

Stakeholder engagement in the Ostrobothnian Regional Cormorant Management Plan

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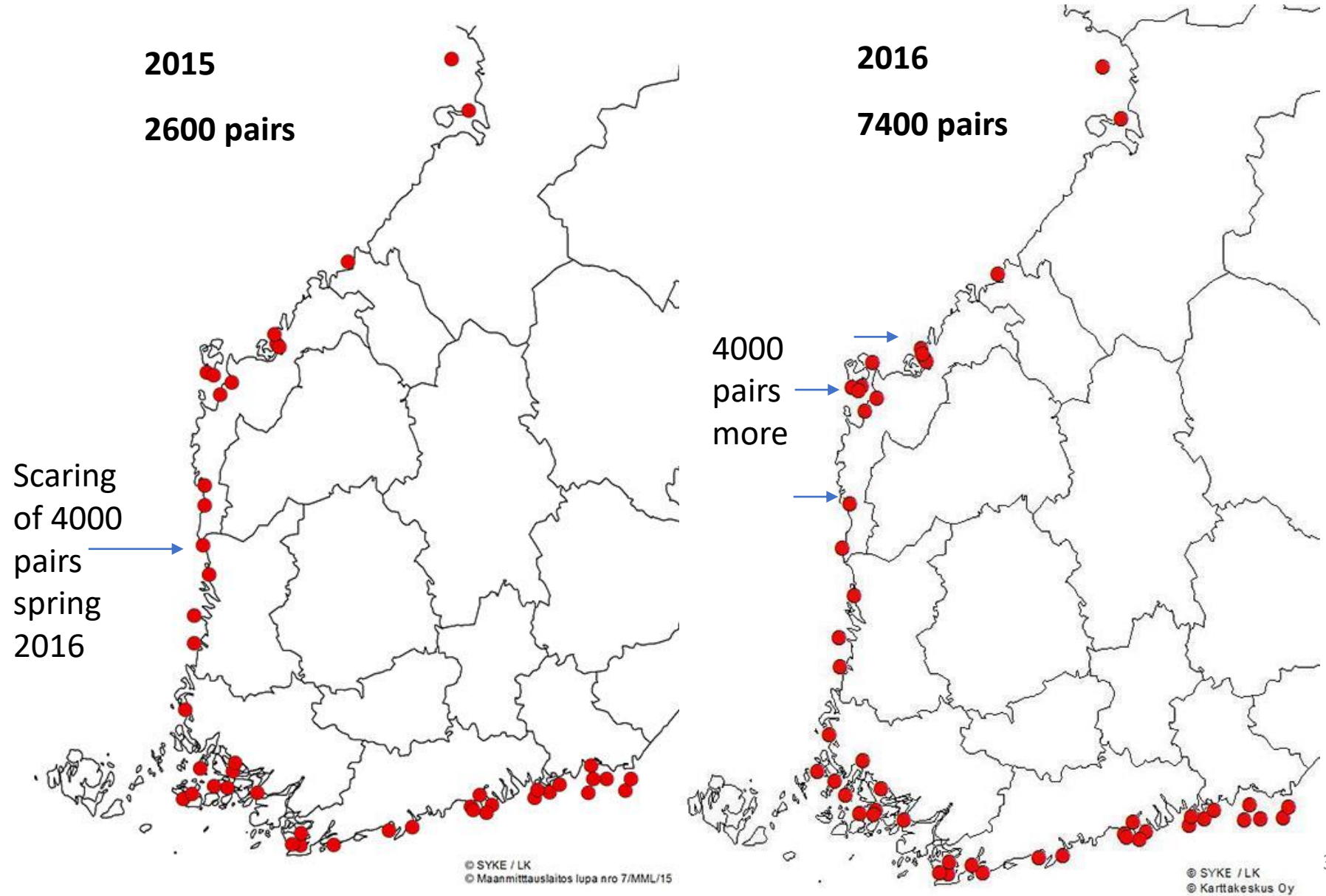
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Background to regional cormorants plans

- Ministry of Environment established a **national** cormorant working group with the aim to suggest measures that would reduce the problems caused by cormorants in november 2015.
- Report published 6.4.2016 (8 measures suggested, unanimous report)
- Ministry issued a guidance letter 17.5.2016 to the regional authorities in coastal areas **asking them to establish regional collaborative working groups** to manage problems related to cormorants.
- **Aims** of regional groups: to identify problem areas and situations, to develop suitable solutions **that satisfy everyone, if necessary make a management plan.**



Cormorants in Ostrobothnia 2015 and 2016



Preparation of a cormorant management plan in Ostrobothnian coastal area

- Regional cormorant working group in Ostrobothnia first met 17.8.2016
- About 30 members, open group, anyone with an interest can join
- A sub-group was established in February 2017 → to write a management plan
 - 12 participants: authorities (fisheries 1 rep + environment 3 rep), research institute, environmental assoc., archipelago assoc., fisheries assoc., sportfishing, a municipality, fishing region, and water owner.
 - 10 + meetings
- No funding /participating organisations covered own costs

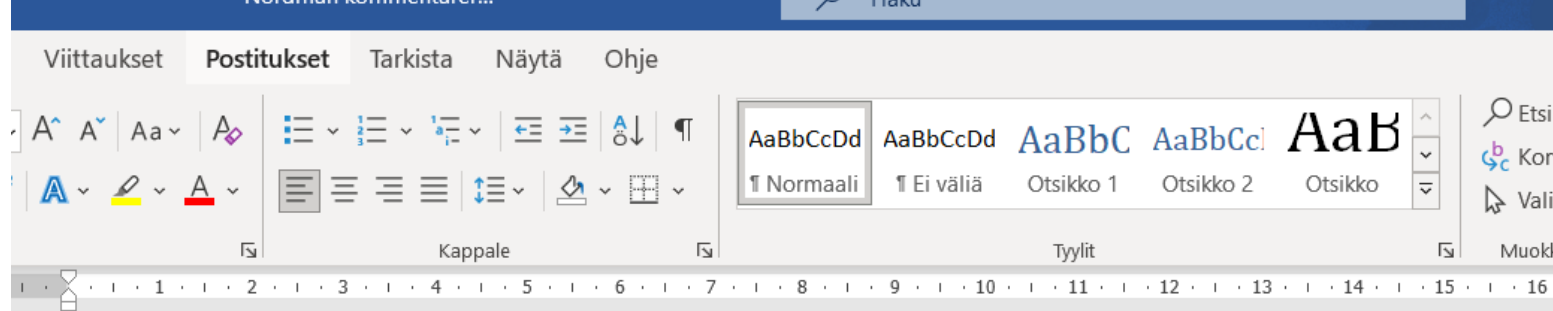


Preparation of plans

- Division of labour:
 - 7 participants (4 authorities, 1 researcher, 1 fisheries assoc, 1 environment assoc) wrote the plan/responsible for various chapters
 - Active correspondence between meetings and editing of text/making compromises (track changes)
 - then meetings with all participants to discuss details.



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Bernts kommentarer till Marina Nyqvists utkast till Avsnitt 3

Allvarlig skada på fisket

FÖRSLAG 1: Sista meningen i stycket (rad 17-18) stryks.

MOTIVERING: Skarvarbetsgruppen skall inte påstå att skarvens inverkan är sista droppen, när vi inte har gjort en analys av hur stor inverkan andra faktorer har.

– MN: OK, done.

FÖRSLAG 2: Tillägg i slutet:

Skarvarna är en av många naturliga och antropogena faktorer som påverkar fiskets lönsamhet. Tyvärr kan man inte utgående från hittills gjord forskning fastställa hur stor skarvarnas betydelse är.

– MN: håller med om att andra orsaker påverkar fiskets lönsamhet, men genom en större del av den forskning som gjorts i Östersjön har man kunnat fastställa att skarven har en inverkan för sig själv. Jag har satt till fyra referenser på raderna 6-7 (en del är listade på raderna 22-24 också).

FÖRSLAG 1: Meningen i andra stycket (rad 50-52) stryks:

MOTIVERING: Ingen vetenskaplig källa, siffrorna kan inte generaliseras

MN: OK, tog bort.



Research on cormorant effects on fish stocks has been key in the plan

- The group organised a cormorant seminar and workshops 19.5.2017 with the aim to gather more research information for the plan.
- Representative from the Ministry of Environment and judges from the administrative court participated, no representative from the licencing authorities.
- Participants keen to keep a high momentum driven by a high motivational level



Increasing frustration among public summer 2017

- Still 7400 pairs in Ostrobothnia
 - Prolonged application process, especially decisions on egg oiling and shooting, up to 18 months
 - Decisions on egg oiling and shooting considered very restrictive, with many conditions making the management measure ineffective
- anger, debates, conflict



Conflicts

- Writing + discussions progressed well, until the very end (august-september 2017)

Agreements:

- ✓ Oiling and shooting to scare acceptable derogation measures
- ✓ Identification of problem areas, e.g. Isojoki estuary, shooting accepted to protect sea trout smolt

Disagreements:

- Majority decisions versus consensus
 - Reducing the population to the size of the nesting population in 2014 (about 3000 nesting birds)
 - Shooting other than to scare away in special cases / shoot larger number of birds
 - The use of Danish research results (migrating fish), even if no Finnish research
- Environmental associations withdrew from the working group and **attached dissenting opinions to the plan**



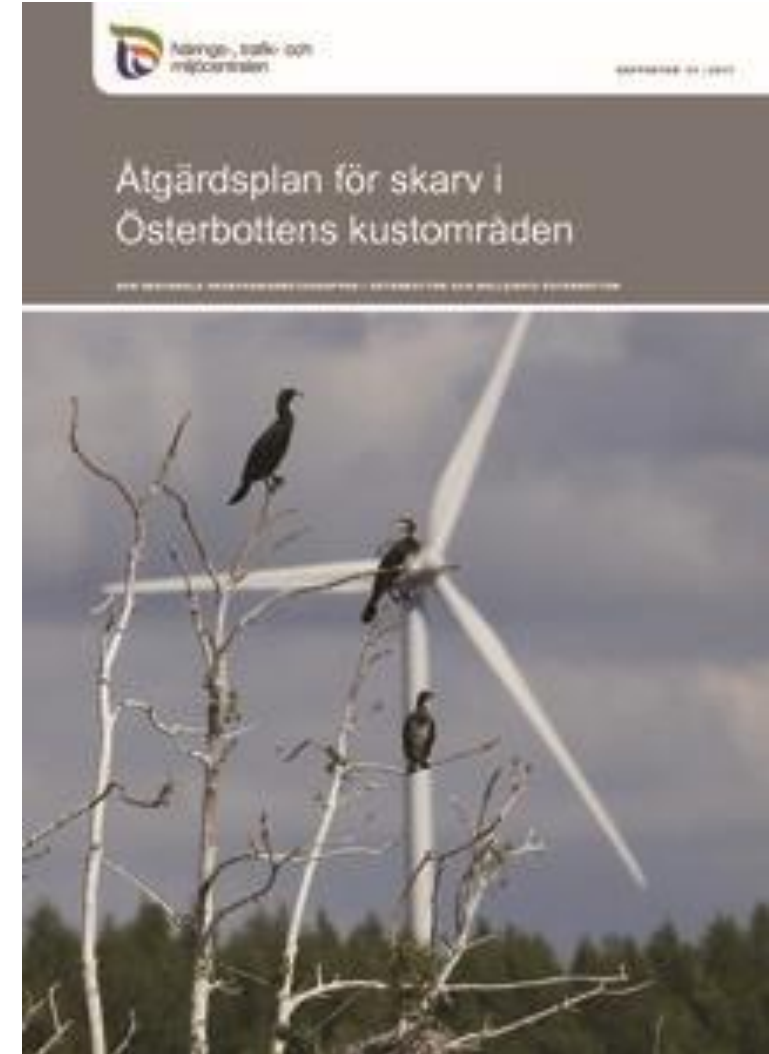
Cormorant management plan for Ostrobothnian coastal area published 2.10.2017:

Aims:

- To describe 1) the cormorant population in Ostrobothnia, 2) damages caused by cormorants as a ground for derogation measures, 3) acceptable derogations measures (methods)
- To suggest concrete measures to reduce and to prevent problems caused by cormorants
- To act as a supporting document for applicants and for licencing authorities



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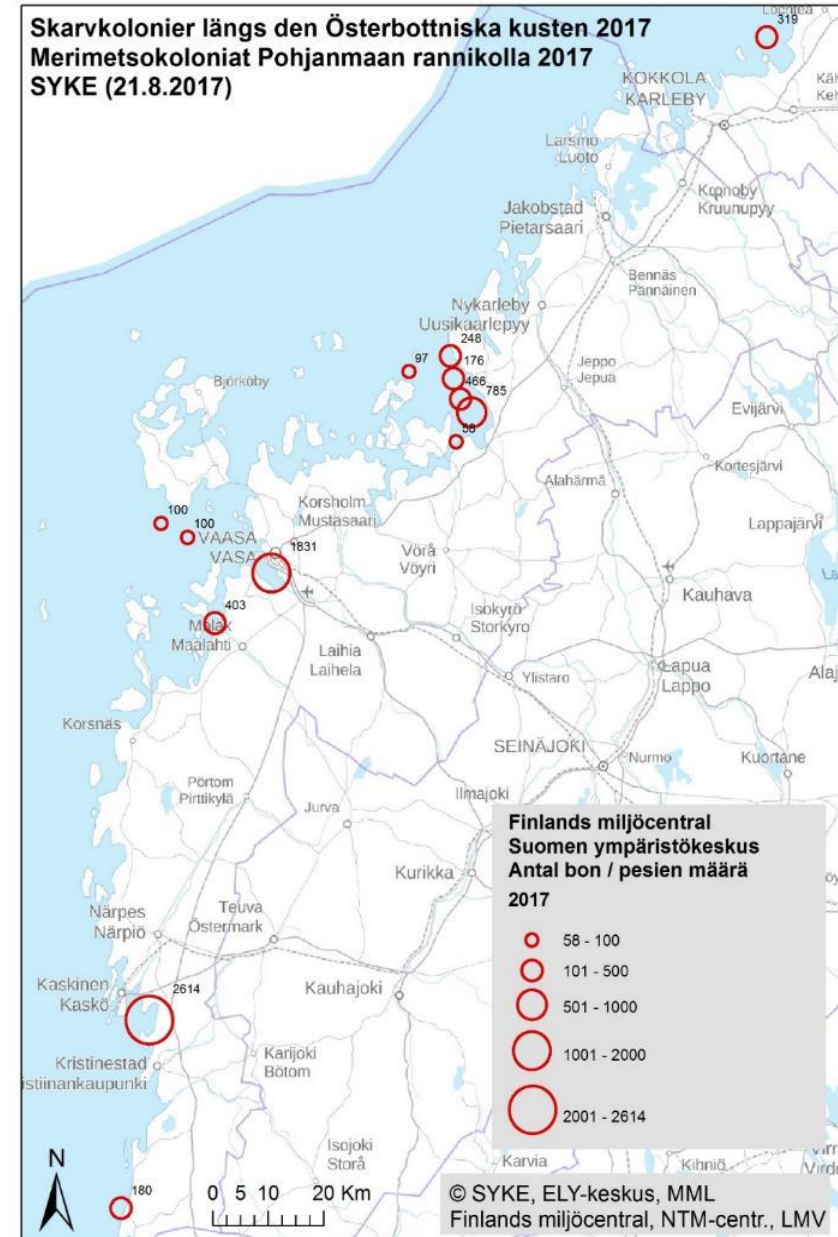


(66 pages)

www.doria.fi/handle/10024/146311

Content of the plan

1. Introduction and background
2. Cormorant colonies in the area and their development
3. Description of damages (in relation to Bird Directive article 9)
4. Description of derogation measures and their effects
5. Suggested measures → general guidelines and example areas.



a) General guidelines

- Regulation at roosting sites and foraging areas
 - Shooting or scaring to reduce serious damage to fish stocks or fisheries
- Regulation at nesting sites
 - Established colonies are regulated through egg oiling
 - Scaring can be done to prevent nesting in new areas

b) Five example areas

- Lappfjärds ås mynning
- Malax ås mynning
- Oravais-Monå-Kantlax- fjärden
- Revöfjärden
- Södra Stadsfjärden i Vasa



Effectiveness of the plan

- The plan was handed over to the minister of Environment Mr Kimmo Tiilikainen in November 2017 in Helsinki. The minister said he was impressed by the work and assured us the plan would come to use
- Applicants have referred to the plan in several applications, but the licencing authorities have not considered it in their decisions
- Fisheries stakeholders asked for a meeting with the authorities to discuss why plan is not considered, answer: "it is not a unanimous plan and the plan is not legally binding" (20.8.2018)
- Administrative courts have in a decision 5.11.2020 asked the licencing authorities to re-process an application for derogation measures and to consider the regional plan



Lessons learned / memorable moments from a stakeholder view

- Mediation /facilitation needed to work towards **consensus** among participating stakeholders and authorities. The importance of consensus needs to be very clear from the start.
- **Stakeholders need to take an active role**, take initiatives, be well aware of research, develop networks, hold factual discussions
- We need an improved communication between stakeholders and licencing authorities and the ministry. Stakeholders want a lower treshhold for contacting and discussing issues concerning permissions (with a friendly tone). There seems to be distrust between the parties (from both sides).



Thank you
for your
attention!

