

Identification and assessment of top priority areas for conservation management using Natura 2000 data

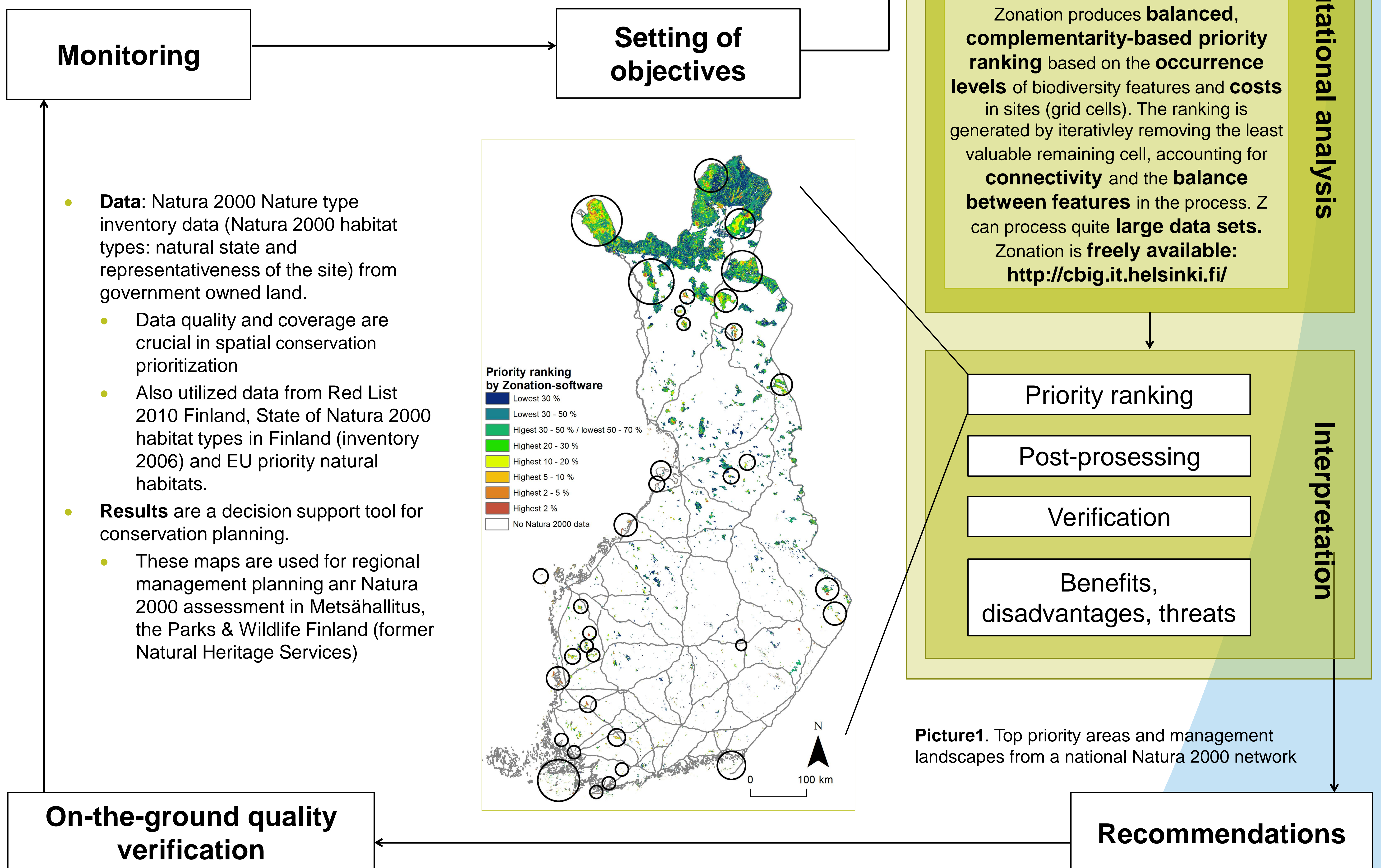
In this study we develop a high-resolution spatial conservation prioritization for the Finnish national Natura 2000 network and identify top-priority areas in it. The primary purpose of this work is to assist targeting of habitat maintenance, management and restoration in and around the Finnish Natura 2000 network. While it is obligatory to maintain the condition of the Natura 2000 network or improve it by habitat restoration, it is a fact that national environmental bodies operate under budgetary constraints. Consequently, there is a need to prioritize targeting of conservation effort in and around the Natura 2000 network.

High priority areas are combinations of areas that are high quality (pristine and representative), irreplaceable (rare), well aggregated (connectivity), continuous (defragmented) and they complement Natura 2000 network. These areas and their neighbourhoods are the areas of high conservation relevance in terms of habitat maintenance and possibly habitat restoration.

Top-priority management landscapes fall into three categories: landscapes that 1. hold significant distribution of at least on Natura 2000 habitat type, 2. are highly prioritized and over 20 km² or 3. qualifies these both.

The analysis done here could be replicated elsewhere using publicly available spatial prioritization software Zonation and Natura 2000 inventory data.

CONSERVATION DECISION-MAKING: Spatial conservation prioritization process (in Zonation)



References

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