**Nordic Resource Management: Finnish Component**

**Work Report 2: Horizon Scanning / Nordic Resource Management**

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**1. Introduction**

As a part of the Nordic Resource Management project the uses of similar templates or practices, and other relevant issues was undertaken. This will be continued in the 2016 activities of the project.

**2. Methods**

‘Horizon scanning’ for similar activities was conducted by interviews with key game and wildlife scientists, hunter-fishermen interviews, surveys of national game and wildlife institutions and comparing the Näätämö and Jukajoki work with a third catchment area restoration project, the lake Kuivasjärvi in Western Finland, the province of Pirkanmaa. As the main purpose of the reporting is to represent results from this season, literature review has not been included.

**3. Results**

**A. Key game and wildlife scientists:** Several interviews with key game and wildlife scientists[[1]](#footnote-1) were carried out between May and October 2015 in informal capacity, to discuss various mechanisms local uses and harvests of resources are linked with governance. On 11th October an interview a senior scientist with the Natural Resources Institute of Finland[[2]](#footnote-2) took place to discuss ‘best practices’ of such arrangements.

According to these meetings, the catch statistics provide an important information flow regarding uses of species and their locations in Finland. One scientist considered the Näätämö river co-management project to be ‘wonderful’ initiative to raise interest of the ‘local people’ in managing and discussing the local resources. However, as a trend from these meetings with the scientists, the local uses and documentation of local harvests was mostly seen as a ‘data flow’ for science, rather than a starting point of discussions for governance or reform of governance. One person commented “*I do not like the idea of [Indigenous Sámi and local] rights. Rather I wish to speak of possibilities*”.

**B. Hunter-fishermen interviews:** Two hunter-fishermen, one in his late 30s and one in his 50s, were met and informal interviews conducted with them regarding these topics. They are both well-known harvesters in their home village, and respected by many for their knowledge and uses of birds, game animals and fish for subsistence foods.

The younger hunter felt it is very positive the hunters can participate in so-called ‘game triangle’ calculations, where they survey, using local traditional knowledge, the amounts of forest game birds and hare, to name a few examples, and then report these to the Finnish Wildlife Agency[[3]](#footnote-3) regional bodies.

In these surveys, the hunters walk a designated triangle territory on a map and count their observations of offspring and tracks of animals, which then in theory constitute an information flow into population dynamics and in the case of some species, to the quotas to be harvested. He felt this gives him a possibility to participate in game management.

The older hunter was sceptical to the reliability of these ‘game triangle’ calculations or their accuracy. He did not oppose them, but felt they are conducted in wrong times or miss out on the ‘real situation’. Interviews and better participation of hunters in management would allow a shift how these issues can be decided. It remains a very top-down system.

**C. Surveys of national game and wildlife institutions:** Various mechanisms of local observations and governance were reviewed using the practices from the Finnish Wildlife Agency that was founded in 2011. User surveys, ‘game triangle’ calculations, meetings with hunter associations and public administration tasks of the agencies, namely the quotas and permits for hunting are the most visible interactions that the Agency does to include ‘local’ their activities. Space here does not allow all details to be explored, but the Finnish Wildlife Agency is a key player in how the discourses of the inclusion are carried out.

**D. Lake Kuivasjärvi in Western Finland:** Lake Kuivasjärvi[[4]](#footnote-4) in the Parkano area in Western Finland has been a target of ecological restoration of the catchment area, and later the lake itself. A public movement, which turned into *Pro Kuivasjärvi* association in 2015[[5]](#footnote-5), coordinates the work.

A brief survey of how local issues are involved in this heavily damaged catchment area was conducted over summer 2015. Local fishermen felt their catch statistics can inform the situation of the fish on the lake and felt this was very positive. Kuivasjärvi is known in Finland as a very traditional community where many oral histories, old land uses and occupancies and traditional knowledge has been collected since 1840s.

It is also the target of heavy-handed peat production and forestry ditching that began in 1940s. In short the local people called the lake Kuivasjärvi the ‘*Congo of Pirkanmaa region*’[[6]](#footnote-6). While they have initiated ecological restoration where traditional knowledge is a major driver, the heavy-handed, on-going natural resources use, such as peat production and forestry, is causing their home to be seen as a natural resources periphery where local Finnish villages have no right or say to these matters.

**4. Discussion**

Horizontal scanning conducted for the project combined Sámi use areas and Finnish village territories. Four groups of entities were reviewed, scientists, game authorities, hunters and fishermen. A common thread running in all of these materials is the role catch statistics provide as a source of raw data for the institutional arrangements. Local rights, governance and a symmetrical encounter between different parties are fully missing in most cases. This conflict is most pronounced in the Sámi areas of Lapland.

**5. Conclusion**

Finland, as a result of a special socio-historical process, remains a top-down –governed boreal natural resources periphery. A local governance or even ’meaningful participation’ of natural resources issues is often seen as a threat by the structure. Expert knowledge is also using terminologies, which do not meet or translate well into the local – Indigenous knowledge complexes, such as in the Finnish case of lake Kuivasjärvi.

On the other hand, the agencies, such as the Finnish Wildlife Agency, can refer to the ‘game triangle’ calculations and other methods in place to engage with the local hunters, in some cases also with the fishermen. If taken critically, these constitute ‘token’ forms of engagement, where nothing guarantees the local observations, wishes, and priorities and ultimately, needs, in manifesting into the actual management and governance decisions.

While the local context is not always in a position to fully guarantee sustainable use, the dialogue of reforms in governance cannot even begin, when the power and associated discourses remain in position. Therefore other major drivers, such as environmental degradation of habitats and climate change, and appropriate mechanisms to respond to them, are not even on the table, let alone the large-scale industrial land uses, such as mining.

1. Total of eight scientists were met. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. Results are presented here anonymously from all of these meetings. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. <http://riista.fi/en/game-administration/public-administration-tasks/> [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. See for example <http://www.foreignpolicy.com/articles/2014/10/10/finland_environment_climate_change_peat_vapo_green_koijarvi_fishing_biodiversity> [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. <http://www.lumi.fi/kuivasjarven-kansanliike-parkanossa-pirkanmaalla/> [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
6. Referring to the role the lake basin plays as a resource periphery to the region of Pirkanmaa. [↑](#footnote-ref-6)