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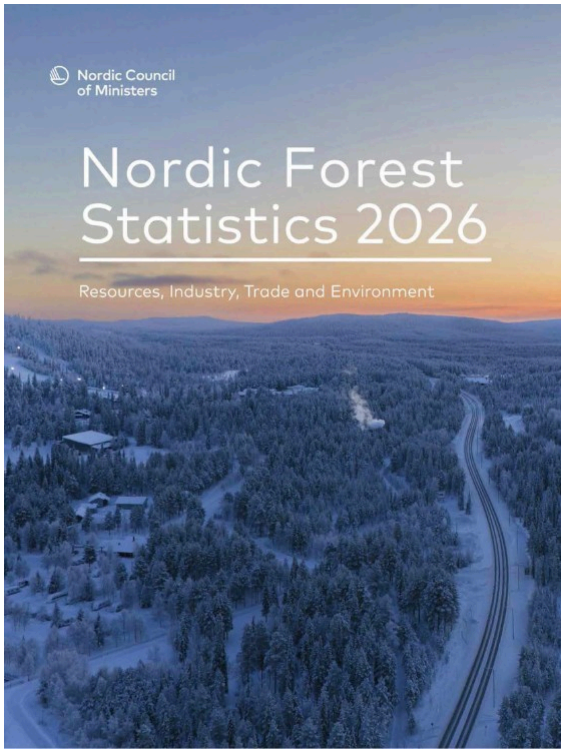
Nordic Forest Statistics 2026:

Small in area, big in forest



The Nordic region is a world-leading exporter of sawn softwood, accounting for a quarter of the global market. It may be surprising that while the forests are being utilized, the Nordic countries simultaneously have by far the largest protected forest areas. Half of the EU's strictly protected forest is located in Sweden and Finland.

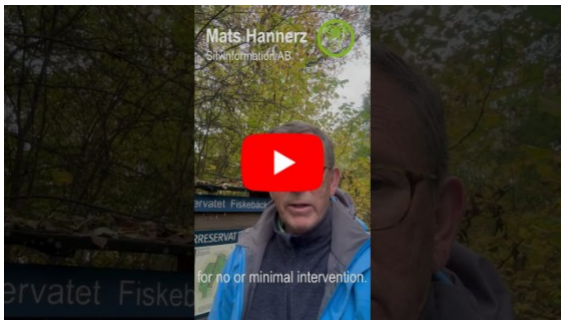
The new report "Nordic Forest Statistics 2026" (Nordic Forest Research (SNS)/Nordic Council of Ministers) compiles current statistics on forest resources, industry, trade, and environment, and gives a unique opportunity for comparisons that wasn't possible before.

Download the report for free!

More about the Nordic Forest Statistics 2026

The global share of Nordic softwood sawn export is 24 %.

Sweden and Finland are home to half of the strictly protected forest in Europe



Along with Norway, 5,5 million hectares of the forest is strictly protected. The northern part of the region contains some of the largest wilderness areas in Europe. Looking at how much of the forest area that is managed, about 27% in Sweden and 32% in Norway is exempted from forestry.

Find more about protected forest in the report

National forest inventories were born in the Nordic region



The world's first national forest inventory was launched in Norway in 1919. Finland and Sweden followed in 1921 and 1923. No other region has such detailed, statistically correct and century-long information on its forest resources.
The national forest inventories have over time been broadened to include carbon, soil properties and biodiversity metrics. This is why we have such detailed knowledge of the state of the forest in the Nordic countries.

Find the report on NordPub

In Finland, each inhabitant has 4 hectares by itself. In Germany, ten inhabitants has 1 hectare!

The Nordic growth and harvesting miracle

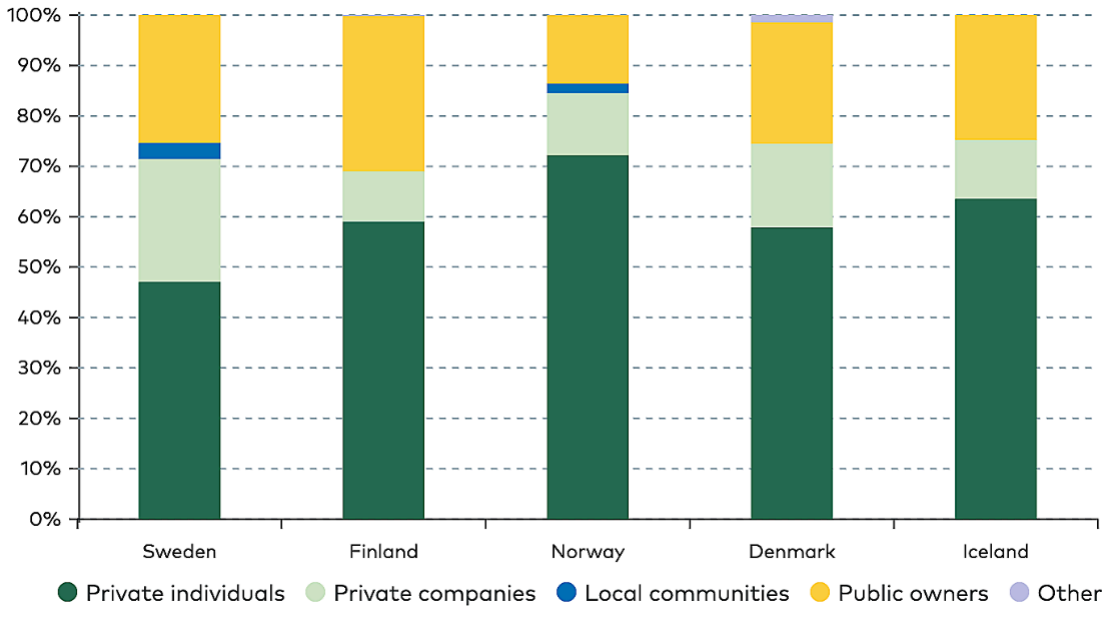


Although Sweden, Finland, and Norway have harvested timber equivalent to twice the original standing volume over the past 60 years, the standing timber stock is now 70% larger than it was at the start of the period.

Taken together, the message is striking. Across all three countries, twice the forest volume that existed in the 1960s has been harvested over the past six decades. And still, the forests have continued to grow. Today, the total growing stock is over 70% larger than it was then – and it is still increasing.

More exciting facts in the report

Retention forestry dominates: For each clearfelling, about 5-10% of the area is set aside to act as a life-boat for species depending on aging forest.



700,000 small-scale forest owners of Nordic forest land

Forest ownership is a critical part of the Nordic supply model.
Small-scale private owners account for 56% of Nordic forest land, and more than 700,000 individual owners make day-to-day forest management decisions. Collectively, these owners provide more than 70% of the region's timber supply. This makes ownership structure an important, and sometimes overlooked, factor in understanding Nordic wood availability.

Find the report on NordPub

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