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

CO-DBP

Group of specialists - European Diploma

Bullerö and Långviksskär Nature Reserves
(Sweden)

Category B

RENEWAL

Expert report by
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(Switzerland)

No representative of the Council of Europe Secretariat took part in the inspection visit.

Resolution (93) 19 granting the European Diploma is reproduced in Appendix I; in Appendix II, the Secretariat presents a draft resolution for possible renewal in 1998.

1. INTRODUCTION

The European Diploma, Category B, was awarded to the Bullerö and Långviksskär Nature Reserves in June 1988. It was renewed in 1993. The author visited the Park on 7 and 8 August 1997, with a view to the next renewal, due in 1998.

MM Anders Bergquist of the Swedish National Environment Protection Board, John Ahlbom of the Stockholm Archipelago Foundation, and Hans Englund of the Stockholm County Administration took part in the inspection, with Mr Johan STAKE, Manager of the Bullerö Reserve.

The itinerary, by boat and on foot, was very well chosen and the visit impeccably organised. Our warm thanks are due to those whose helpfulness and hospitality contributed to making it both successful and pleasant.

2. SITE AND VALUE OF THE RESERVES

The Bullerö and Långviksskär Nature Reserves are part of the Stockholm Archipelago, which comprises some 24,000 islands, 150 of them inhabited year-round. This is a very popular leisure and recreation area, particularly for Stockholmers. There are approximately 40,000 week-end houses in the area and more than 50,000 boats with sleeping facilities.

The Bullerö and Långviksskär Nature Reserves were formerly very large private estates, and they have kept their wild character, with very few buildings or facilities. They have exceptional landscape qualities.

The Reserve has an area of 8,200 ha and includes roughly 1,200 islands of all sizes, consisting of gneiss bedrock, mostly covered with birches, heather and some pines. There are also several small peat bogs, as well as wetland areas with rushes and reeds. Four hundred species of vascular plant have been recorded.

On the whole, the forests are young, since most of the islands were extensively cleared to provide farming land or firewood.

The area is a nesting site for some 100 species of bird, including the white-tailed eagle (*Haliaeetus albicilla*) and large numbers of eiders (*Somateria mollissima*). The aquatic fauna include both freshwater species, such as pike (*Esox lucius*) and saltwater species, such as herring (*Clupea harengus*).

The Bullerö and Långviksskär Nature Reserves are owned almost entirely by the Stockholm Archipelago Foundation and are subject to the usual reserve regulations. For historical reasons, the two reserves are managed more or less independently.

3. MANAGEMENT

There is a detailed management plan for each of the reserves. The chief activities covered are:

3.1 Visitor reception facilities and surveillance

The Bullerö and Långviksskär nature reserves attract a great many visitors in private boats: up to 43,000 every season for Bullerö and 30,000 for Långviksskär. The figures vary greatly from year to year, depending on the weather.

There are also day visitors, most of whom come to Bullerö on package tours. Their number has recently increased significantly, since a cruise ship has been making a weekly scheduled stop. Bullerö, where visitors concentrate, has simple facilities for them - an exhibition, a nature trail and a culture trail too. Fortunately, there are no snack bars, restaurants or other commercial activities of the kind which might be expected.

To cope with the influx, and with the numerous boats which moor near the islands, the Foundation uses press campaigns, leaflets, etc. to inform visitors and alert them to the need to be careful. It also provides simple but effective toilet and rubbish collection facilities on a few easily accessible islands. The wardens make regular inspection rounds.

Self-discipline also plays quite an active role. Most visitors come regularly and attach great importance to the site's being clean and tidy. Its nature limits pressure on the land; visitors instinctively walk on the bare rock, rather than the vegetation, and this reduces the amount of trampling.

The site is managed by the Stockholm Archipelago Foundation with financial support from the Swedish Environmental Protection Agency. The Foundation is also very active elsewhere. A new foundation is to be set up shortly. It will take over the activities of the current one, but its responsibilities will be even greater, as it will also manage the 2-3,000 ha which the city of Stockholm owns on the Archipelago.

The funds available for management of the Bullerö and Långviksskär Nature Reserves remain limited and are just enough to cover present needs.

There are no admission fees, even for the exhibition and trails on Bullerö. With visitors increasing and costs rising, charging needs to be considered, particularly for groups visiting on package tours.

3.2 Restoration and maintenance of buildings

Major efforts are regularly made to restore and maintain the reserves' existing buildings, respecting the original style and materials. Houses which are not occupied by wardens or the islands' few residents are rented out to visitors or offered as short-term accommodation in exchange for maintenance work. A house on Långviksskär is offered free of charge to interested artists for short periods. No new buildings are planned.

3.3 Maintenance of certain farming activities

Several islands were regularly inhabited up to the 1940s. The residents raised livestock and farmed a number of meadows and pastures reclaimed from the forest, which firewood collection had left in a very poor state. These grassy areas helped to diversify the landscape and environment, but the forest has now absorbed most of them.

Nowadays, some cattle are still regularly kept on the islands of Bullerö and Ragskär in the summer, and this means that the pastures are maintained. Some hay meadow areas have been reclaimed and are maintained on Bullerö and Långviksskär, the aim being to show how they were traditionally used and also to promote the fauna and flora associated with this type of environment.

Traditional breeds, similar to those found on the islands a few decades ago, have recently been included among the livestock.

In a few places, trees, especially ash, have been extensively cut back to give them the pollarded look which was typical when they were used as additional fodder for cattle.

3.4 Protection of fauna

Birds are the main focus of attention here. Protection activities include regular counts and monitoring of colonies or nesting areas. Access to the most vulnerable breeding zones is prohibited during key periods. These prohibitions are clearly signposted, but surveillance has recently had to be increased after several cases of non-compliance.

Campaigns to destroy mink, a carnivore which escaped from mink farms a long time ago, are organised regularly and have yielded good results in recent years.

The white-tailed eagle is the focus of careful monitoring and a feeding programme which is intended, among other things, to provide it with food low in pesticides. A second couple is now nesting in the reserves.

There are some reports of an increase in the number of deer. There are no signs of overgrazing, but there may be local effects on vegetation, since deer prefer to graze on dicotyledons, which benefits Graminaceae.

3.5 Scientific research

Some of the meadows which are again being mown are botanically monitored. A useful further step would be to enclose a few small areas in mown and grazed meadows to provide better points for comparison.

Some meadows are mown rather early, but this has to be done before the main tourist season. In any case, these environments have no exceptional flora.

Bullerö and Långviksskär are covered by the Foundation's project, «A living archipelago – protection and management of fauna on the Stockholm Archipelago». This incorporates work already under way on the white-tailed eagle and extends the research to the Caspian Tern and to the alcidae (auks) - the Guillemot (*Uria aalge*), Black Guillemot (*Cepphus grylle*) and Razorbill (*Alca torda*) - and also to the Grey Seal (found on small islands on the seaward side of the Archipelago). Started in 1991, the project is contributing usefully to management of the Archipelago's vulnerable species.

3.6 The proposed national park

The proposed national park, which would incorporate the Bullerö and Långviksskär Nature Reserves and extend much further to the south, is still under discussion.

Although still a live issue, the project is unlikely to reach fruition in the immediate future. The most interesting islands, particularly Kastön, are owned by a private foundation, which takes great care to protect their natural assets, but has no wish to part with them. Under Swedish law, national parks may be established only on state-owned land.

4. ACTION TAKEN ON RECOMMENDATIONS

4.1 Monitoring of pressure from tourists

The number and behaviour of visitors are both closely monitored. The few problems - disturbance of nesting sites, for instance - have been highlighted in the reports and appropriate action taken.

4.2 The balance between cultural and natural aspects

This balance is maintained, particularly by the efforts made to restore buildings and also to revert to the grazing and mowing of meadows. Bullerö has a nature trail for visitors, and a culture trail too. "Aquatic" aspects might be given a little more attention.

4.3 A global approach to managing the two reserves and disseminating information on them

The two reserves definitely form a whole, but are still managed more or less independently, mainly because two different people are responsible for them locally.

5. CONCLUSION

In conclusion, we recommend that the European Diploma, Category B, awarded to the Bullerö and Långviksskär nature reserves be renewed.

The following recommendations, which aim at protecting the reserves' natural and landscape assets more effectively in the long term, and encouraging the managers to continue their efforts to improve visitor facilities and management of the islands, should be attached to renewal:

1. an adequate budget and resources should be provided to cope with the growing number of visitors;
2. the possibility and advisability of charging admission to the information centre on Bullerö, especially for groups visiting on package tours, should be considered;
3. a good balance should be maintained between information and research on the reserves' historical aspects and on their natural aspects, especially aquatic life.

COUNCIL OF EUROPE COMMITTEE OF MINISTERS

RESOLUTION (93) 19

ON THE RENEWAL OF THE EUROPEAN DIPLOMA AWARDED TO BULLERÖ AND LÅNGVIKSSKÄR NATURE RESERVES (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) 12 awarding the European Diploma to the Bullerö and Långviksskär Nature Reserves (Sweden);

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

Renews until 12 June 1998 the European Diploma, Category B, awarded to the Bullerö and Långviksskär Nature Reserves ;

Attaches the following recommendations to the renewal :

1. monitor the number of visitors and the trends in their behaviour in order to enable appropriate measures to be taken in time, if need be, so as to adjust the impact of tourism to the sensitivity of the environment and to increase the number of wardens ;
2. maintain a sound balance between information on the historical aspects of the reserves and that relating to nature aspects, and increase the general information available on the reserves at places most frequented by visitors ;
3. increase the global approach of management and information on both neighbouring nature reserves of Bullerö and Långviksskär, whilst taking into account the marine environment.

CONSEIL DE L'EUROPE

COMITÉ DES MINISTRES

RÉSOLUTION (93) 19

CONCERNANT LE RENOUELEMENT DU DIPLÔME EUROPÉEN OCTROYÉ AUX RÉSERVES NATURELLES DE BULLERÖ ET LÅNGVIKSSKÄR (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) 12 concernant l'octroi du Diplôme européen aux Réserves naturelles de Bullerö et Långviksskär (Suède);

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

Renouvelle jusqu'au 12 juin 1998 le Diplôme européen octroyé aux Réserves naturelles de Bullerö et Långviksskär dans la catégorie B;

Assortit le renouvellement des recommandations suivantes :

1. poursuivre le suivi du nombre de visiteurs et de l'évolution de leur comportement afin de pouvoir prendre à temps, au cas où cela s'avérerait nécessaire, toute mesure utile pour adapter au besoin la pression touristique à la sensibilité du milieu et pour renforcer le gardiennage;
2. maintenir un bon équilibre entre les informations sur les aspects historiques des réserves et celles qui concernent les aspects relatifs à la nature, et renforcer l'information générale sur les réserves aux points de passages principaux du public;
3. renforcer l'approche globale de la gestion et de l'information sur les deux réserves naturelles voisines de Bullerö et Långviksskär, sans négliger les aspects marins.

APPENDIX II

DRAFT RESOLUTION

**on renewal of the European Diploma
to the Bullerö and Långviksskär Nature Reserves**

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 (93) 19 awarding the European Diploma to the Bullerö and Långviksskär Nature Reserves, Category B,

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 until 12 June 2003 the European Diploma awarded to the Bullerö and Långviksskär Nature Reserves,

Attaches the following recommendations to the renewal:

- an adequate budget and resources should be provided to cope with the growing number of visitors;
- the possibility and advisability of charging admission to the information centre on Bullerö, particularly for visiting groups on package tours, should be considered;
- a good balance should be maintained between information and research on historical aspects of the reserves and on natural aspects, especially aquatic life.