heritage – *No changes. Management of the traditional rural biotopes also maintains the scenic values of the archipelago.*

7.2. Socio-economic context

- 7.2.1. Changes concerning the socio-economic context – *No changes*

8. Education and scientific interest

8.1. Visitors – Information policy

- 8.1.1. Arrangements for receiving and informing the public (building, booklets, maps, cards, etc.) – *Material about NP can be found in Finnish, Swedish and English in the web page (<https://www.nationalparks.fi/ekenasarchipelagonp>). The visitor center in Ekenäs was closed in year 2020, after which the information services has concentrated on the electronic communication (webpages, social media). Collaboration in marketing is also done with the City of Raseborg.*

- 8.1.2. Frequentation by visitors and behavior (number, distribution in time and space) – *The number of visits in the NP has grown steadily in recent years being currently around 60 000-65 000 per year. This is due to the development of services, mooring places and enhanced access via organized boat trips. Most people visit NP only in June-August. Approximately 88 % of visitors are Finnish and their main motivation to come are scenery and nature. The largest part (almost 80 %) of the visitors visit only two areas (in and around Jussarö and Rödjan). The reasons for this are e.g., their location close to fairways, easy access and services like toilets and fireplaces. New services have also been developed in Jussarö by the new entrepreneur.*

- 8.1.3. Special visits (distinguished persons, groups, etc.) – *Ekenäs Archipelago NP received an expert from the Council of Europe (Mrs. Blanca Ramos) for the on-site appraisal for the renewal of the Diploma in June 2023. Volunteers have removed *Rosa rugosa* and collecting plastic trash yearly. During these weekend camps, environmental education (discussions, lectures) has been active.*

8.2. Scientific research

- 8.2.1. Current or completed research (observation, experimentation, etc.; identification or inventory of the species listed in the appendices to the Bern Convention, etc.) – *Inventories for the terrestrial habitats listed in the Habitats Directive were conducted for the most parts of the NP already in years 2004-*

2012. Update of the terrestrial habitat data would however be needed. Data from the areas surrounding the NP (namely state-owned and privately protected areas) have been collected also more recently. Monitoring of underwater nature via VELMU project has produced significant data about marine habitats. Collection of underwater data was described in detail in the Diploma report in year 2020.

Data from the endangered species is mainly collected from marine birds (check section 6.3.). Other species data is scarcer. Data from invertebrates are based mainly on observations from researchers and nature enthusiasts except Jussarö, in which a regular monitoring of Micro- and Macrolepidoptera is made.

- 8.2.2. Scientific publications – Ekenäs archipelago is actively used to study the coastal and marine ecosystem of the Baltic Sea. Research organizations actively working in the area are e.g. Tvärminne Zoological Station (University of Helsinki), Novia University of Applied Sciences and Natural Resources Institute Finland. Studies in the NP has been conducted as a part of the collaboration projects, in which P&W Finland is a partner (e.g. VELMU, Biodiversea) or via independent research projects, for which necessary research permissions has been granted by P&W Finland.

Recent studies have produced new data for example about the importance of flads for fish spawning (Westerbom et al 2023. *Front. Mar. Sci.*, vol 10/2023) or the biodiversity of rocky reefs (Westerbom & Koivisto 2022. *Front. Mar. Sci.*, vol 9/2022). Published articles can be found for example via Research Gate or Google Scholar.

9. Site description (vulnerability, protection status, ownership, documentation)

- 9.1. Changes in legislation or regulations – The regulations of the NP were updated in June 2023 via Act 526/2023. New regulations are based directly on Finnish Nature Protection Act (9/2023). In practice, the update brought no significant changes to the regulations.
- 9.2. Changes in ownership title (conversion to public property, rentals, etc.) – No changes. National Park is owned by the State of Finland and the area is governed by Parks & Wildlife Finland.
- 9.3. Extension or transfer, new uses (for example, conversion into total reserve) – No changes

10. Site management (management plans, budget and personnel)

- 10.1. Improvements made
- 10.1.1. Ecological action affecting the flora and biotopes; controls of fauna – Management and restoration actions are described in section 6.2.
- 10.1.2. Protection against the elements (fire, water regime) – No changes
- 10.1.3. Approaches and thoroughfares (paths, roads, car parks, signposting, fencing, etc.) – Duckboards and signs in the nature trail in Jussarö and signs in Rödjan were renewed. These two areas are currently the most visited sites for NP visitors. Regular boat trips are organized by local entrepreneur from Ekenäs to Jussarö during holiday season with ferry Suometar (88 seats). NP can also be accessed by own boat or via taxi cruises ordered separately.
- 10.1.4. Field equipment (hides and study facilities) – No changes
- 10.1.5. Waste management – Entrepreneur on Jussarö provided chances for guests to sort their wastes. The principle of litter-free hiking, as stated by the Outdoor Etiquette of P&W Finland (<https://www.nationalparks.fi/hikinginfinland/visitorguidelines>), is applied also in the Ekenäs archipelago NP. Visitors are thus required to carry their own thrash with them and bring them to recycling sites outside NP.
- 10.1.6. Use of renewable energy systems – No changes
- 10.2. Management
- 10.2.1. Administrative department: changes made – No changes
- 10.2.2. Wardens' department: changes made – No changes
- 10.2.3. Internal policing measures – No changes
- 10.2.4. Infringement of regulations and damage; legal action – Only minor infringements of regulations were discovered and no legal actions were taken.

11. Influence of the award of the European Diploma for Protected Areas

Diploma underlines high ecological values of the area but also outstanding scientific, cultural, and aesthetic values. The diploma has guided the work carried out in National Park and been an advantage when applying for project funding. Annual reporting has been a good tool to see and evaluate the achievements and work.