

## WHAT ARE THE MAIN THREATS TO THE SAIMAA RINGED SEAL?



Hanne Kosonen

### FISHING GEAR

Certain types of fishing gear can be lethal for the Saimaa ringed seal if they become caught up in them. Nets are especially dangerous for seals. Traditional hook and line fishing, lure fishing, and fishing traps that have a narrow opening are safe for seals.

### CLIMATE CHANGE

Winters have become milder with higher temperatures and less snow than before. This has made it more difficult for seals to breed. Volunteers have helped seals to breed by making man-made snow drifts and artificial nests.



Hanne Kosonen



Hanne Kosonen

### NOISE AND DISTURBANCE CAUSED BY HUMANS

Saimaa seals are shy animals. They must be allowed to nest and rest on rocks in peace. Unnecessary noise and movement in the Saimaa seal areas must be avoided, especially with motor vehicles. Seals may be observed from a distance with binoculars.

### SMALL AMOUNT OF SEALS

The Saimaa ringed seal population is still very small, and divided into small sub-populations living in various parts of Lake Saimaa. Surprising factors and chance, for example, contagious diseases, can threaten the Saimaa ringed seal population.



Pekka Sarkanen

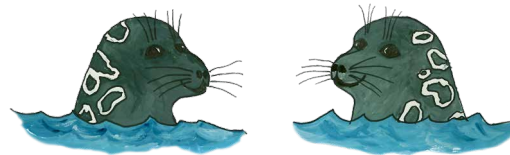
## THE SAIMAA RINGED SEAL – ONE OF THE WORLD'S RAREST SEALS



Eero Korhola

The Saimaa ringed seal is only found at Lake Saimaa. The seals are divided into smaller sub-populations in various parts of the lake and live in the same area from one year to another.

The Saimaa ringed seal spends most of its life underwater. They can remain submerged for around 20 minutes before having to come to the surface to breathe. Seal pups often also sleep underwater in short bursts.



### DID YOU KNOW?

A relative of the Saimaa ringed seal, **the Ladoga ringed seal**, lives in Lake Ladoga in Russia. They are slightly smaller than the Saimaa ringed seal. Whilst their population is significantly larger than that of the Saimaa ringed seal, the Ladoga ringed seal is vulnerable.

Another relative, **the Baltic ringed seal**, lives in the Baltic Sea - as the name suggests. It is the world's smallest seal species. The Baltic ringed seal is near-threatened.



**Suomen luonnonsuojeluliitto**  
The Finnish Association for Nature Conservation

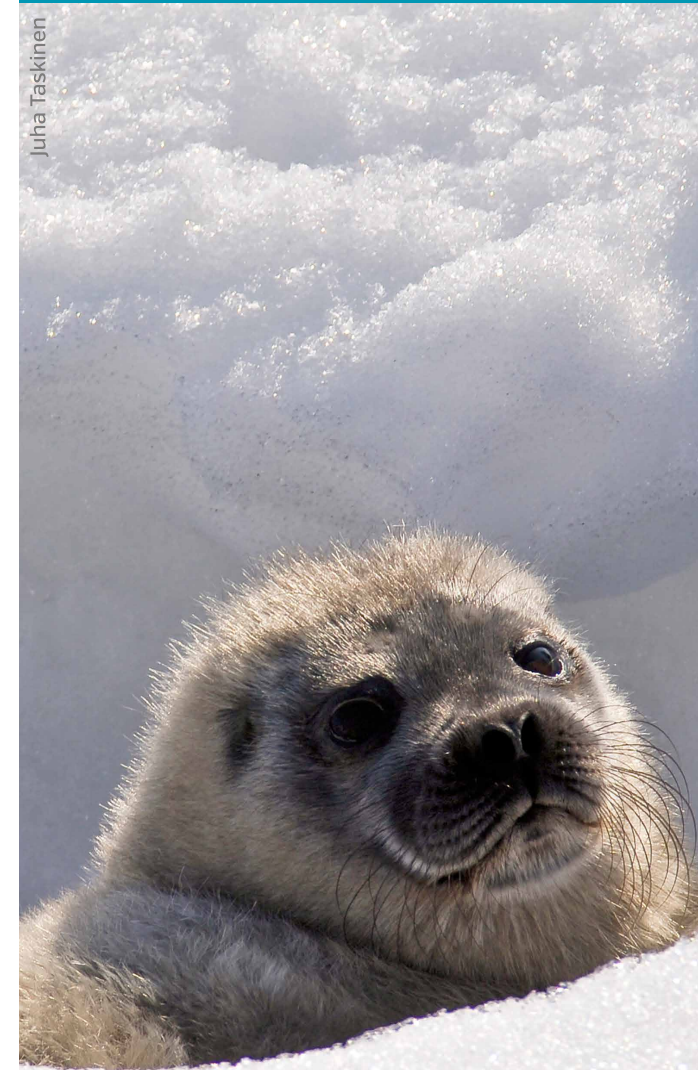


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The Finnish Association for Nature Conservation, 2023.

## The endangered SAIMAA RINGED SEAL

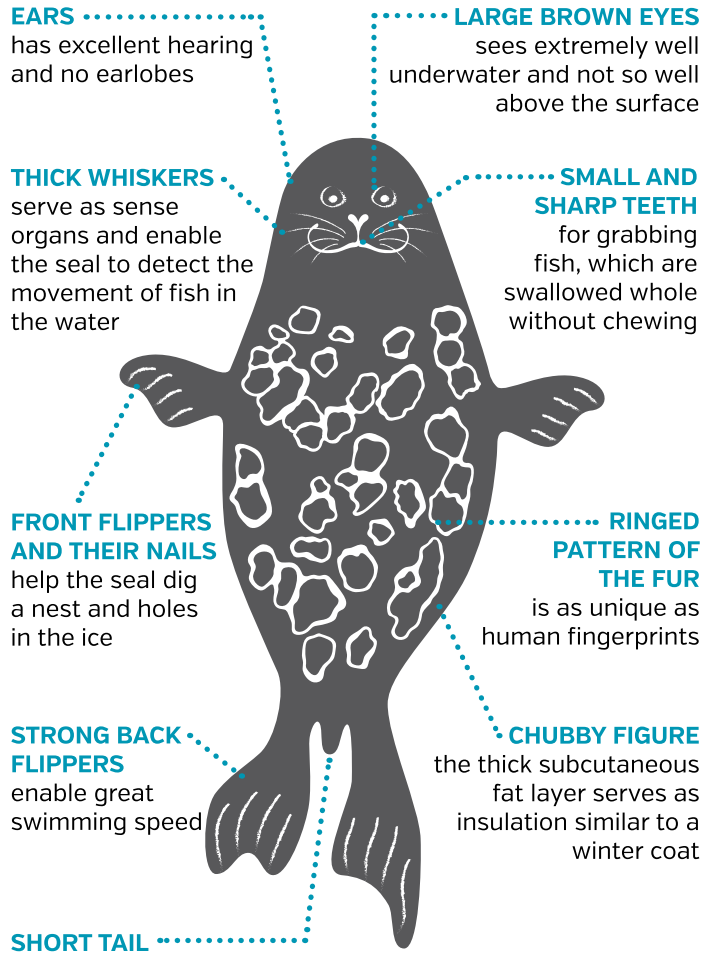
Juha Taskinen



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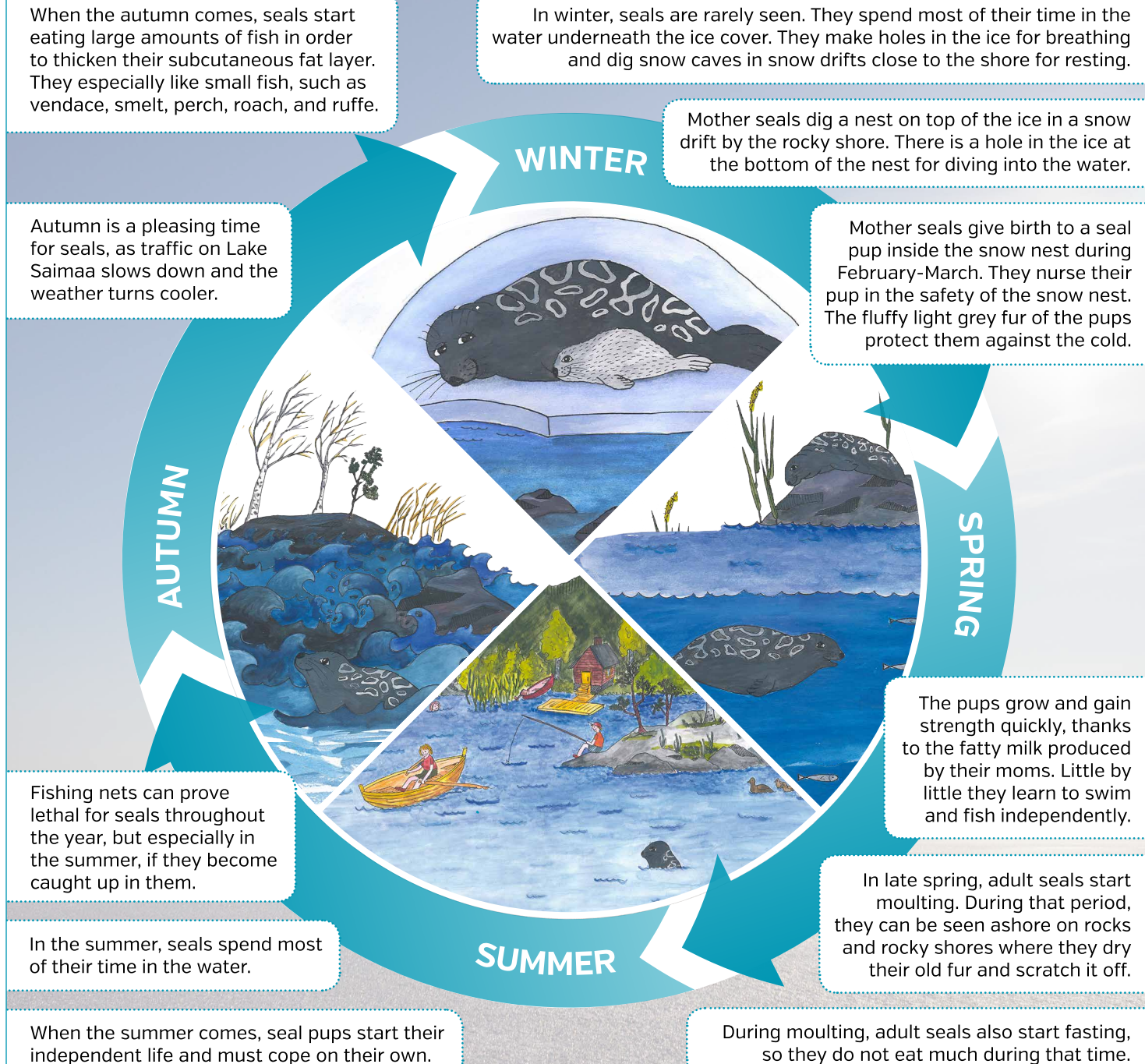
## WHAT DOES THE SAIMAA RINGED SEAL LOOK LIKE?



### SAIMAA RINGED SEAL (*Pusa hispida saimensis*) IN FIGURES

- Population roughly **430–440** individuals (in 2022)
- Some **120** fertile females (in 2021)
- Lifespan roughly **20** years
- The average length of a mature individual **130–145** cm
- The average weight of a mature individual **50–90** kg
- A new-born seal pup weighs **4–5** kg
- An adult seal eats roughly **1,000** kg of fish a year

## WHAT IS THE AVERAGE YEAR OF THE SAIMAA RINGED SEAL LIKE?



# The Saimaa Ringed Seal

I'm a friend of snow and cold weather



JUHA TASKINEN



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