



# Helmi Habitats Programme

2021-2030

# Helmi Programme strengthens the biodiversity of Finnish nature and improves the status of deteriorated habitats

Almost a half of Finland's habitats and 12% of the Finnish species are threatened. The main reason for this is the decline and deterioration of habitats. Halting the loss of biodiversity requires fast and comprehensive action. In the Helmi Programme we take concrete protection and management measures for the benefit of biodiversity.

## MEASURES



Protection and restoration of mires



Restoration of aquatic bird habitats and wetlands



Restoration and management of semi-natural grasslands



Protection, restoration and nature management of woodland habitats



Restoration of small water bodies and shore habitats

The objectives of the Helmi Programme are to be reached by 2030. The programme is implemented both in and outside conservation areas.

The programme comprises a total of 40 measures that besides restoration and management also concern research, communication and stakeholder cooperation.

The measures of the Helmi Programme support the functioning of ecosystem services and water protection and contribute to climate change mitigation and adaptation.

The measures improve the conservation status of tens of threatened habitat types and numerous species.

Helmi Programme is implemented in extensive cooperation – measures are based on voluntary action by landowners



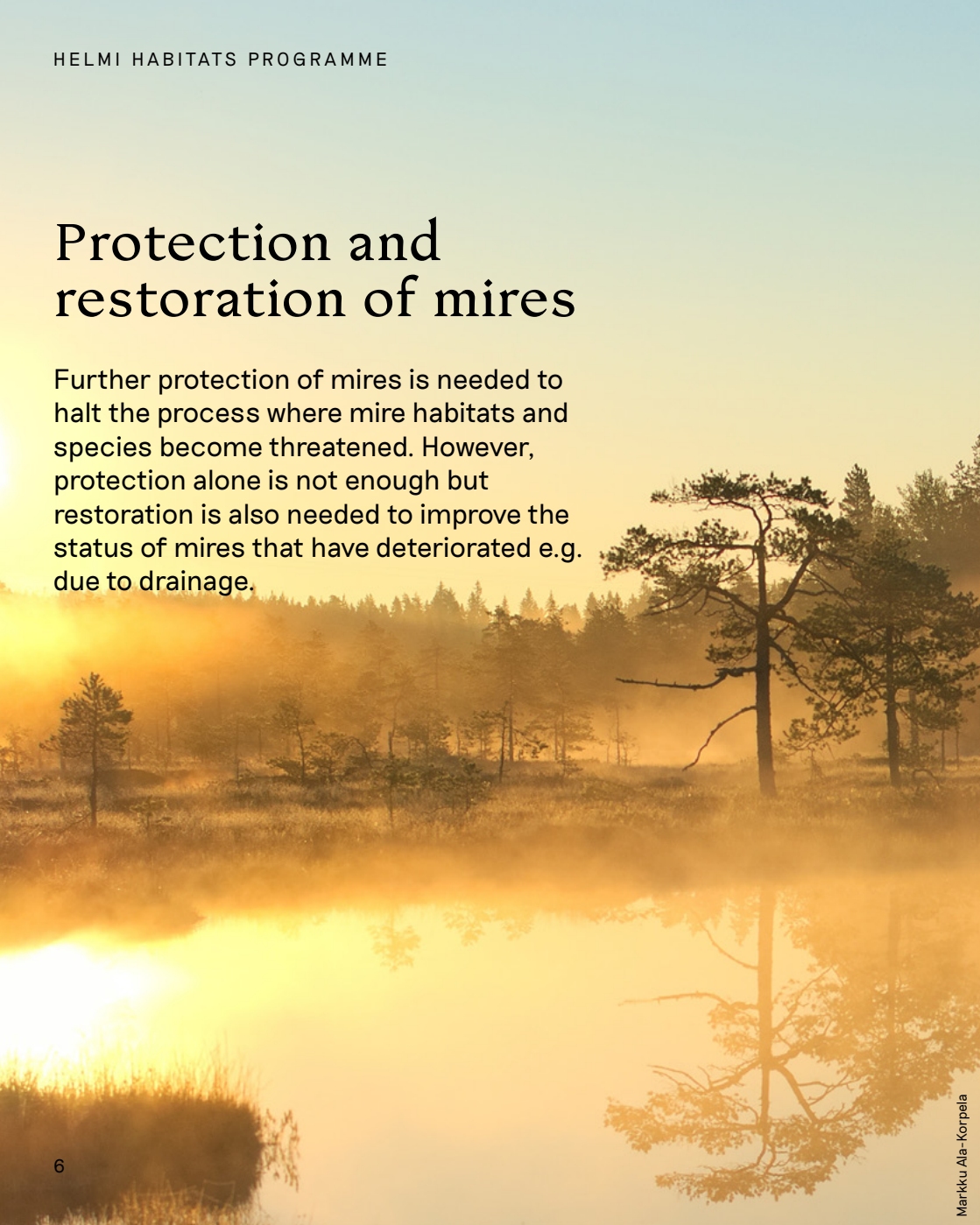
The main responsibility for the measures rests with the Ministry of the Environment and Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry. The Helmi Programme is implemented by organisations under these two ministries, together with municipalities, NGOs, local communities, other stakeholders in the environmental and forestry sectors, and private landowners.

Areas covered by Helmi Programme bring measures together to form comprehensive packages

The Helmi Programme adopts a broad and holistic approach to habitats. The aim is to establish 30 to 50 Helmi areas that are comprised of key habitats with respect to biodiversity. The restoration and management work done in the Helmi areas is planned in cooperation with the local stakeholders, which enhances its effectiveness and impact. Besides the Helmi areas, measures are also targeted to certain individual sites.

# Protection and restoration of mires

Further protection of mires is needed to halt the process where mire habitats and species become threatened. However, protection alone is not enough but restoration is also needed to improve the status of mires that have deteriorated e.g. due to drainage.



Mires protected on the basis of negotiations and voluntary action by landowners

**60,000** ha

Mires restored in total

**59,300** ha

Mires restored in state- and privately-owned conservation areas

**30,000** ha

Mires restored in multiple-use forests of Metsähallitus

**9,300** ha

Mires restored outside conservation areas

**20,000** ha

Water from the surrounding area is returned to protected mires

**400** st.

# Restoration and management of aquatic bird habitats and wetlands

Threatened and declined aquatic and shore bird populations will be strengthened by restoring their aquatic and wetland habitats, by ensuring that the birds can nest in peace and by offering feeding and resting sites for migratory birds.



Arto Juvonen

## OBJECTIVES



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Special protection areas (SPA) designated under the EU Birds Directive and other valuable aquatic bird habitats in the conservation area network restored

**200** sites

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Wetland habitats for birds established and restored outside the conservation area network

**500** sites

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Restored sites managed after restoration and, where necessary, restoration measures repeated during the Helmi period

**100** sites

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Intensified hunting of non-native predators in some of the restored SPA sites started

**70** sites

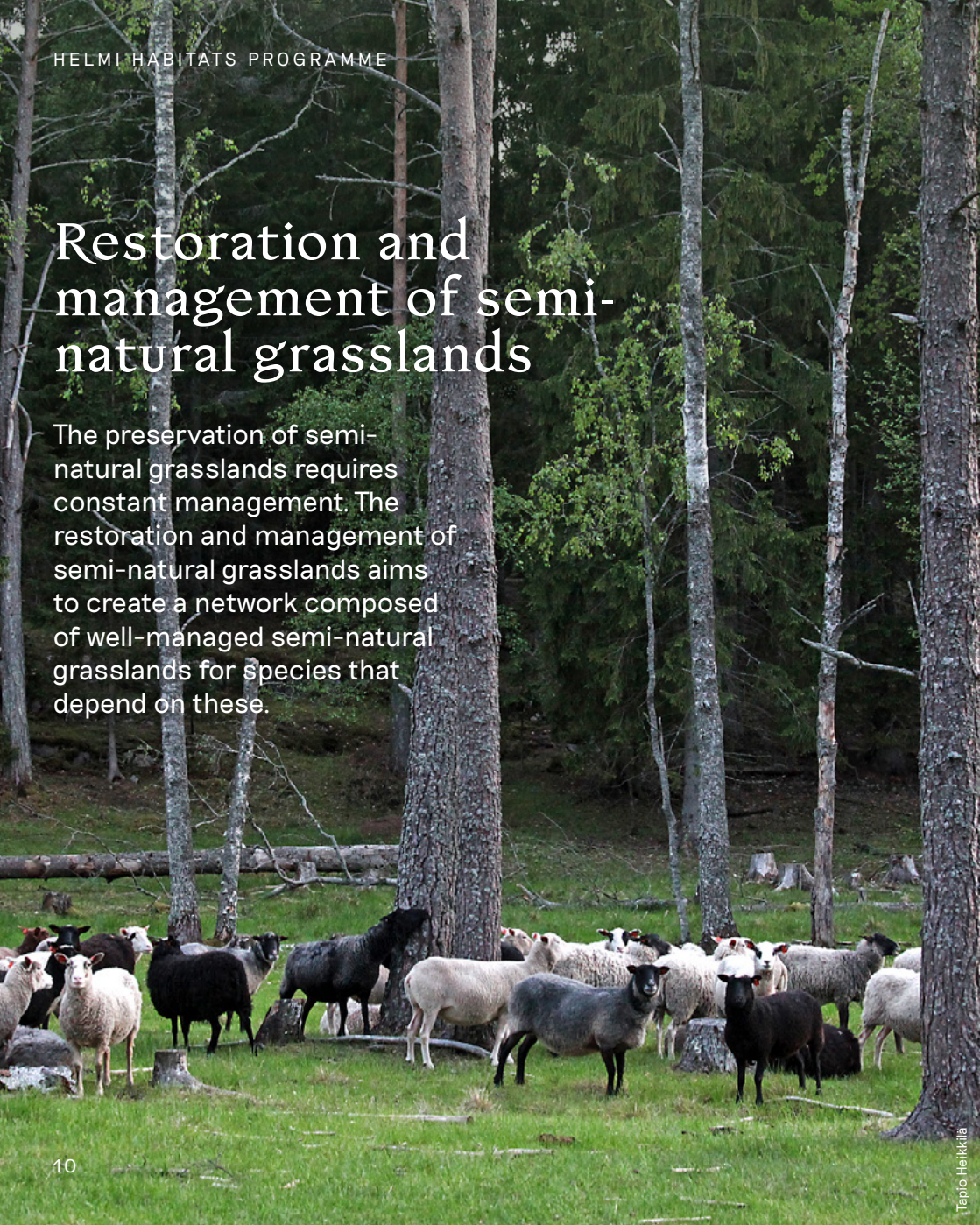
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Network of protection and resting areas for birds supplemented through voluntary action models

**150** sites

## Restoration and management of semi-natural grasslands

The preservation of semi-natural grasslands requires constant management. The restoration and management of semi-natural grasslands aims to create a network composed of well-managed semi-natural grasslands for species that depend on these.



Tiipio Heikkilä



Surface area of managed semi-natural grasslands increased to

**52,000** ha

Semi-natural grasslands restored to improve their quality

**26,000** ha

A national coordination group set up for the management of semi-natural grasslands

Regional cooperation groups set up for the management of semi-natural grasslands

Novel habitat sites with valuable flora and fauna restored and managed to strengthen the network of novel habitats

**150** sites

# Protection, restoration and nature management of woodland habitats 2021-2025

Measures under the Helmi Programme will be specifically targeted to habitats of threatened forest species, the most threatened woodland habitat types and transitional zones between mires and mineral soils.

The measures complement the Forest Biodiversity Programme for Southern Finland METSO in 2021-2025.



Restoration and nature management in conservation areas and other valuable woodland sites

**800** sites

Including prescribed burning

**750** ha

Nature management measures in state-owned multiple-use forests

**2,850** ha

Supporting areas established close to nature conservation areas by protecting felling sites with retention trees

Metsähallitus will conduct field inspections to complement the network of sites covered by landscape ecological planning in 2021-2022. The impacts of landscape ecological planning by Metsähallitus will be assessed by the end of 2023. This will also include an assessment of the need to intensify forest protection on state lands and how this could be done, including requirements based on the biodiversity targets of the EU Biodiversity Strategy with respect to state lands.

# Protection, restoration and nature management of woodland habitats in METSO Programme 2026-2030

Under the Helmi Programme, objectives will also be set for the next period of the Forest Biodiversity Programme METSO. The objectives will be specified in more detail and targeted based on experiences gained from the METSO and Helmi Programmes in a broad-based working group to be appointed before the current period of the METSO Programme ends.



Forests protected on the basis of negotiations and voluntary action by landowners

**40,000** ha

Biodiversity of privately-owned commercial forests preserved through nature management

**2,000** ha

Nature management measures in state-owned multiple-use forests

**2,490** ha

Restoration and nature management in conservation areas and other valuable woodland sites

**900** sites

Including prescribed burning

**750** ha

Biodiversity of privately-owned commercial forests preserved through environmental aid

**20,000** ha



# Restoration and management of small water bodies and shore habitats

Small water bodies are restored to bring them and their surroundings as close as possible to the state preceding the disturbance caused by human influence. The aim is to preserve the threatened flora, fauna and habitats of small water bodies and shores. The role of catchments must also be assessed to ensure the impacts of restoration.

## OBJECTIVES



Small water bodies and their immediate catchments restored in nature conservation areas.

Springs	Brooks	Flads and glo-lakes in land uplift areas
350 sites	200 km	40 sites

Small water bodies and their immediate catchments restored outside nature conservation areas.

Springs	Brooks	Flads and glo-lakes in land uplift areas
700 sites	400 km	40 sites

Migration connections to small water bodies restored

700 sites

Barriers to migration removed in state-owned multiple-use forests

970 sites

A national coordination group set up for the restoration of small water bodies

The state and restoration needs in shore habitats assessed to target the measures

Shore habitats restored and managed in and outside conservation areas

200 sites

## Communication and stakeholder cooperation

Timely and effective communication is important for the success of the Helmi Programme. Communication makes the programme and its measures better known and more readily acceptable. This will ensure that nature sites suitable for the programme can be found. Communication links the Helmi Programme to the public discussion on biodiversity loss and tells about measures by which it can be halted. In the programme that involves a broad spectrum of actors a key focus is on interaction and working together.

- 1 A broad-based monitoring group appointed for the Helmi Programme
- 2 A national communication group appointed and necessary communication measures taken
- 3 Regional cooperation groups appointed for areas covered by different ELY Centres
- 4 A training project set up to enhance knowledge and skills in nature management and restoration
- 5 Application process for special subsidies to municipalities and associations (Kunta-Helmi and Järjestö-Helmi)

## Knowledge base and monitoring of the programme

Inventories, research and surveys are need in all themes of the Helmi Programme. These will ensure that the measures are appropriately targeted.

- 1 The minimum requirements for inventories revised
- 2 Inventories and broader studies that may be needed carried out concerning the sites to be covered by the measures
- 3 Surveys and studies carried out to support the achievement of the programme objectives
- 4 A model developed and a public map application created for spatial data related to the measures
- 5 Interim and final evaluations of the programme planned and implemented

In addition, the Helmi Programme includes specific measures concerning its monitoring. Besides the technical aspects of the programme, the monitoring also covers the impacts of the measures on biodiversity.

