



BPAN Barents Protected Area Network

Recommendations for Strengthening the Protected Area Network in the Barents Region

There is a need for prompt establishment of planned protected areas and conservation of the last intact forests.

- In February 2010 in Tromsø, Norway, the Barents environment ministers urged further steps to protect the last intact boreal forests and underlined the importance of identifying and establishing a representative network of protected areas in the Barents Region (BPAN). The importance of BPAN was further confirmed in November 2013 by the chair of the Barents Euro-Arctic Council.
- The countries of the Barents Euro-Arctic Region have a special responsibility to conserve biodiversity, since the valuable ecosystems of the region represent natural heritage of global significance. In addition, its intact forest, mire and tundra ecosystems are enormous carbon stores.
- The most significant threats to biodiversity in the Barents Region are habitat loss, degradation and fragmentation, as well as rapidly changing climate. Increasing and too often unsustainable use of natural resources creates a serious threat to natural environment and ecosystems. An ecologically functioning and well connected protected area network serves - even by itself - as an effective tool for biodiversity conservation and also mitigates the impacts of climate change and helps the nature and people in adaptation to changing environmental conditions.



Urgent need to protect unique boreal and arctic nature

The primary aim of the Barents Protected Area Network (BPAN) project is to promote and support the development of a representative protected area network in the Barents Euro-Arctic Region to conserve biodiversity of boreal and arctic ecosystems, particularly forests and wetlands. The BPAN project is a key biodiversity project of the Barents Euro-Arctic Council's (BEAC) Working Group on Environment and its subgroup on nature protection.

The BPAN project contributes to the internationally agreed Aichi Biodiversity Targets of the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) to halt the loss of biodiversity by 2020. Barents Protected Area Network is a regional initiative to implement the Programme of Work on Protected Areas of the CBD.

The BPAN project was implemented in 2010–2013 by nature conservation authorities, scientific institutes and nature conservation non-governmental organisations with funding from the Nordic Council of Ministers, the Governments of Finland, Sweden and Norway, WWF Russia and other participating organisations.

AICHI BIODIVERSITY TARGET 11

"By 2020, at least 17 per cent of terrestrial and inland water areas and 10 per cent of coastal and marine areas, especially areas of particular importance for biodiversity and ecosystem services, are conserved through effectively and equitably managed, ecologically representative and well-connected systems of protected areas and other effective area-based conservation measures, and integrated into the wider landscape and seascape."

Analysis of the network of protected areas

The BPAN project has harmonised and analysed information on protected areas in the Barents Region including their distribution and ecological representativeness in proportion to the main ecosystems.

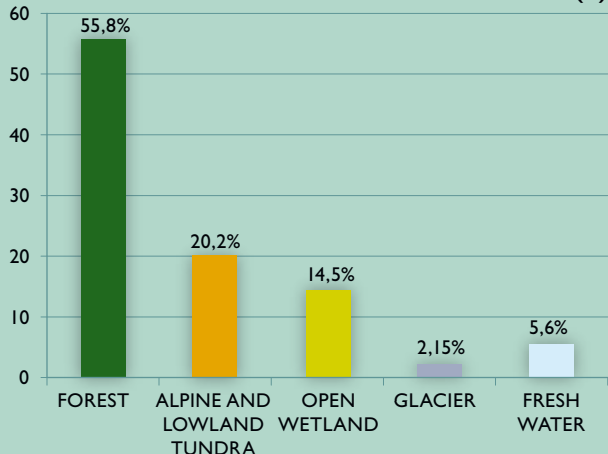
A network of protected areas is under development in the Barents Region. Gap analyses have been conducted to determine the most important sites for biodiversity conservation and many of these are included in the national and regional plans to be established as protected areas.

In the Barents Region 13,2% (231 600 km²) of the terrestrial area is protected for biodiversity conservation. Countries and regions of the Barents Region are in the process of implementing nature conservation plans which include establishing 59 400 km² as protected areas. If all planned protected areas were established as statutory protected areas, the level of protection would increase to cover 16,6% of the total area. However, as some of these areas are not planned to be established by 2020, the current pace of implementation of nature conservation plans is inadequate for the attempts of the Region to achieve the Aichi Target 11.

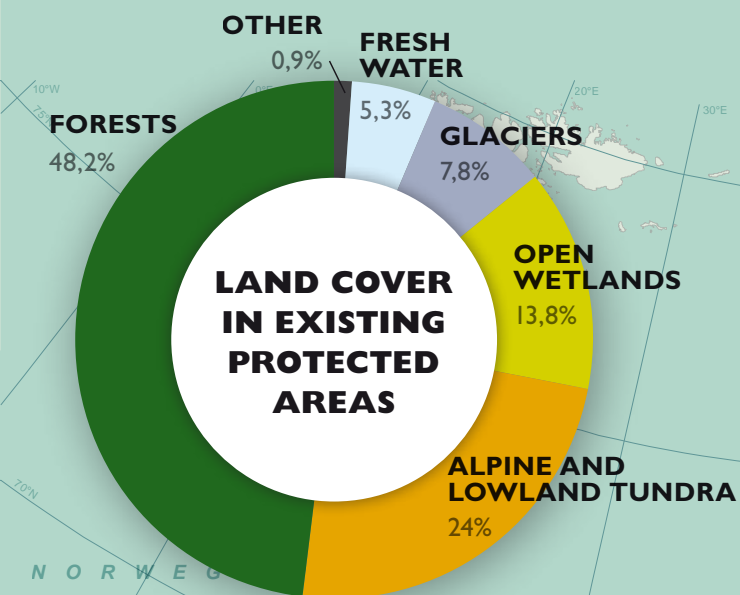
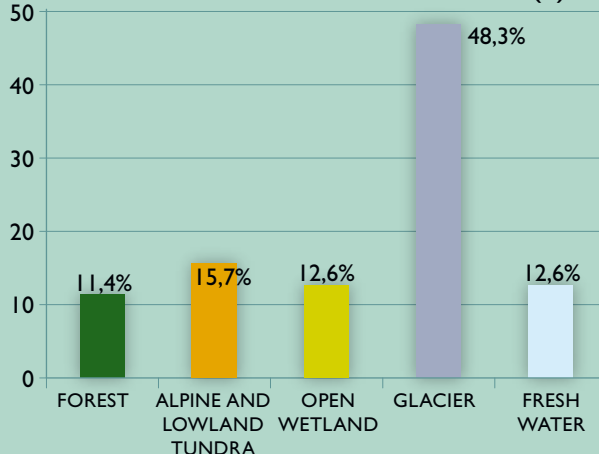
AICHI BIODIVERSITY TARGET 5

"By 2020, the rate of loss of all natural habitats, including forests, is at least halved and where feasible brought close to zero, and degradation and fragmentation is significantly reduced."

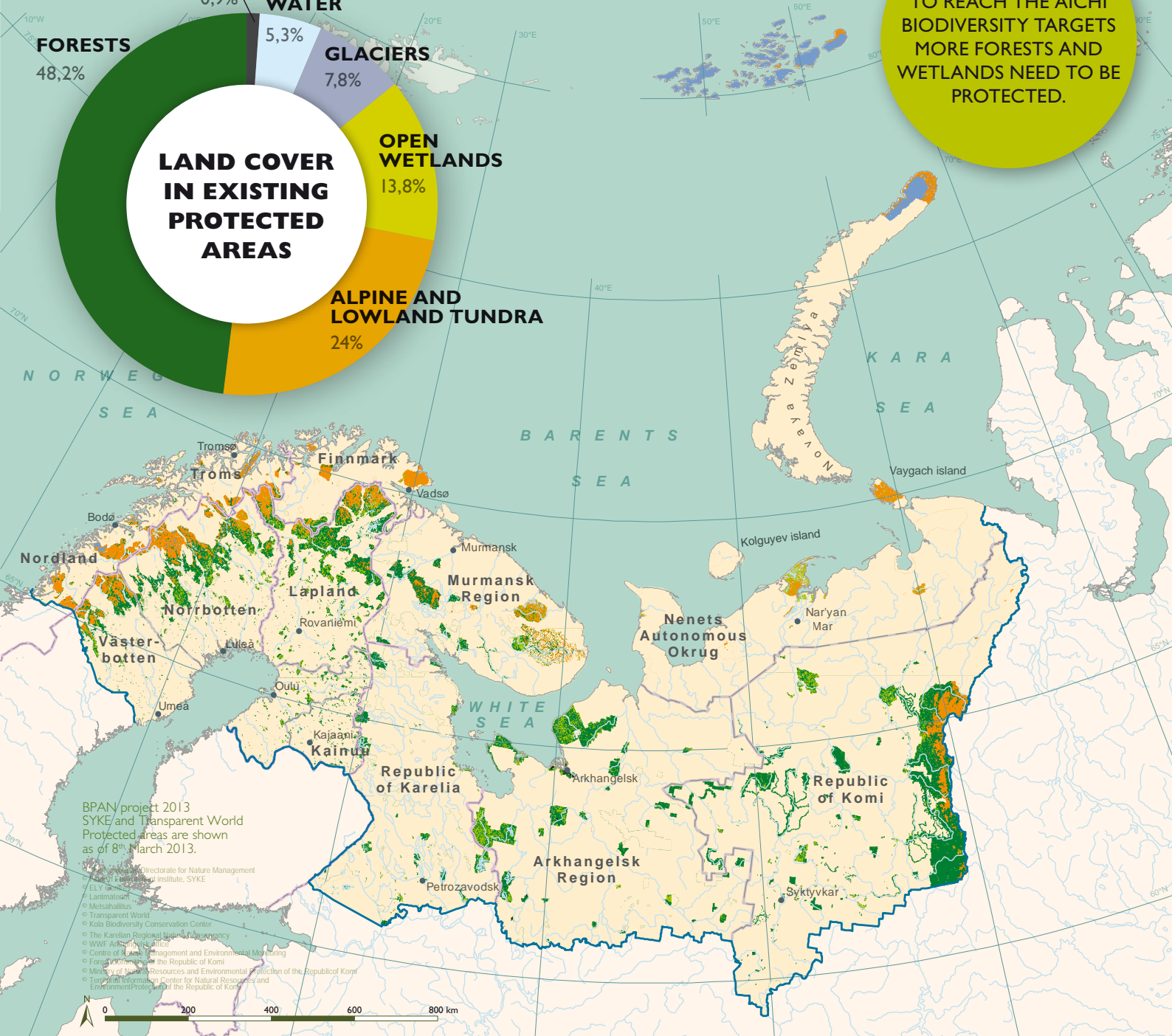
THE MAIN ECOSYSTEMS IN THE BARENTS REGION (%)



LEVEL OF PROTECTION IN MAIN ECOSYSTEMS (%)



TO REACH THE AICHI BIODIVERSITY TARGETS MORE FORESTS AND WETLANDS NEED TO BE PROTECTED.



BPAN project 2013
SYKE and Transparent World
Protected areas are shown
as of 8th March 2013.

© The Arctic Directorate for Nature Management
© The Arctic Institute, SYKE
© ELY Centre
© Lantmätarverket
© Metsähallitus
© Transparent World
© Kola Biodiversity Conservation Center
© The Karolien Regional Nature Agency
© WWF Arctic Circle Office
© Centre of Landscape Management and Environmental Monitoring
© Forest Management of the Republic of Komi
© Ministry of Natural Resources and Environmental Protection of the Republic of Komi
© Territorial Information Center for Natural Resources and Environmental Protection of the Republic of Komi

RECOMMENDATIONS

The protected area network in the Barents Region needs to be further strengthened in order to contribute to the achievement of CBD Aichi Biodiversity Targets and other international commitments. That implies:

- Results of national and regional gap analyses on high conservation value areas and representativeness of the protected area network should be taken into consideration. Representativeness of the protected area network should be assured through the establishment of protected areas in under-represented habitats and ecosystems.
- There is a need for prompt establishment of planned protected areas as statutory protected areas by 2020.
- In particular, large intact areas need to be prioritised for protection as they are crucial in maintaining ecological processes and ecosystem functions, and are under pressure from intensified land use.

The last intact forests have unique values and their protection requires special attention

- Protection of productive old-growth forests and larger intact forest landscapes should have high priority.
- High conservation value areas, identified in the Gap analysis of northwest Russia, need to be protected. Information on high conservation value areas of the whole Barents Region should be compiled.

In the light of changing climate and intensifying land use there is a need for better connectivity between protected areas

- A comprehensive assessment of the connectivity of protected area systems is needed.
- The Barents Region has a few principal ecological corridors of relatively intact ecosystems, which have special importance for biodiversity. Conservation of these corridors should get special attention.
- Development of the road network needs better spatial planning and environmental impact assessment. Protected areas, planned protected areas and other high conservation value areas need to be taken into consideration.

Regulations and effective management of protected areas need to be improved

- Improved and more appropriate regulations, particularly for regional protected areas in northwest Russia, need to be taken into consideration.
- There is a need to develop and update management plans and monitoring schemes for protected areas.
- More comprehensive assessment of management effectiveness is needed.

The participation of stakeholders in planning and management of protected areas needs to be improved

- More work should be done to involve local communities, indigenous peoples and other stakeholders in protected area planning and management. It is very important that they are committed to the protected areas.

Sustainable financing needs to be ensured

- Financing of protection, implementation of protected area plans, programmes and management actions varies in the Barents Region, but in general it is insufficient.
- The largest planned protected areas with intact forests of international significance are located in northwest Russia. Therefore it is important that Russian regional authorities are provided with sufficient, long-term resources to ensure establishment of statutory protected areas.

There is a strong need to continue co-operation to strengthen the protected area network

- Co-operation in the BPAN project has been successful and should be further strengthened for the second stage of the BPAN project.

CONTACT BPAN COORDINATION

Anna Kuhmonen, firstname.lastname@ymparisto.fi

READ MORE: BPAN PROJECT www.bpan.fi

READ MORE: PROGRAMME OF WORK ON PROTECTED AREAS www.cbd.int/protected/

References: Barents Protected Area Network (BPAN). 2013. *Evaluation of the Protected Area Network in the Barents Region – Using the Programme of Work on Protected Areas of the Convention on Biological Diversity as a Tool*.

Barents Protected Area Network (BPAN). 2013. *The Characteristics and Representativeness of the Protected Area Network in the Barents Region*.

Authors: Anna Kuhmonen, Dmitry Aksenov, Denis Dobrynin, Knut Fossum, Olle Höjer, Bengt-Gunnar Johnsson, Sanna-Kaisa Juvonen, Yuliya Khrustaleva, Tapio Lindholm, Victor Petrov, Vladimir Shibeko, Nikolay Sobolev, Oleg Sutkaitis and Tatyana Tyupenko. **Photo:** Artyom Stolpovsky. **Map design:** Irina Danilova.

Layout: Erika Várkonyi.