



OPERATION SAIMAA SEAL

What will it take to save the endangered Saimaa ringed seal? The documentary film Operation Saimaa Seal presents the hard work and people who are dedicated to protecting the Saimaa ringed seal.

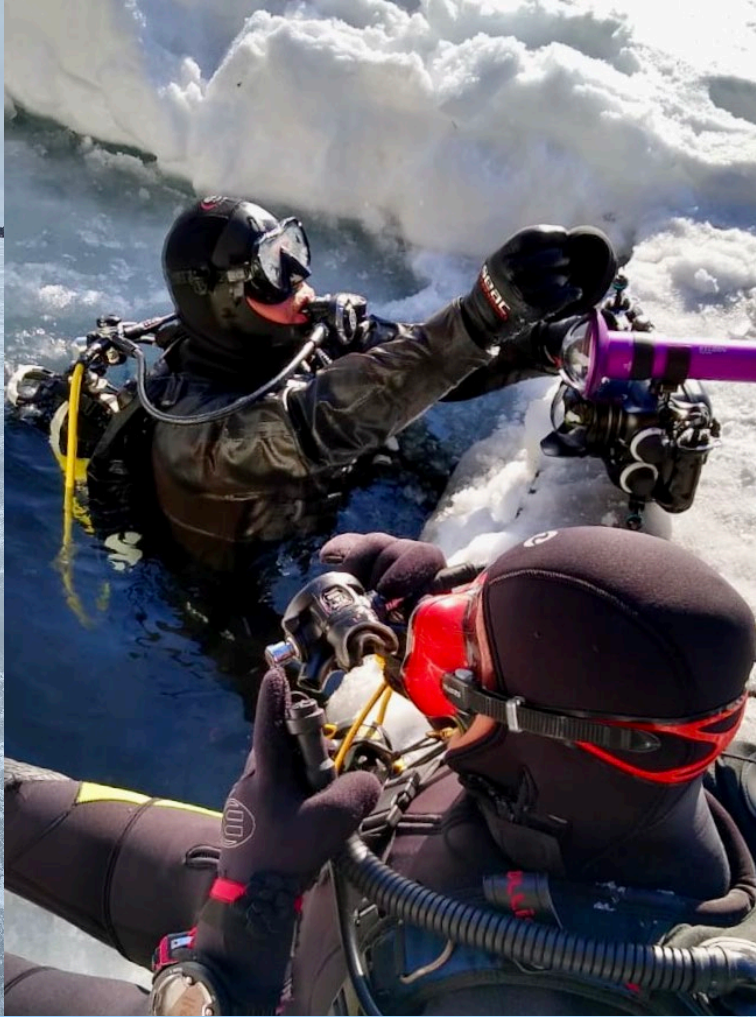
If the Saimaa ringed seal cannot be saved in Lake Saimaa, it will disappear from the entire world. The documentary Operaatio Norppa (Operation Saimaa Seal) focuses on the determined and promising work being done to protect the Saimaa ringed seal. At the same time, the film presents the uniquely beautiful nature of Lake Saimaa.

The documentary film was broadcasted on YLE TV1 primetime slot Avara Luonto on Saturday 16th of Dec 2023 (1st rerun on 17th of Dec 2023), gathering a total of 402,000 TV viewers. It is available for several years in YLE Areena, the leading domestic streaming service in Finland.

The seal is facing threats, but hard work is a source of hope

Filming of the documentary lasted for three years. The film highlights the work being done by Saimaa ringed seal conservation experts in a very concrete way. Although the work is based on expertise, it also includes practical, comical and touching situations.







The main threats to the Saimaa ringed seal currently are fishing nets and climate change. Amendments to legislation could extend the net fishing, helping pups of the year to survive their first year. Influencing global warming is a slower process, but it is still possible and necessary to help the seals.

Under the shadow of these threats, Saimaa ringed seal conservation experts – researchers and people in the field – are working hard on behalf of the seals. The work done so far shows that the conservation measures are having an impact. Man-made snow drifts are built yearly under the direction of Metsähallitus, offering shelter during milder winters. More than 300 pups have already been born in those helping structures.





New methods will be needed if snow and ice do not cover the shores of Lake Saimaa in the future. These include artificial nest boxes, which have to be placed in the right locations and be appealing to the seals. These solutions are presented in the film. In addition, a strong belief in the future is essential to preserving the species and preventing biodiversity loss.

“I would like everyone to remember that we do not own nature. All the species that disappear from nature will be gone forever. Although we don’t know what the future holds, everything that we can preserve for 10 years or until the next generation can always be preserved for longer,” says **Miina Auttila**, Senior Specialist in Nature Conservation at Metsähallitus.

Petteri Saario, scriptwriter and director of the documentary film, confirms the same message:

“In today’s world, most of the news we hear about nature is quite sad. Even in Finland, one in every nine species is at risk of disappearing from our nature. This is one reason why the Operation Saimaa Seal story is a hopeful and important one. The fact that the population of Finland's only indigenous mammal has increased from 200 to nearly 500 individuals is positive news. Nature conservationists are the true heroes of our time.”





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FINAL TITLE OF THE FILM: Operaatio Norppa

ENGLISH TITLE: Operation Saimaa Seal

DURATION: 58 mins.

TV PREMIERE: 16.12.2023 YLE TV1 and YLE Areena

→ WATCH TRAILER (opens in a new window)

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