

Our Saimaa Seal LIFE project

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Photo: Jari Ilmonen

Protection of Saimaa ringed seals in a changing environment

Our Saimaa Seal LIFE project aims to enhance the conservation of the Saimaa ringed seal (*Pusa hispida saimensis*) by the following measures:

- Preparing and implementing a genetic rescue plan
- Restoration of breeding habitats by man-made snowdrifts and artificial nests
- Novel monitoring tools and methods
- Research on genetics and health of the Saimaa ringed seal population
- Controlling for fishing restrictions relating to the seals
- We also transfer and replicate the lessons learned in Saimaa to improve the conservation status of the Baltic ringed seal



Photo: Timo Seppäläinen

The saimaa ringed seal is an icon of Finnish nature conservation.

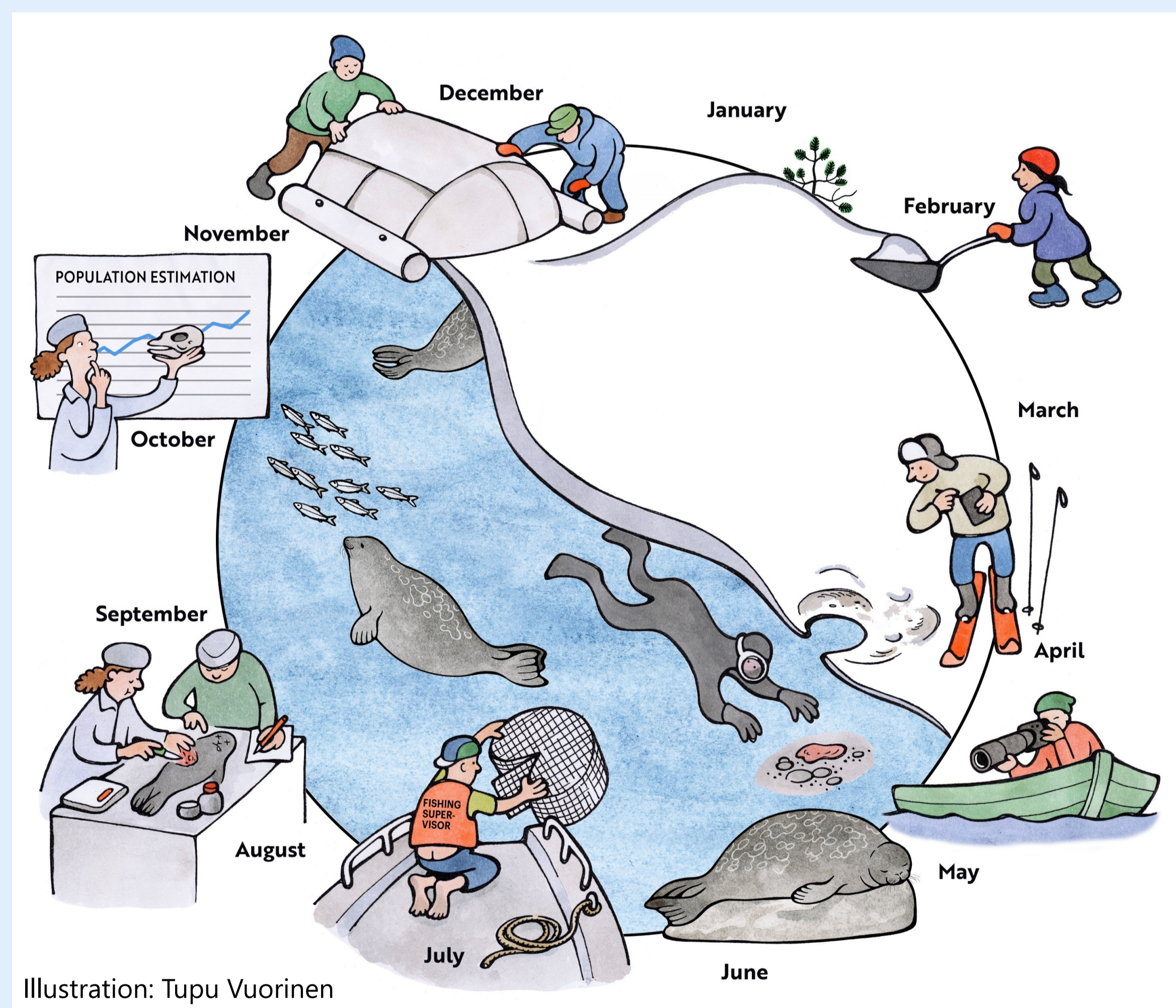


Illustration: Tupu Vuorinen

Seal conservationist's annual schedule is determined by the ecology of the seal.

Raising awareness by environmental education and communication

- Promotion of seal-friendly tourism in Saimaa area with seal safari companies
- A high-end documentary film of the Saimaa seal and conservation efforts
- Seal education for children and youth
- Campaigns for increasing the use of seal-safe fishing gear
- Education of local veterinaries for care for injured seals
- Saimaa ringed seal conservation strategy
- Land use planning and management
- Live cameras for the Baltic ringed seals in the moulting period:
<https://wwf.fi/luontolive/itamerenorppa/>

LIFE programme is the EU's funding instrument for the environment and climate

- Project duration 1.9.2020-31.12.2025
- Budget 7,069M€, EU LIFE funding 75%
- Coordinated by Metsähallitus, 12 associated beneficiaries (regional authorities, research institutes, a private company and NGO's)
- 5 co-funders
- Location: Finland/Saimaa and SW archipelago in the Baltic Sea

More info: <https://www.metsa.fi/en/project/our-saimaa-seal-life/>

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