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Case study #03: Beaver re-introduction

Case study cluster: peatlands and wetlands

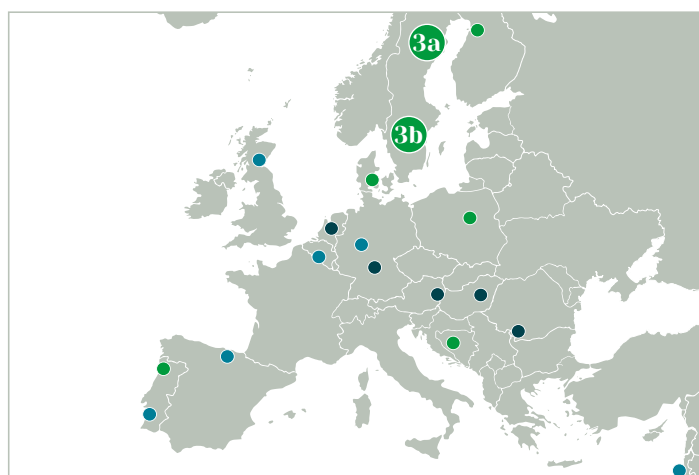
Country: Sweden

Scientific partner: Swedish University of Agricultural Sciences (SLU), contact: Frauke Ecke

Implementation partner: Swedish Forest Agency (SFA)

Twinning case study: GRIP on LIFE

Website: www.skogsstyrelsen.se/en/wambaf



Demonstration (3a)

- **Type of restoration:** beaver re-introduction: nature-based solution to restore degraded wetlands and small streams and ditches – from local to regional scale
- **Size:** local to catchment scale (100 m² – >10,000 km²)
- **Location(s):** beaver systems within the species distribution range in Sweden with a focus on the Vindelälven catchment (12,650 km²)
- **Value of the case:** river and floodplain restoration, flood protection, drought mitigation, biodiversity enhancement, recreation, potential disservices due to vectors and reservoirs causing health risks
- **Stakeholders involved:** Swedish Forest Agency, County Administration Boards
- **Sectors involved:** forestry
- **Innovations being applied:** truly nature-based solution by beavers restoring degraded wetlands and waterbodies

Implemented within MERLIN

- Restoration measures: creation of 30 artificial beaver dams; removal of beaver dams at 30 sites

- Size: 1,01 ha re-wetted area, 0.15 km stream length restored
- Scope: local to regional
- Vicinity: rural, (semi-urban)
- Stakeholders involved: hunting associations, municipalities, forest enterprises, anglers, nature conservation organisations, spatial planners, Swedish Agency for Marine and Water Management, Swedish Environmental Protection Agency, Public Health Agency of Sweden
- Estimated costs: 80,000€ (including planning, monitoring and construction costs)

Lessons learnt

- Plan for upscaling from the outset.
- Engage landowners early.
- Professional communication builds public support.

Additional information

After extinction in Sweden, 80 Norwegian beavers were reintroduced between 1922 and 1939, giving rise to today's population of around 200,000.



Strengths

- Biodiversity and recreational benefits
- Self-sustaining beaver-led restoration
- Clear stakeholder rights and responsibilities
- Strong policy alignment

Weaknesses

- Difficult to assess cost-effectiveness
- Limited ecosystem service knowledge
- Limited long-term monitoring

Opportunities

- Beaver impact research
- Nature-positive public engagement
- Catalyst for holistic forest management

Threats

- Policy and legal uncertainty
- Unpredictable beaver-driven change
- Potential ecological disservices

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