

THE YEAR OF THE SAIMAA RINGED SEAL CONSERVATIONIST

Metsähallitus Parks & Wildlife Finland is responsible for the monitoring and conservation of the Saimaa ringed seal. The conservation acts are executed in collaboration with local volunteers and several partner organizations.

Improving the breeding conditions in the winter

We set artificial nests from late autumn till January. In mid-winter, we plow man-made snowdrifts to secure the ringed seals will have suitable breeding lairs during winter. We aim to finish the plowing work before the end of January, to secure a peaceful breeding season for the seals.

Monitoring the breeding success and population size in the spring

In spring, when the ice is melting and snow dens have mostly collapsed, we count the breeding lairs and the haul-out lairs. We dive the lair sites to gain information about the birth and mortality rate of born pups. During moulting season, we photograph the seals' fur patterns to recognize individuals; this also helps in estimating the population size. In late spring, we estimate the number of seal pups born the past winter, based on the results of lair counting and diversings.



Supervising fishing restrictions in the summer

We execute fishing supervision on the whole lake Saimaa. We check fishing gear to ensure they are seal-safe, and we survey fishers follow the restrictions concerning fishing with nets. We instruct tourists to take the presence of the Saimaa ringed seal into account when travelling in Saimaa region.

Keeping track of the conservation success and making plans in the autumn

We monitor the health and mortality rate of the seals throughout the year. We collect and examine found seal carcasses, for they provide important information. At the end of the year, we estimate the size of the winter population and report the results of the conservation acts.

Spreading information and promoting conservation through the year

We inform people about the conservation of the Saimaa ringed seal, and we take part as experts concerning e.g. the conservation strategy, movement and fishing restrictions, and land use planning. We spread information about the seal for residents, tourists, and hikers of the lake Saimaa region.

Joining forces together to protect the Saimaa ringed seal

Our Saimaa Seal LIFE project enhances the conservation of the Saimaa ringed seal during the years 2020-2025. The project is led by Metsähallitus Parks & Wildlife Finland and the project has several cooperation partners. Read more: metsa.fi/en/project/our-saimaa-seal-life

nationalparks.fi/saimaa-ringed-seal

metsa.fi/saimaa-ringed-seal



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