

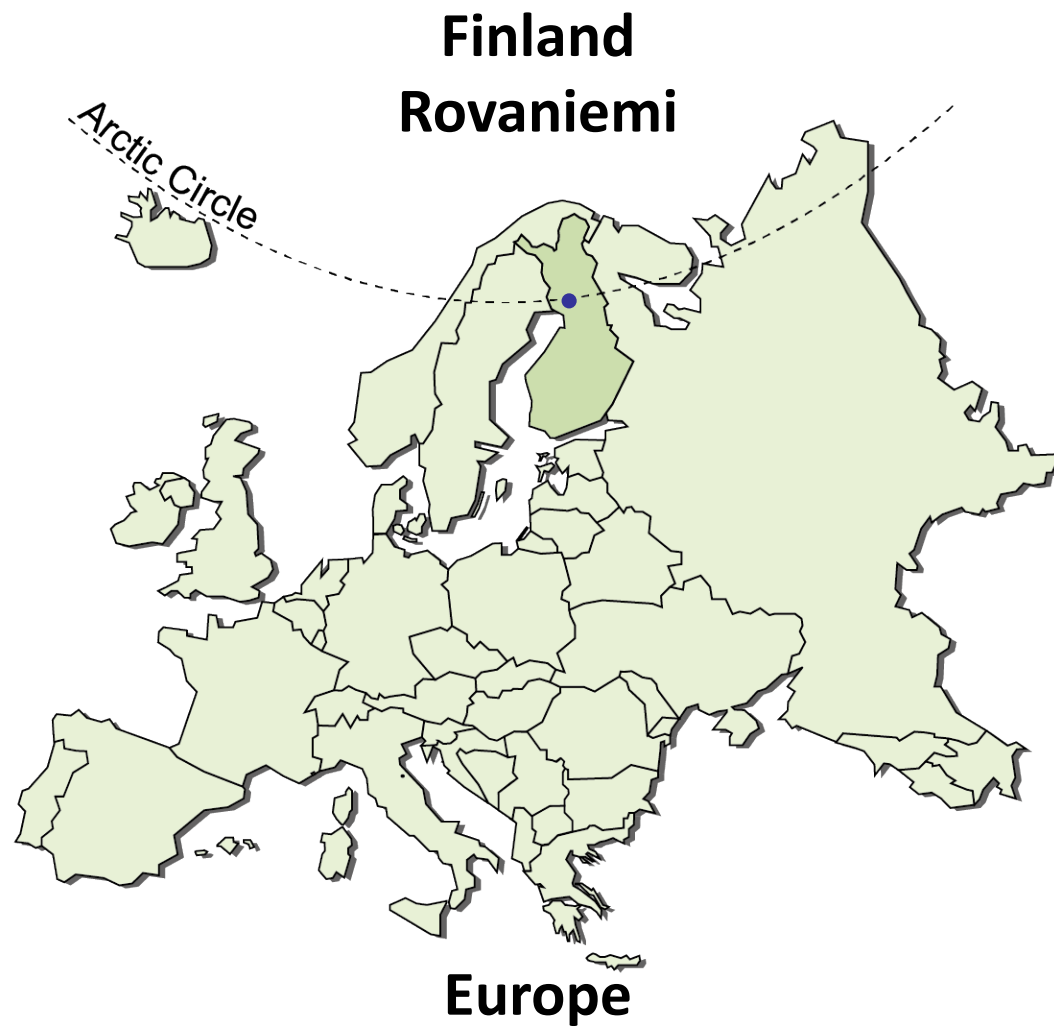
Operations of the Visitor Monitoring System in Finland

IUCN World Parks Congress
Sydney 2014

Joel Erkkonen
Senior Advisor
Parks & Wildlife Finland



METSÄHALLITUS



Contents of the Presentation

- **Protected areas in Finland**
- Development of visitor monitoring and information system in Finland
- Use of visitor information
- An inspiring solution?

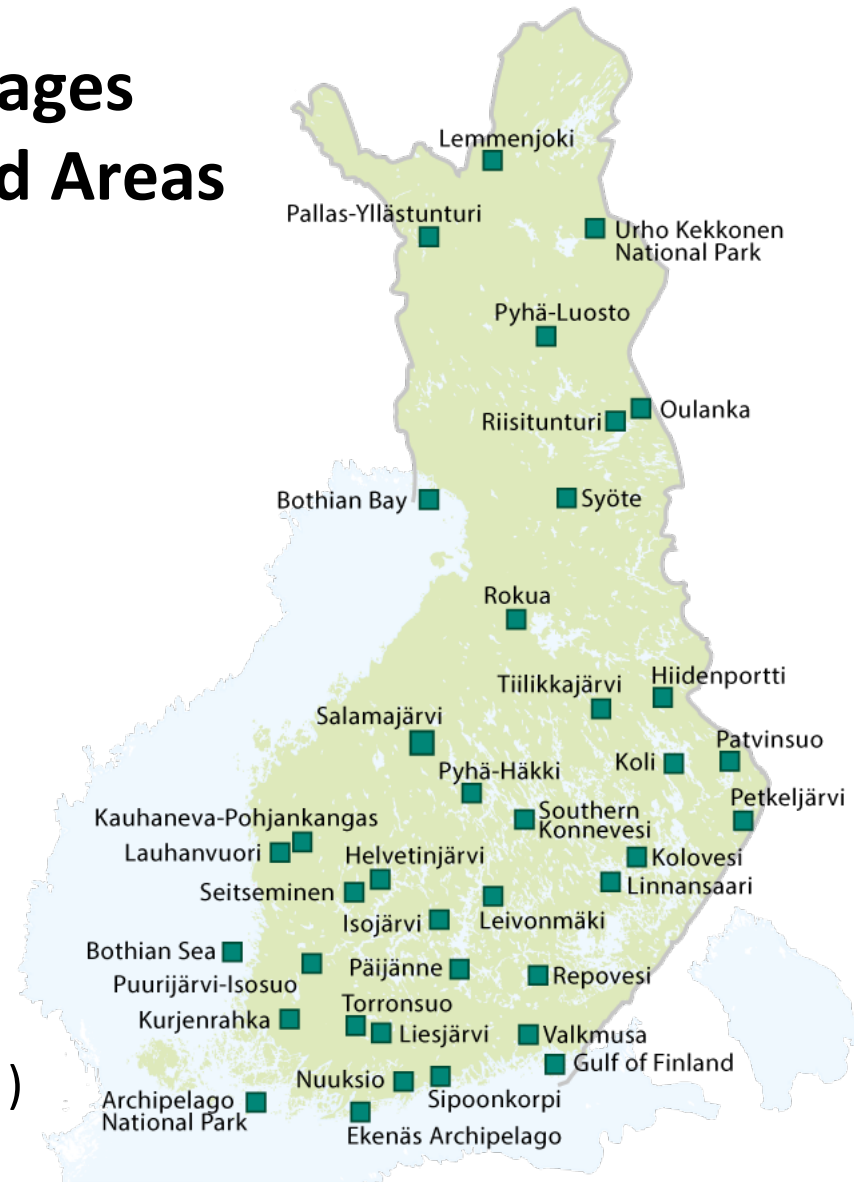




**We manage and protect Finland's
most valuable natural treasures
for the best of nature and people**

Parks & Wildlife Finland Manages All the State-owned Protected Areas

- 38 national parks (9 789 km²)
 - 19 strict nature reserves
 - 7 national hiking areas
 - 12 wilderness areas
 - almost 500 other PAs
 - public water areas
-
- Altogether over 7 million hectares of protected areas
 - 2.3 million visits to national parks (2013)



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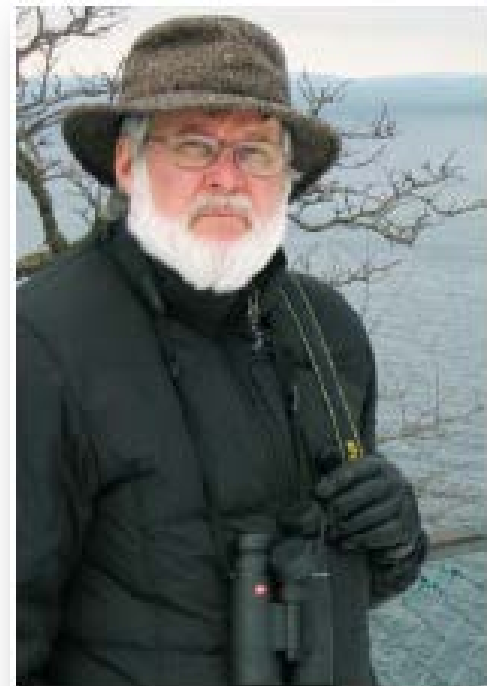
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Why Visitor Monitoring in Protected Areas?

“Any phenomenon that is not measured and reported does not exist politically. Governments, societies, communities and individuals place more value on that which is documented.”

Prof. Paul F.J. Eagles



Paul F. J. Eagles

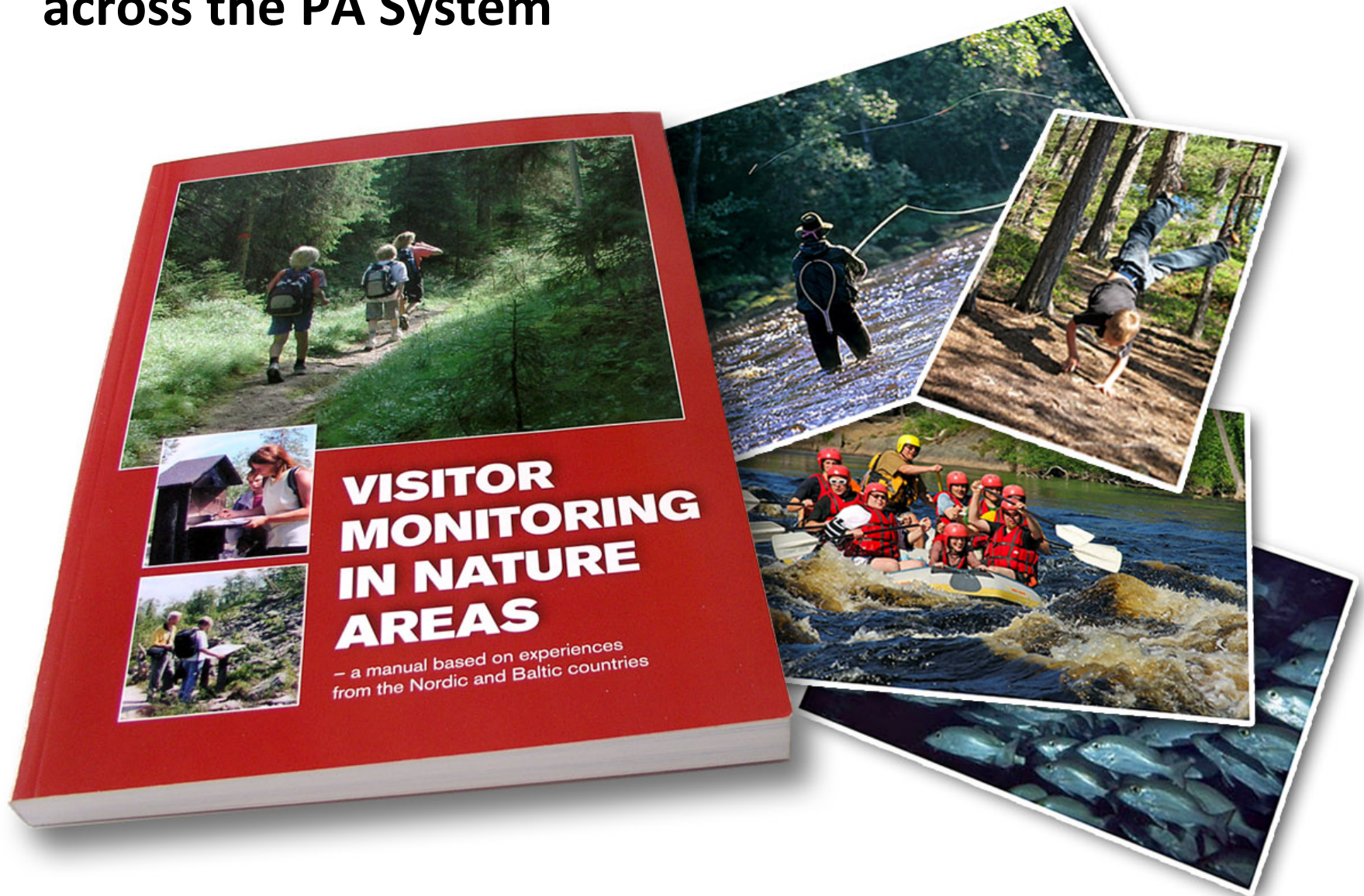
Visitor Monitoring Programme



Development of Visitor Monitoring System in Parks & Wildlife Finland

Year	Action
2000	Standardised surveys start and the first manual on visitor monitoring was published in Finland
2002	First MMV Conference
2005	Nordic and Baltic Project on Developing Visitor Monitoring Methodology
2006	ASTA database was launched
2007	Manual of Visitor Monitoring in Nature Areas was published in Nordic and Baltic countries
2008	ASTA database was sold to Estonia (RMK)
2010	First economic impacts of park visitation report was published in Finland
2013	Questions on health and wellbeing benefits experienced by visitors
2014	World Parks Congress

Standardised Visitor Monitoring Data across the PA System



ASTA - the Visitor Information System

SURVEYS ON

- Protected and recreational areas
- Visitor centres
- Nature tourism enterprises

CONTINUOUS FEEDBACK AT

- Visitor centres

Surveys

ASTA

Feedback

Visits



VISITS TO

- Protected and recreational areas
- Visitor centres

The Current Volume of Data in ASTA (examples)

Protected Areas

- 134 visitor surveys since 2000
 - More than 50 000 survey responses
- 400 electronic counters currently in use

Visitor Centres

- 49 surveys since 2000
 - 16 500 survey responses
- 44 300 continuous feedback responses from nature centres



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Use of Visitor Information

Visitor information is needed at various levels for comparisons, statistics and decision making

Local	Pallas-Yllästunturi NP
Regional	Lapland
National	Finland
International	Nordic and Baltic countries, EUROPARC, IUCN...

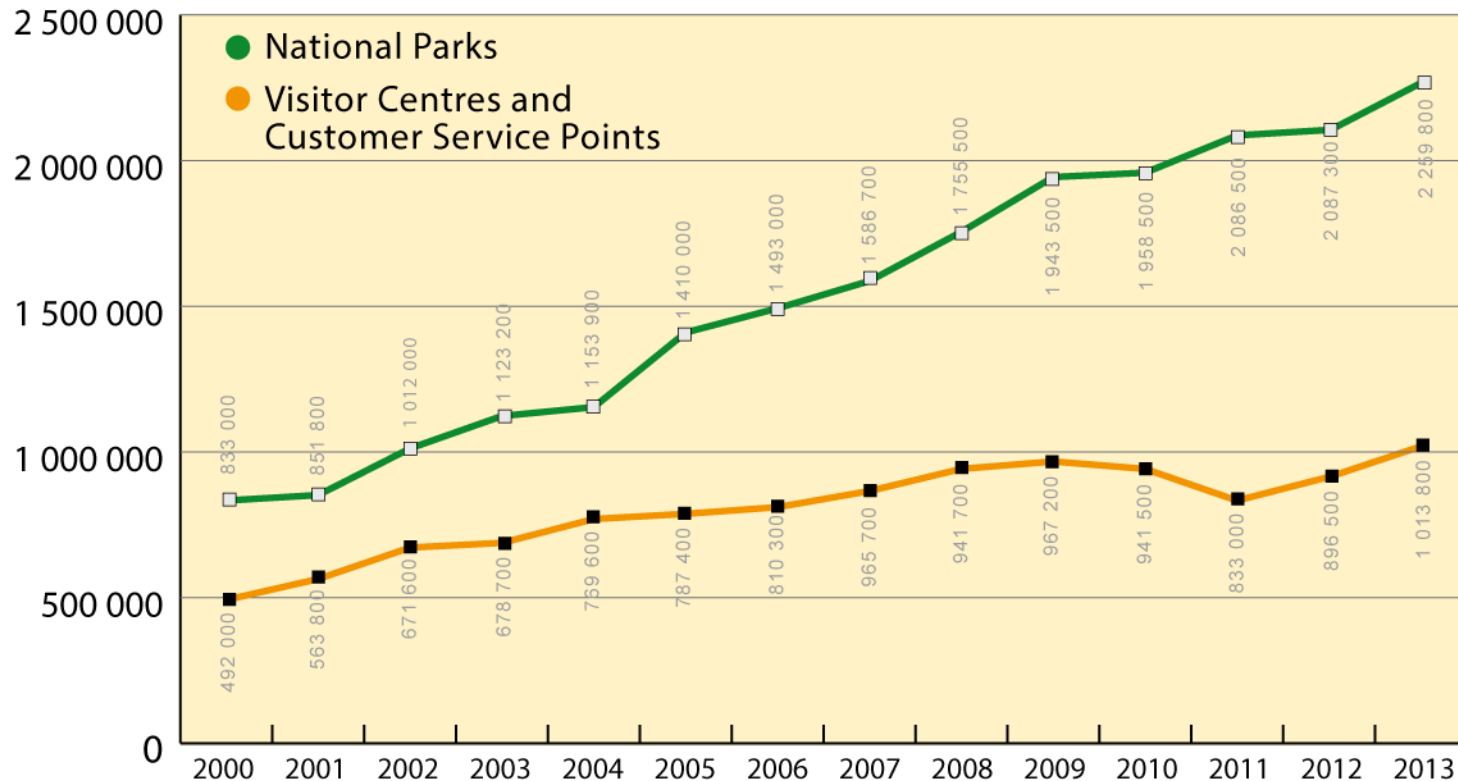


Comparisons: Most Popular National Parks in Finland

	Number of visits in 2013
Pallas-Ylläs NP	488 400
Urho Kekkonen NP	292 600
Nuuksio NP	267 400
Oulanka NP	174 600
Koli NP	140 600
Pyhä-Luosto NP	105 500



Statistics: Number of Visits to National Parks and Visitor Centres



Decision making: Economic Impacts of Visitor Spending

- Money spent on the management and services of national parks and other PAs comes back many-fold through local private businesses and creates a plenty of jobs
- On average, **1 EUR** public investment in the services of national parks results in **10 EUR** return to local economies



New Themes: Healthy Parks – Healthy People

- National parks promote social, psychological and physical well-being
- It is possible to calculate a health benefit index for one specific area or all areas nation wide (scale 1 – 5).

	Responses		Evaluation, %					Average
	n	%	Totally disagree	Some-what disagree	No opinion	Some-what agree	Totally agree	
Increased social well-being	2011	98	0	2	14	40	43	4,24
Increased psychological well-being	2007	98	0	1	8	39	52	4,41
Increased physical well-being	2010	98	0	1	9	38	52	4,41

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An Inspiring Solution?

- Important to make visitor information visible and tangible for all
- Decision makers prefer numbers at all levels
- Using visitor monitoring information data pays back many-fold in the future
- Visitor monitoring is not an option, but a necessity



Photo: Inari-Saariselkä Matkailu Oy



joel.erkkonen@metsa.fi
www.outdoors.fi
www.excursionmap.fi