

## 2<sup>nd</sup> Nordic NJF Seminar on Reindeer Husbandry Research “Reindeer herding and land use management – Nordic perspectives”

**Päivi Soppela<sup>1</sup>, Jouko Kumpula<sup>2</sup> & Kari Oinonen<sup>3</sup>**

<sup>1</sup> Arctic Centre, University of Lapland, PO Box 122, FI-96101 Rovaniemi, Finland  
(Corresponding author: paivi.soppela@ulapland.fi).

<sup>2</sup> Natural Resources Institute Finland (Luke), Habitats and ecology, Toivoniementie 246, FI-99910 Kaamanen, Finland.

<sup>3</sup> Finnish Environment Institute (SYKE), Environmental Policy Centre/Land Use, Mechelininkatu 34a, FI-00260 Helsinki, Finland.

**Rangifer**, 35, (1), 2015: 33-38

*The 2nd NJF Seminar on Reindeer Husbandry Research was held at the Arctic Centre, University of Lapland, Rovaniemi, Finland from 19 to 21 October 2014. The seminar was organized under the framework of Reindeer Husbandry Research Section of NJF (Nordic Association of Agricultural Scientists), established in 2012. Over 100 Nordic and international delegates including researchers, managers, educators, students and reindeer herders participated in the seminar.*

The main theme of the seminar was “Reindeer herding and land use management – Nordic perspectives”. The goal of the seminar was to discuss reindeer herding and land use questions from the angles of different disciplines and to figure out preconditions for sustainable reindeer husbandry as well as sustainable co-management and governance of land use between different stakeholders. The seminar also aimed to increase communication between research, administration and reindeer herders.

The two-day seminar included six scientific sessions and a finalizing panel discussion. The scientific sessions were:

- Relations of reindeer herding and other land use activities
- Reindeer herding in a changing environment
- Predators and reindeer management
- How to combine different land use activities – presenting the POROT project in Finland
- Sustainable and profitable reindeer management
- Social and cultural security and sustainability of reindeer herding livelihood - future prospects



**Figure 1.** Seminar participants from Finland, Norway, Sweden, Denmark, Greenland, Germany, UK and Hungary at the conference venue; the Arktikum, Rovaniemi (Photo: Veli Kouri).

In total, 18 lectures and 16 posters were presented during the seminar. A pre-conference field trip was made to Konttaniemi family's reindeer farm nearby Rovaniemi after which the Rovaniemi City Council represented by Chair Heikki Autto offered a welcoming party in the city hall.

The session themes were introduced by frontline Nordic keynote speakers. In addition, there were invited speakers and panelists from the ministries, reindeer herding administration, reindeer herding livelihood and land use management. The first keynote was given by Juha Joonas, Senior researcher of the Northern Institute of Environmental and Minority Law, University of Lapland who led the audience through legal aspects of reindeer herding as a land use right in Finland that differs from other Nordic countries. Research professor Bruce Forbes from the Arctic Centre, University of Lapland reviewed relations of reindeer management and long-term pasture vegetation dynamics in Fennoscandia and NW Russia. The third keynote speaker, Professor Birgitta Åhman from SLU, Sweden presented the effects of predators on reindeer management.

The papers of the first seminar day dealt e.g. with the effects of land use activities such as forestry and wind power infrastructure on reindeer herding, the distribution of large carnivores in Northern Fennoscandia and the effects of large predator management on reindeer herding. Also, the adaptation of reindeer herding to a changing environment, grazing conditions and winter feeding was discussed from different perspectives.

The session presenting the POROT project led by Mr. Kari Oinonen from SYKE addressed how GIS data could be used in co-planning and management of reindeer herding and other land use activities in Finland. A corresponding GIS system ("Renbruksplan") has been developed for Sami reindeer herding districts in Sweden. The papers were followed by a lively discussion where different aspects like the needs of reindeer herding and the ownership rights of the GIS data were discussed.

The second day's keynote speakers were Dr. Bård-Jørgen Bårdsen from the Norwegian Institute for Nature Research (NINA) who addressed the effects of climate and pasture condition on reindeer life history and herd dynamics. Then Dr. Annette Löf from Umeå University discussed challenges of sustainability and the role of governance and politics in reindeer herding. The presentations of the second day addressed the effects of climate change and grazing conditions on management of reindeer herds and means of adaptation to different changes. Based on bio-economic research, the effects of pasture conditions, herding and slaughtering strategies on the productivity, sustainability and profitability of reindeer herding were also presented. Other topics dealt with the impact of the selection on meat production traits of reindeer and the possibilities of collaborative pasture circulation in the North Calotte, even across national borders.

The poster presentations dealt with the effects of different environmental changes to reindeer herding and grazing lands, reindeer tourism and wellbeing of reindeer and reindeer herders. The posters were briefly presented by the authors. The finalizing panel discussion on 'Sustainable governance in reindeer management and land use' drew together ideas and questions from the sessions and outlined grounds for sustainable governance of reindeer husbandry and land use between policy-makers, administration and research. The panelists included delegates from Finland, Norway and Sweden. The panel discussion was moderated by Dr. Lasse Peltonen from the Finnish Environment Institute.

The panelists of all Nordic countries shared a concern about land use changes, losses of pastures and profitability of reindeer herding. The discussion topics included e.g. regulation of reindeer numbers, intensification of pasture circulation within and between reindeer herding districts and



**Figure 2.** Keynote speaker, Dr. Annette Löf from Umeå University discussed the challenges of sustainable reindeer husbandry (Photo: Berit Inga).

reindeer herding as an entrepreneurship activity. An increasing interaction in discussion and decision-making between practical reindeer herding and different levels of administration was called for.

Wide participation from all Nordic countries and different universities and institutions showed a clear interest in the scope of the seminar and emphasized the importance of Nordic cooperation and contacts. The seminar was financially supported by NKJ (Nordforsk), Finnish Game and Fisheries Research Institute, Finnish Environmental Institute and Ministry of Environment in Finland. The next NJF seminar is planned to be held 2016 in Sweden.

The seminar was hosted by the Arctic Centre, University of Lapland in Rovaniemi. The collaborative local organizers were the Finnish Game and Fisheries Research Institute (RKTL), the Finnish Environment Institute (SYKE), Reindeer Herders' Association in Finland and the Sami Educational Centre, Inari, Finland.

The scientific committee included:

Prof. Birgitta Åhman, Swedish University of Agricultural Sciences (SLU)

Prof. Øystein Holand, Norwegian University of Life Sciences

Dr. Rolf Røvden, Research Director, Bioforsk, Norway

Mr. Kari Oinonen, Head of Unit, SYKE, Finland

Mr. Janne Näkkäläjärvi, Development manager, Sami Educational Centre, Inari, Finland

Dr. Päivi Soppela, Senior Scientist, Arctic Centre, University of Lapland, Finland

Dr. Jouko Kumpula, Senior Scientist, RKTL, Finland

A detailed program for the conference is available at: [www.ulapland.fi/njf2014](http://www.ulapland.fi/njf2014)



**Figure 3.** *From left to right:* Dr. Päivi Soppela, Seminar coordinator; Dr. Eva Wiklund, Editor of Rangifer and Professor Birgitta Åhman, Head of NJF's Reindeer Husbandry Section on a poster session. (*In the background:* Dr. Maria Väisänen presenting her poster.) (Photo: Hans-Göran Olofsson).

