

Monitoring small landscape elements as indication for quality of landscape and biodiversity

From 2004 until 2009, the NGO for Landscape Management in the Netherlands (LBN) carried out the so-called Monitor Small Landscape Elements (MKLE) in 20 National Landscapes. It resulted in an inventory of around 150.000 ha and some 42.000 elements, such as wooded banks, pruned trees, lanes etc. Qualitative data was collected about e.g. vitality, measures to be taken in the next year. The aim was to do a monitor after 5 years. From 2010 onwards the follow-up is being carried out on a smaller scale than before, due to lack of funding. We are now monitoring/making an inventory of 60.000 ha in 11 of the 12 provinces of the Netherlands. It forms a representative random sample of the Dutch landscape. The results so far show us, that although the number of elements remains stable, the completeness and the dispersion over the landscape is diminishing. We also see a growing need to keep up the quality of the landscape elements. This indicates that due to less interest for landscape policy by national and local governments, in combination with less money for it, a risk full development is taken place at the moment. If we can't stop this trend within 5 to 10 years, the risk of irreversible deterioration of the Dutch landscape is there!

The consequences for biodiversity and for enjoying the landscape are clear if that happens. E.g. the number of meadow birds is declining for decades in the Netherlands and the future doesn't look



good. The sheer number of elements is not important: a line of trees is regarded as one element. If after five years the line is not complete anymore and only 10 trees remain, it means that the number of elements has risen by 9. The landscape quality however has declined!

In the presentation, I will clarify the method of making the inventory and the way we present

the results. The monitor is used for the lobby strategy of LBN towards policy makers. It is also used to give evidence to statements about the deterioration of the landscape and the consequences for biodiversity. Many 'feel' that landscape quality and the number of elements is rapidly going down, but no numbers were there to support it.

References

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