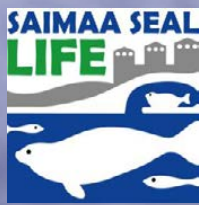


Photo: Timo Seppäläinen

LIFE Saimaa Seal

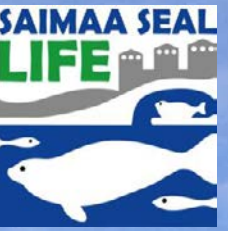
Platform meeting Punkaharju 11.6.2018

Raisa Tiilikainen, project manager



Structure of the presentation

- What, how long, by who?
 - The basic info of the project
- Why?
 - Background for the project
- How? LIFE Saimaa seal project
 - New methods in Saimaa ringed seal conservation; improving the breeding conditions of the seals and the results underwater surveys



LIFE Saimaa Seal – Safeguarding the Saimaa Ringed Seal

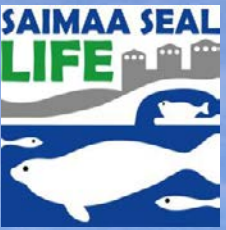
- Duration 5 years 1.8.2013-31.12.2018
- Budget ca. 5,26M€, from EU 3,95M€ (75%)

8 project partners

- Metsähallitus Parks & Wildlife Finland
- University of Eastern Finland UEF
- South Savo ELY centre ESAELY
- Natural Resources Institute LUKE
- University of Turku
- Finnish Federation for Recreational Fishing SVK
- Finnish Association for Nature Conservation FANC
- WWF Finland

Co-financiers

- Ministry of Environment
- Nestori Foundation
- Raija and Ossi Tuuliainen Foundation



Background and aims

- Saimaa ringed seal one of the most endangered seals, the only endemic mammal in Finland
- Current population size **370-380 individuals**
- Metsähallitus Parks & Wildlife Finland is responsible for most of the conservation and monitoring measures of the Saimaa seal
- The national conservation strategy and action plan for the Saimaa ringed seal (2011) to improve the conservation status of the species
- LIFE Saimaa seal project is targeted to **reduce risks especially related to fishing, human induced disturbance and climate change.**



Photo Timo Seppäläinen





Photo Ismo Marttinen

Main EU policy targeted in LIFE Saimaa seal:

- The Habitats and Birds Directives (Annex IV species)
- The Saimaa ringed seal is classified as IUCN status of EN
- The seal is endemic mammal of Finland, therefore Finland has international responsibility for protection of the species.

SPECIFIC GOALS:

- **to reduce by-catch mortality** by developing and promoting seal-friendly fishing methods and reinforcing compliance of the fishing restrictions,
- **to reduce human-induced disturbances** by identifying and defining risk areas, guiding land use planning and activities on vulnerable areas,
- **to adapt to climate change** by adopting a method of making man-made snowdrifts to improve the Saimaa seal's lairing conditions during mild winters,
- **to strengthen the role of voluntary work and involvement of local people in conservation actions,**
- **to produce broader and updated knowledge** on essential ecological issues as well as knowledge about potential threats to seals for development of conservation policy and effective conservation and monitoring,
- **to increase the awareness about the seal and its protection.**



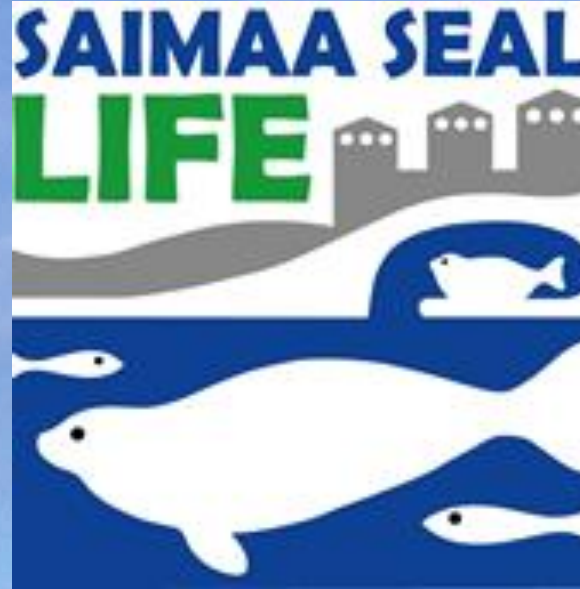
Photo Timo Seppäläinen

NEW INFORMATION

- Mortality of pups and young UEF + MH (game cameras 200/yr and under-water surveys)
- Permanent distribution area of the seal MH
- Habitat use of the seal UEF
- > **update of Saimaa seal conservation strategy and action plan**

HUMAN-INDUCED DISTURBANCE

- 34 ha islands, 670 ha water areas purchased on key seal areas
- Human disturbance during breeding season analyzed. Guidelines drafted for land use planning and possible conflict points between shoreline development and breeding sites mapped in 6 N2000 areas
- MH + ESAELY
 - Information maps
<https://julkaisut.metsa.fi/julkaisut/show/2183>
- Management plans (Joutenvesi-Enonvesi-Pyyvesi & Orivesi-Pyhäselkä N2000 areas) & N2000 site condition assessments (6), rules and regulations for conservation areas (3)
- Marking of conservation and restriction areas



REDUCING FISHING INDUCED MORTALITY

- Promoting of seal-safe fishing gear SLL, WWF, ESAELY
- **Update of Fishing act 2016**
- Enhancing control over regulations protecting the seal MH
 - Game and fish warden & ranger

ADAPTING TO CLIMATE CHANGE

- Man-made snowdrift method MH + UEF

VOLUNTEER WORK

- Lair inventories, population monitoring MH+ WWF
- Man-made snowdrifts

KNOWLEDGE ON SAIMAA RINGED SEAL

- Children (>10000), summer residents (>60000), recreational fishers, tourists
- Diverse information on Saimaa seal and its conservation
 - Brochures, workshops, presentations
 - Riihisaari Provincial Museum exhibition renewal in 2018
 - ABC Kuortti Service Station

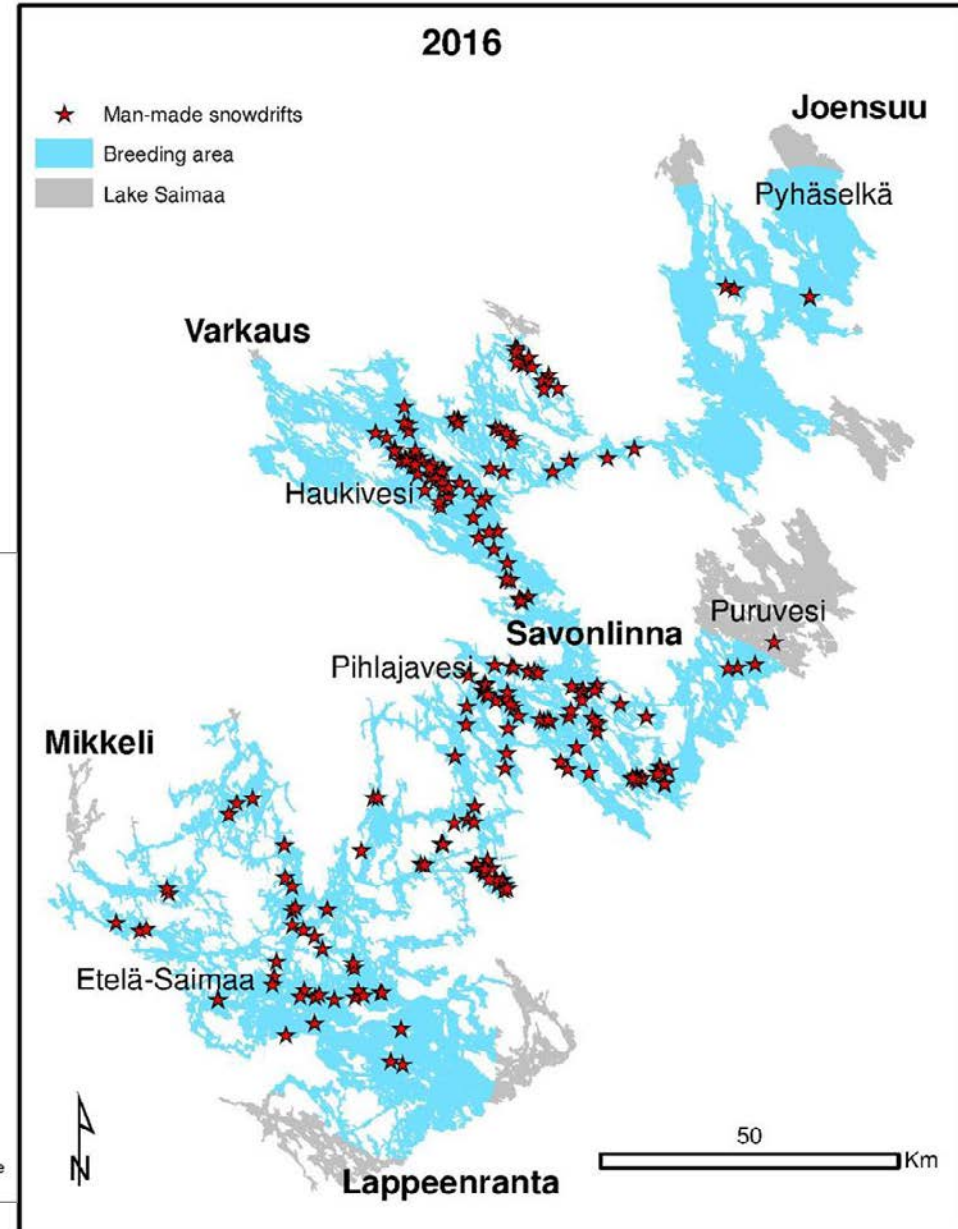
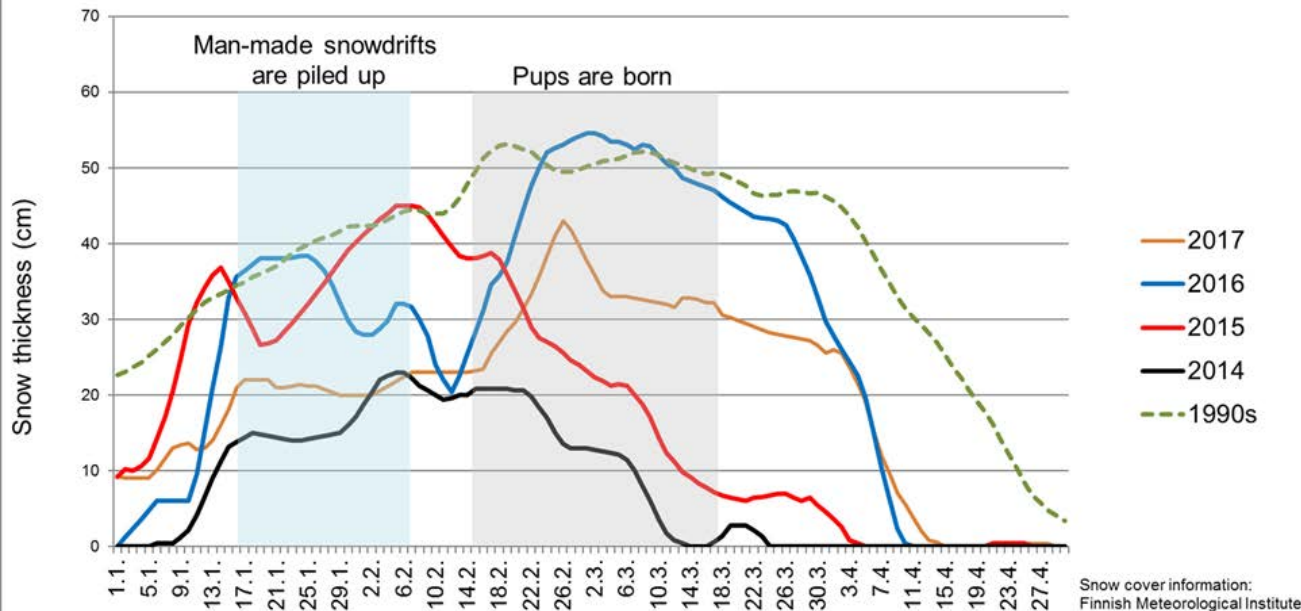
www.metsa.fi/web/en/saimaaseallife
www.nationalparks.fi/en/saimaa-ringed-seal



Man-made snowdrift method as a conservation act (2014-18)

Results and summary

- >1000 man-made snowdrifts made
 - ✓ 75 % has been used by seal
 - ✓ 345 pups born in man-made snowdrifts
- Pup mortality 8-19 %
- >250 persons educated to the method
- Method is very effective



A pup was born in a reed nest **Phs322** -> You will find it on NorppaGalleria!



WWF-n katsivulle Sisaankirjautuminen

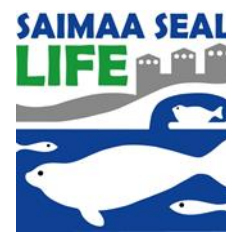
ILMOITA HAVAINTO TÄSTÄ ON KYSE GALLERIA [LITY JA LAHJOITA](#)

WVF
NORPPA-GALLERIA

TUTUSTU TERTTUUN
JA MUIHIN NORPPIIN

Uudet havainnot Havainnot alueittain - Kuvatuimmat norpat

Kuva: Juha Taskinen



Under-water surveys (2011-18)

Information on natality and mortality of pups -> better estimate of the population size

- 700 lair sites surveyed
- 19 dead pups (>30%)
- 34 new pups (10%)





Photo: Miina Auttila



Photo: Miina Auttila



Photo: Ismo Marttinen

Photo: Timo Seppäläinen

Thank you! Kiitos!

www.metsa.fi/web/en/saimaaseallife

www.nationalparks.fi/en/saimaa-ringed-seal

raisa.tiilikainen@metsa.fi

