Data systems supporting marine protected area management in Parks & Wildlife Finland

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Parks & Wildlife Finland is part of the state of enterprise Metsähallitus and is, among other tasks, responsible for the management of National Parks and other state owned protected areas, including several marine protected areas (MPAs). Parks & Wildlife Finland manage over 50% of Finland´s MPA areal, including National Parks, a UNESCO World Heritage site, N2000-, HELCOM MPA- and Ramsar-sites, as well as other protected areas, such as seal protection areas.

In order to effectively manage these areas several kinds of data are needed and the data used should be of good quality, up to date and easily accessible.

At Parks & Wildlife Finland we have in the recent years moved towards a concentrated (spatial) data management system, to support the management of various types of protected areas. The system consists of several sub-parts which are integrated in one framework. The main part (SASS) is meant for planning and assessment of protected areas. Here one can make e.g. management plans, N2000-status evaluations etc. The other parts contain information on species (LajiGis), habitats and biotopes (SAKTI), basic information of protected areas (SATJ) and cultural heritage sites and recreational structures (PAVE). These are built in way as to make it possible for the information to move between the different parts, so that when you e.g. start making management plans for an MPA, you can get all the species, biotope etc information for the specific area from the other parts.

The sub-parts are also more than simple storages for data, as these can also be used for various kinds of planning and monitoring tasks. You can e.g. make plans for eradicating occurrences of invasive species or management plans for maintaining cultural biotopes.

At the moment the system is open only for the environmental administration in Finland, but in the future, there are plans to open at least some of the data, if not parts of the systems, for the bigger public as well.