



and decreased in the 1990s. In the nearby cities of Monchegorsk and Apatity, in addition to Mallard, we observed a tendency for a rise, although not so sharp and manifest only by the late 2000s, in the numbers of Teal and Shoveler, and for a decline – in Pintail.



## **SCIENTIFIC FEASIBILITY STUDY OF PA NETWORK DEVELOPMENT AS A FACTOR FOR CONSERVATION OF GAME ANIMALS IN EASTERN FENNOSCANDIA**

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A team of leading specialists at Karelian Research Centre have prepared and published the “Scientific feasibility study of the development of the network of protected areas in Republic of Karelia” (2009). The study deals with the problem of conserving the biotic diversity – natural objects in Republic of Karelia that are typical, rare, unique, most vulnerable to human impact sites. Provisional basic criteria for PA identification and practical principles for the regional PA network formation were formulated. All the material regarding the qualities of the natural complexes in general and their components are presented in the following order: 1) methodological approaches to and grounds for development of the nature protection network; 2) adequacy of the operating and planned PA network, 3) designation priorities for the coming 5-7 years, 4) problems and potential solutions. Interregional continuity of PA networks is analysed separately. Special focus is on



the sections where the current state and problems of conserving the last surviving large areas of pristine forest are considered. These areas are the habitation centres and sources of native taiga fauna. Waterside protection zones, which act as ecological corridors for animals, are indicated and described. They keep populations continuous by maintaining links between PAs and other intact or relatively undisturbed pieces of the taiga biome. Thus, populations of specialized animal species can live sustainably. Of particular interest in terms of preventing fragmentation of the species' range are several territories in Eastern Fennoscandia: "Green Belt" and three taiga "corridors" – north, mid-, and south-taiga ones (Kurhinen et al. 2009; Gromtsev et al. 2009). Surveys of these territories with view to assessing their value for conservation of the species diversity and populations of taiga animals are still underway.



## GREEN RING OF FENNOSCANDIA

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Available information about the system of protected areas (PAs) that has formed in the north of Europe is summarized. The backbone of the system is large PAs along the Russian-Norwegian and Russian-Finnish borders – so-called Green Belt of Fennoscandia (Titov et al., 1995; Titov et al., 2009), and the equally important green belt along the eastern and south-eastern boundary between Fennoscandia and the