

Woodland Key Habitats: role and definition in the Nordic and Baltic countries



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WOODLAND KEY HABITAT (WKH)?

- A habitat of particular importance to forest biodiversity
- Function as a refuge for red-listed species
- Considered as a cost-efficient conservation tool
- Concept is widely used in Nordic and Baltic countries, but there are some differences in definitions and methodologies

QUESTIONS

1. How the definitions and methodologies used in Nordic (Finland, Sweden and Norway) and Baltic (Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania) countries differ?
2. What are the ecological consequences of these differences?
3. Where and in what circumstances to apply WKH concept?

FINDINGS

Concepts and definitions

- Sweden, Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania:
 - emphasize secondary factors, such as occurrence of species
 - no size limits for the habitats
- Finland:
 - methodology underline primary factors, such as soil and bedrock properties
 - in practice the size is limited to max. 1 ha
- Norway:
 - methodology combines both primary and secondary factors
 - minimum size 0.2 ha, no upper limit

Ecological consequences

- The median size of the delineated habitats is very small and varies considerably from 0.36 ha in Finland to 2.10 ha in Estonia
- Differences in national definitions results rather different set of habitats types
- Finnish WKHs are small habitats important to habitat specialists
- In Sweden and Baltic countries, WKHs are habitats important to red-listed species
- Norwegian WKHs serves both red-listed and common species

Where to apply?

- WKH approach is suitable for fragmented landscapes with history of intensive forest management



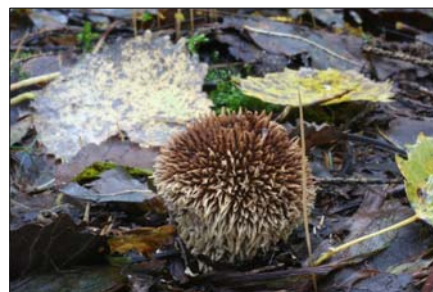
Pycnoporellus fugens

Photo by Panu Halme



Finnish WKH: a brook

Photo by Anu Käppi



Lycoperdon echinatum

Photo by Panu Halme