

Balancing the interests of agriculture and nature protection

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Content of the presentation

- NAO of Estonia audits on environmental impact of agriculture
- Audit on preservation of semi-natural communities:
 - Semi-natural communities?
 - Nature conservation *versus* agriculture
 - Audit questions
 - Main results

Examples of audits on environmental impact of agricultural activities:

- State activities in nature conservation management to guarantee the preservation of semi-natural communities (2015)
- Effectiveness of measures for improving the status of Lake Peipus (2012, cooperative audit with Russian Federation)
- Supervision over use of pesticides and mineral fertilisers (2010)
- Complex reduction of pollution in larger farms (2009)

Semi-natural (biotic) communities (also heritage communities) –

areas of natural biota, which have been continuously mown or used as pasture (wooded meadows and pastures, alvars, grasslands, coastal and flooded meadows etc)

Semi natural communities are valuable habitats for many species and the most biodiverse communities in Europe

These areas are used in agricultural purposes (if economically feasible)





Dunlin (*Calidris alpina schinzii*)

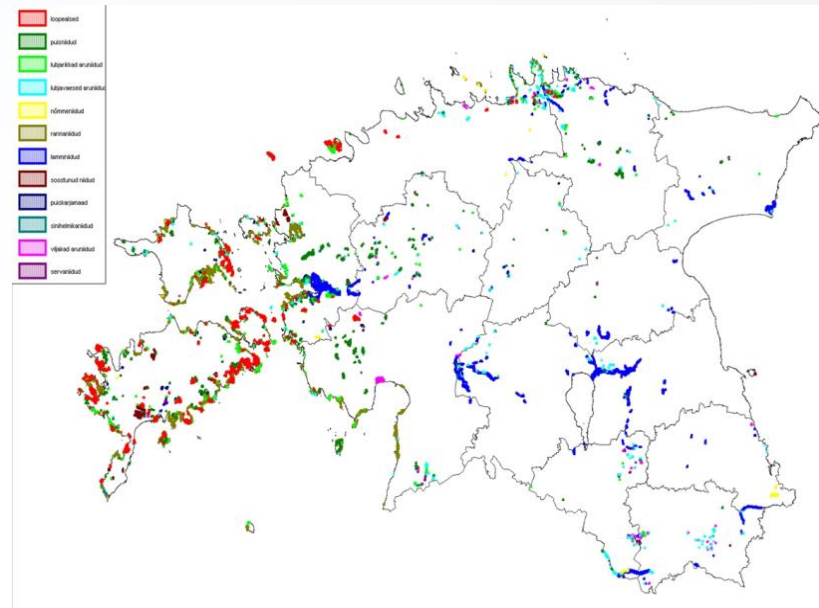


Lady's slipper orchid

Semi-natural communities need human intervention – mowing and herding



Situation in Estonia



Beginning of 20th century	1 800 000 ha (40% of Estonian territory)
Extant	130 000 ha (3%)
<i>out of which in protected areas</i>	75 000 ha
Objective 2013	35 000 ha
Maintained in 2013	25 000 ha
Objective 2020	45 000 ha
Objective 2030	60 000 ha (1,3%)

Values of semi-natural communities

Nature protection	Agriculture	Other
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• valuable habitats for different species• high biodiversity• rare species	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• natural grasslands• pastures• extensive use of land	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• heritage sites• beautiful landscapes• Nature tourism

Problems:

- Loss of biodiversity and valuable habitats
- Many these communities are not economically feasible to use for agricultural purposes
- State support is needed for preserving the values
- Land ownership and scattered management

What did we audit?

- Does the organisation of the protection of semi-natural communities support the achievement of the objectives?
- Does the state financing ensure the management (restoration and maintenance) of semi-natural communities?



Financing

- Restoration is financed from state budget, EU Life Nature
- Infrastructure: ERF, Structural Funds, state budget
- Maintenance is financed from Estonian Rural Development Plan (special measure under II CAP pillar: support for maintenance of semi-natural communities)
 - 2007–2013: 26.8 million euros
 - 2014–2020: 40.2 million euros

Main results (1)

- Objectives are not achieved (25 000 ha maintained instead of 35 000 by 2013)
- 25% of the semi-natural biotic communities restored in 2007-2012 have not been maintained since restoration, or their maintenance has not been done according to requirements
- There is not enough of supervision
- The support schemes developed for the maintenance and restoration of semi-natural biotic communities have not motivated the land maintainers sufficiently
- Not enough finances are planned to achieve the objectives
- Half of the semi-natural biotic communities on state land have not been maintained

Main results (2)

- Nature protection management is scattered
- The problems in the organisation and planning of the protected areas management have made it difficult to protect the semi-natural communities effectively
- It is unlikely that the state will achieve the objectives by 2020 and 2030 if there are no changes made in management



Thank you for your attention!

Audit summaries available in English at:

www.riigikontroll.ee > Publications > Audit reports > Ministry of the Environment or Ministry of the Rural Affairs

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