

Participatory planning - Case Pihlajavesi Natura 2000-area



Photo: Arto Hämäläinen

Seminar of the EUROPARC
Nordic-Baltic Section
Local Participation in the
Management of Protected
Areas

Dovrefjell-Sunndalsfjella
National Park, 18.-21.8.2008
Arto Vilén, Metsähallitus

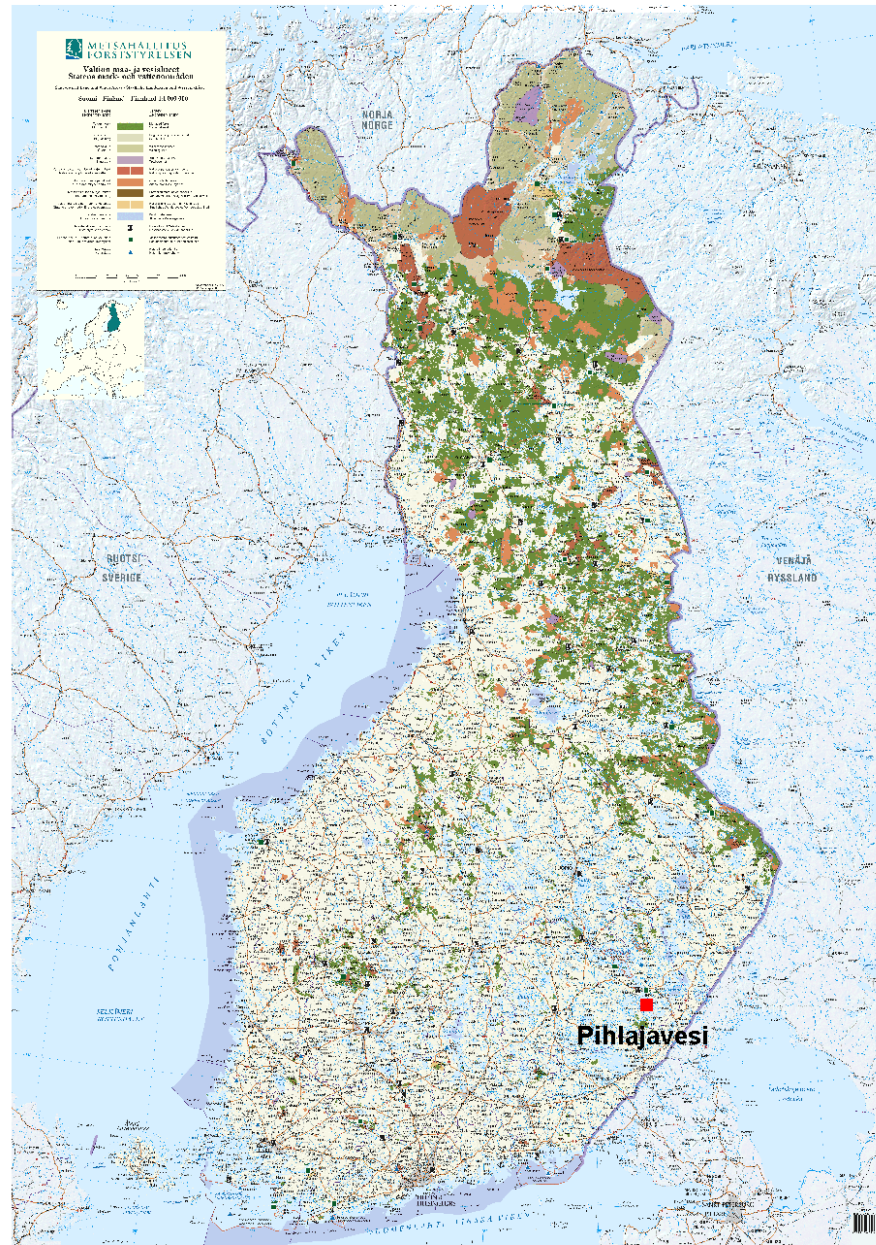




In Presentation

- Introduction
- Planning process and methods
- Actions, results, outcomes and lessons learnt







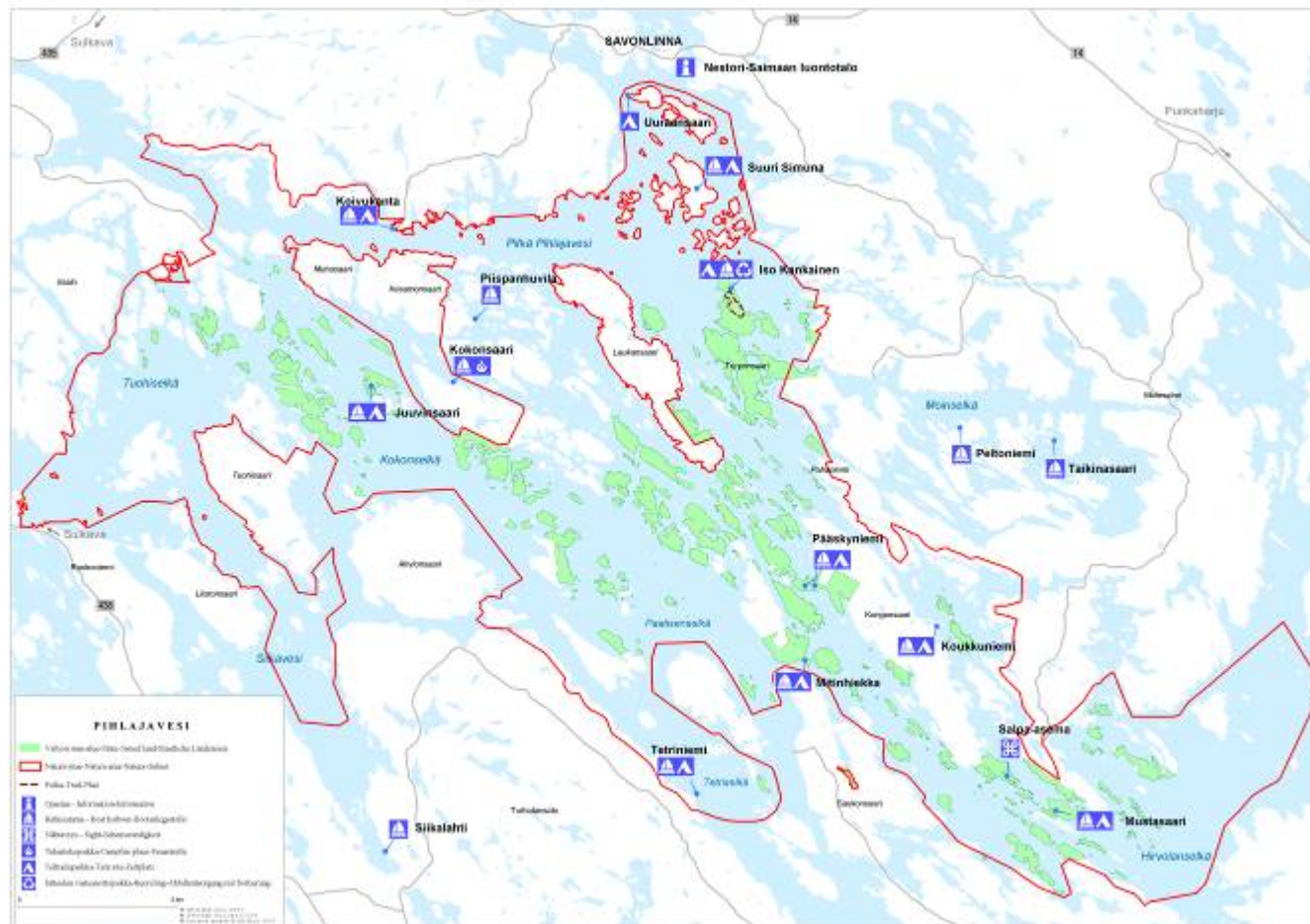
General information

- Lake Pihlajavesi is a part of Natura 2000 –network and Lake Saimaa complex
- Almost 1/3 (ca. 85 seals) of Saimaa ringed seal (*Phoca hispida saimensis*) population lives in Pihlajavesi
- One of Finnish national sceneries
- Over 1000 landowners
- Hundreds of summer cottages
- Important area for recreation (boating, canoeing, fishing, hunting etc.)
- Agriculture and forestry are important sources of income, nature tourism is growing





Pihlajavesi Natura 2000-site





Main conservation values

- Lake ecosystems
- Shorebirds
- Boreal forests
- Cultural habitats
- Herbrich forests
- **Saimaa ringed seal (*Phoca hispida saimensis*)**
 - Threats: Climate change, fishing tacles (nets), disturbance during breeding season
 - Focus on minimizing main threats → affecting on gillnet fishing and traffic on ice
 - Tools: agreements with water owners, fishing policy and regulations, information sharing, pr, zoning
→LOCAL PARTICIPATION!

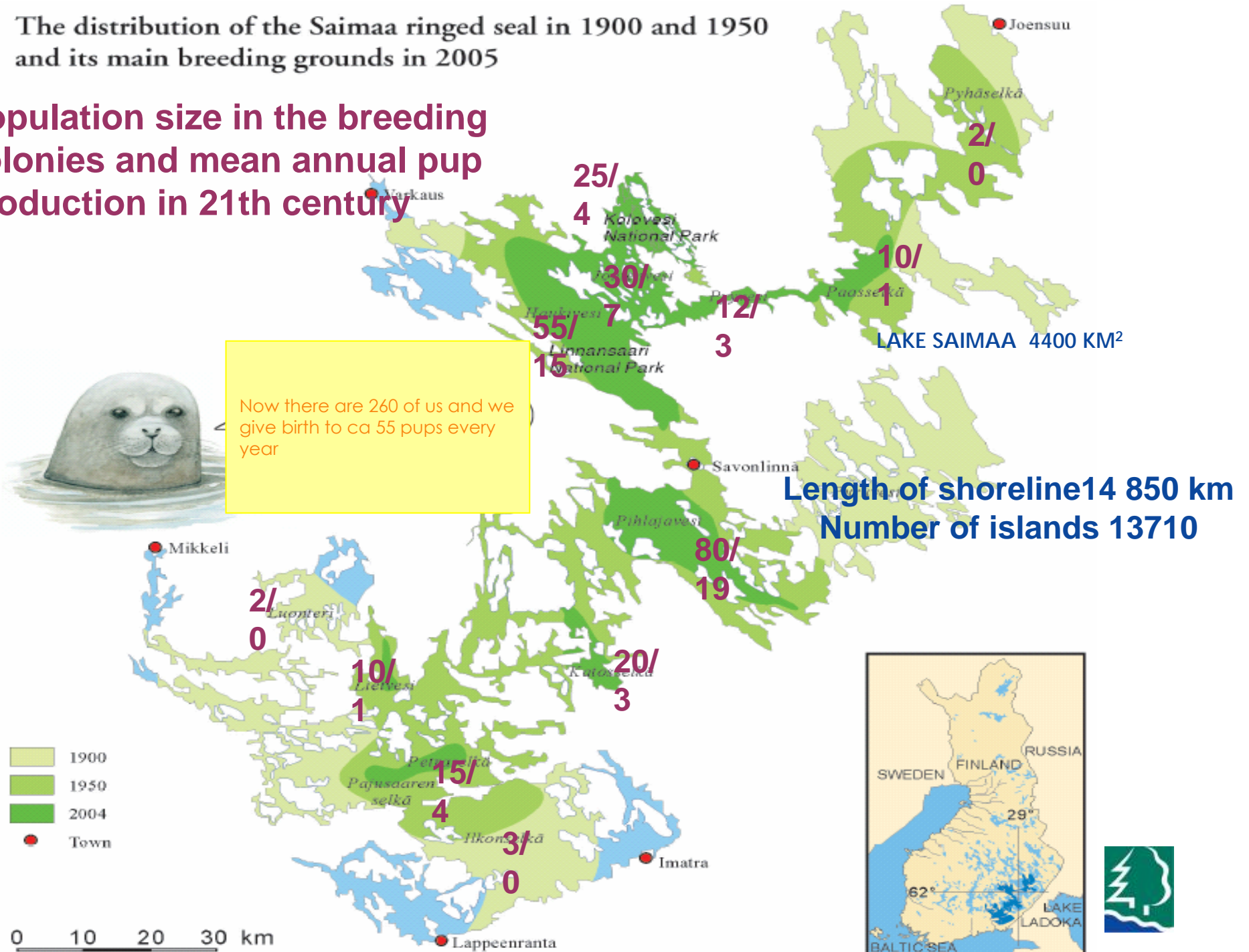


The distribution of the Saimaa ringed seal in 1900 and 1950 and its main breeding grounds in 2005

Population size in the breeding colonies and mean annual pup production in 21th century



Now there are 260 of us and we give birth to ca 55 pups every year





Pihlajavesi Natura 2000 -area as a resource for local communities: past, present and future

- Old tradition on hunting and fishing, agriculture and forestry
 - Conflicting establishment process of protected area
 - Shoreland protection programme, Natura 2000-programme
 - Locals' fear of losing their "traditional rights" like hunting and fishing
 - Saimaa ringed seal and lakeland sceneries are and will be main values for growing nature tourism
- Need for deeper co-operation on local level
- Clarifying conservation value
 - Contributing to the sustainable use of the area for recreation and business activities





Land use and management plan for Pihlajavesi Natura 2000 -area

- Prepared in "People, Nature and Harbours" Interreg III A – project
- Land use and management plan is long-term (10-15 years) strategic plan, which combines objectives of conservation, recreation and other use of state land
- Based on targets of Natura 2000 and national conservation programmes





Objectives of the planning process

- Enhance the local understanding and acceptance of nature conservation
 - Reduce the mortality of Saimaa ringed seal
 - Main threats: fishing tactics and disturbance during breeding season
 - Ensure the locally important recreation possibilities (hunting etc.)
 - Provide possibilities to develop sustainable nature tourism
 - Restoration, management of herb rich forests, conservation and management of cultural environments
 - Balance between conservation and use of biodiversity...
- EMPHASIS ON MULTIPLE USE AND PARTICIPATORY APPROACH
- TESTING NEW METHODS OF PARTICIPATION AND LOCAL CO-OPERATION





Project activities and outputs

- Land use and management plan for the Pihlajavesi Natura 2000 -area
 - Management plan for game and fisheries
 - Special focus on co-operation with hunting clubs and private water owners
- Lessons learnt





Levels of participation

1 Manipulation and 2 Therapy (non participatory)

3 Informing

4 Consultation

5 Placation

6 Partnership

- Power is in fact redistributed through negotiation between citizens and power holders. Planning and decision-making responsibilities are shared e.g. through joint committees.

7 Delegated power

8 Citizen Control

(Arnstein 1969)





Participation methods

- Mapping of the key groups to be involved into planning process
- Meetings with key groups
- Personal contact to landowners
- Public meetings
- Internet
- Circulation for comments





Participation plan

- **Focus on local people, associations and organisations who have essential interests on the land use of the area**
 - Land owners, nature tourism entrepreneurs, hunters, fishermen
 - Contacts to "key persons"
- **Governmental organisations**
 - Regional environmental centre, municipalities, local game and fisheries governance etc.
- **Media**
 - Widespread information
 - Informing the possibilities to participate





Partners

- Visitors
- Land owners
- Water owners, Fishing areas, Regional fishing authorities
- **Game district, local hunters' associations, hunting clubs**
- Nature tourism entrepreneurs
- Local yacht club
- Local nature conservation association
- Savonlinna town, Punkaharju and Sulkava communes
- Regional environmental centre
- Metsähallitus





Actions: Participation

- Information letter to 837 addresses 2/07
- Public meeting in Savonlinna 3/07
- Pihlajavesi fishing area meeting 4/07
- Participation in Savonlinna boating event 5/07
- Public summer event in Pihlajavesi 6/07
- Nature tourism survey summer/autumn 07
- Visitor survey summer/autumn 07
- Game and fisheries management planning 2-12/2007
- Poster, information letters, translation of saimaa seal handout, seal information package for water owners...





First public meeting brought up:

- 1. Hunting
- 2. Natura – what does it mean?
- 3. Guidance material, facilities, nature tourism
- 4. Fishing
- 5. More informing





Hunting and game management (i)

- Problem: Hunters and authorities do not speak the same language when discussing about hunting on protected areas
- Reasons:
 - Hunters' fear of losing their traditional rights
→ "Stiff-neck attitude"
 - Landowners negative experiences about nature protection
 - Non-participatory establishment of Natura 2000 – programme
 - Theoretical vs. practical discussion
 - Previous non-successful proposal for new Nature conservation act





Hunting and game management (ii)

- Our aim was a new approach in the hunting arrangements of conservation areas
 - We created "a standard method of working", by which the problems concerning hunting in protected areas can be solved
 - Basis on hunters' objectives
 - Hunting possibilities should be ensured on certain level
 - We studied:
 - Practices of hunting and game management on the area
 - Legislative background and conservation targets of the area
 - Other recreational use of the area (visitor survey)
 - Hunting practices on similar areas





Hunting and game management (iii)

- As an output we produced a plan which includes:
 - Objectives, actions and recommendations for ecologically and socially sustainable hunting
 - General information about hunting, nature conservation, game stocks and game management
 - Serves as an information package for hunters





Hunting and game management (iv)

- The present state of hunting on Pihlajavesi area was mapped by questionnaire spring 2007
- Questionnaire was sent to 32 associations, of which 26 replied
- Moose hunting is especially important for locals, also socially
- Hunting takes place mostly during autumn (before ice cover)
 - Does not disturb seal breeding





Hunting and game management (v)

- According to results of visitor survey (data collected on excursion harbours of Pihlajavesi):
- 39 % of replied would allow hunting on the area, 15 % would prohibit hunting and 46 % did not have opinion on issue (n=214).
- Hunting on the area did not disturb 97 % of replied (n=213).
- 3 % of replied had found hunting as a disturbing thing. The reasons mentioned were noise, disturbance of nature's peace, hunters' behaviour and possible dangerous situations caused by shooting





Hunting and game management (vi)

- What did we achieve?
 - We found the conflicting issues between targets of hunting, conservation & recreation and a model to combine them
 - Restrictions on landing and hunting on seals' important breeding areas 1.1.-30.4.
 - Restriction zones (150 metres) around excursion harbours
 - Co-operation on hunting of small (red fox) and alien predators (raccoon dog, american mink)
 - Model for reporting (cach, large predator and rare species)
 - Co-operation in voluntary supervision
 - Local hunters took part on planning with great interest and were unanimously committed with the objectives and actions
 - the continuity of hunting is important
 - THE WAY OF WORKING IS RECOMMENDABLE!





Hunting and game management (vii)

- Hunters' opinions and experiences of the planning
 - Hunting is part of management of conservation areas
 - A strength that should be utilized
 - Hunters form a network that has knowledge of areas and historical perspective on changes on nature etc.
 - In Pihlajavesi hunters took part on planning from the beginning of the planning process
 - Trust on open co-operation, more possibilities than threats, commitment to planning
 - The result of the planning was good, the changes in hunting possibilities were minor
 - An outcome of co-operation





Effectiveness of participation

- Effectiveness?
 - We reached in total
 - Personally over 1700 people
 - 26 associations, with 376 members
 - 33 companies, with 200 employees
 - Effectiveness difficult to assess
 - Indicators of positive results
 - General attitude for planning process was positive
 - Positive direct feedback about information sharing
 - Public concern about the state of seal population
 - Concrete actions eg. selling small islands for seal conservation area
 - Agreements on hunting arrangements and restriction zones





What came up during the planning?

- The pain of past
 - Seal conservation, shore protection programme, Natura...
- What does Natura mean? What are the conservation values?
 - No need to return to issue? Knowledge decreases the pain!
- The national specialities of hunting and fishing
- Challenges of participation
 - Numerous means, how to achieve best results





Lessons learnt (i)

- The objectives of participation must be clear, different means work for different purposes
 - Personal contact in the beginning decreases distrust
 - Informal meetings work most often better than formal ones
 - Open atmosphere, more interaction
 - Actual possibility to affect on planning must be ensured to groups with essential interest on land use of the area
 - Focus on participation on local level, avoid becoming "entangled on details"
 - ENSURE THE CONTINUITY OF CO-OPERATION!





Lessons learnt (ii)

- Further steps on applying...
- ...adaptive planning methods which contribute to higher social sustainability of planning
 - Conservation targets – threats – objectives – actions – monitoring well linked
 - Effective protection, not "overprotection"
- ...ecosystem approach on planning
 - Focus on local level
 - Possibility to find balance between conservation and use of biodiversity





Participate – catch the fish!
Thank you!

