



**NATIONAL AUDIT OFFICE  
OF THE REPUBLIC OF LITHUANIA**

**PUBLIC AUDIT REPORT**

**ENSURING RESTORATION AND PROTECTION OF  
FISH RESOURCES IN INLAND WATER BODIES**

29 June 2012, No. VA-P-60-9-8  
Vilnius

**SUMMARY**

Audit started 01 August 2011  
Audit completed 29 June 2012

Full audit report in Lithuanian is available on the website  
of the National Audit Office: [www.vkontrole.lt](http://www.vkontrole.lt)

The structure of fish populations and communities is directly related to the ecological status of rivers and lakes. Fish resources are affected by commercial fishing, a large number of anglers, and fish-eating birds – big cormorants, which, according to scientists, eat about 500 tonnes of fish per year. Therefore it is important to ensure rational and sustainable restoration and protection of fish resources.

During the assessment of the restoration of fish resources in inland water bodies we established that if this work were performed in a more rational way, more water bodies could be stocked with fish and more funds could be collected for the Environmental Protection Programme.

Control of fishing in inland water bodies is one of the most burning issues in the fishery system. As a result of a shortage of human resources, officials of the Live

Environment Protection Inspectorate have not always been able to provide a prompt response to environmental violations. Another urgent problem, which has been continuously pointed out by scientists who do research on water bodies, is sale of net fishing equipment. A possibility for people who do not engage in commercial fishing to easily acquire net fishing equipment increases the likelihood of damage for fish resources.

The purpose of the audit was to assess whether restoration and protection of fish resources in inland waters has been carried out in a rational way:

- has restoration of fish resources been carried out in a rational manner?
- how has protection of fish resources been ensured?

The audit conclusions were drawn up upon analysis of how fish resources were being restored in 170 state water bodies where no permits had been issued for the use of a fishing area and how regional environmental protection departments were carrying out control of protection of fish resources and water bodies during the period 2008–2011.

The audit was conducted on the assumption that the audited and other entities provided detailed and objective information and that copies of documents corresponded to the original documents.

A plan for the implementation of audit recommendations is provided in Annex 2.

The scope and methodology of the audit are given in Annex 3.

## **Audit conclusions**

1. The restoration of fish resources in inland waters has been insufficiently rational, which has lead to failure to ensure sustainable functioning of the ecosystems of water bodies:
  - 1.1. annual national fish stocking plans were developed and approved without taking into account typical management plans for water bodies, scientists' recommendations, stocking carried out in previous years, and without any data on the status of fish resources in water bodies.
  - 1.2. in a number of cases water bodies were stocked without taking into account the activities carried out therein, i.e. water bodies intended for recreational fishing were stocked according to commercial or licensing norms and those

intended for commercial fishing were stocked according to the norms set for recreational fishing.

2. As a result of a shortage of human resources, officials of Live Environment Protection Inspectorates under Vilnius and Kaunas Regional Environmental Protection Departments have not always been able to provide a prompt response to environmental violations and so damage for fish resources has been done;
3. Unregulated sale of commercial fishing equipment makes it difficult for regional environmental protection departments to perform their function of control of the use, restoration and protection of fish resources.

## **Recommendations**

### **To the Ministry of Agriculture of the Republic of Lithuania:**

1. With a view to ensure rational and sustainable use and restoration of fish resources in inland water bodies:

- to take into account typical management plans for water bodies, scientists' recommendations, and the list of minimum norms for fish and crayfish stocking while developing national fish stocking plans;
- to set priorities and/or criteria for including water bodies into the national fish stocking plan.

### **To the Ministry of Environment of the Republic of Lithuania:**

2. With a view to ensure protection of fish resources:

- to provide for measures intended to increase control of the protection of fish resources;
- to provide for restrictions on selling net fishing equipment.