



FISHERIES AND GAME IN FINLAND

Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry



FINLAND – A LAND OF ABUNDANT FISH AND GAME RESOURCES

The northern nature offers excellent opportunities for enterprise and recreation. About 10 per cent of the surface area of Finland is lakes. Relative to the size of the country, we have more inland waters than any other country in Europe. Reindeer husbandry in Northern Finland is strongly rooted to the arctic nature. As one of the most densely forested EU country, Finland offers outstanding living conditions for game animals.



PROFESSIONAL FISHING, BUSINESS ON WATERS

The Finnish fishing waters are pure and the natural fish stocks offer diversified opportunities for fishing. Altogether 60 fish species are found in Finland. The fish stocks have been influenced by changes in their habitats, but in general their status is still very good.

Fish is highly valued as food in Finland. Fish consumption has grown rapidly. Today, with about 13 kilos of fish as fillet per capita, Finland ranks the third among the EU countries in annual fish consumption. Domestic fish accounts for about half of the consumption.

There are about 1,000 professional fishermen in Finland, while about 2,000 persons engage in fishing as a secondary occupation. The annual catch from the sea and inland waters totals about 100 million kilos. Most of the catch from the sea is Baltic herring. Other main species for professional fishing are sprat, cod, perch, European whitefish, pikeperch and salmon. In the inland professional fishing is practised especially in the northern and eastern parts of the country. The main species are vendace, perch and European whitefish. Finnish fish resources are utilised in full compliance with the principle of sustainable development. Professional fishing is not only business, but it is also a way of life and an important aspect of the culture in the coastal regions.





FISHERIES AND GAME ADMINISTRATION

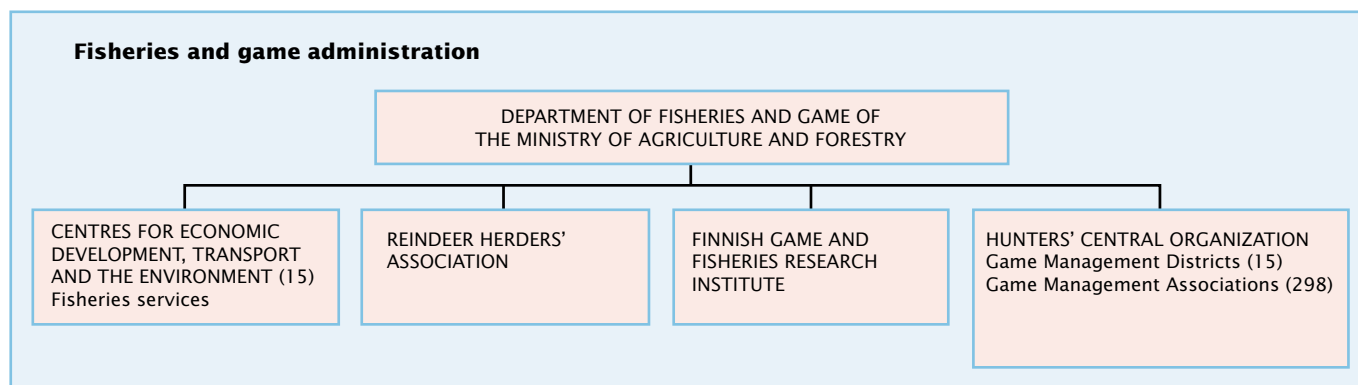
The Department of Fisheries and Game of the Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry regulates the diversified management and use of natural resources on which the fisheries sector, game and hunting, and reindeer husbandry are founded.

The Fisheries Units of the Employment and Economic Development Centres promote fisheries in their own territories.

The Reindeer Herders' Association develops reindeer husbandry and promotes research and experiments in the sector and reindeer breeding.

The Finnish Game and Fisheries Research Institute calculates, estimates and forecasts fish and game resources and catches and compiles statistics on these, as well as ensures the diversity of fish populations.

The Hunters' Central Organization and Game Management Districts and Associations promote hunting and game management and the related training and advisory services.



AQUACULTURE PRODUCES HIGH-QUALITY FOOD FISH

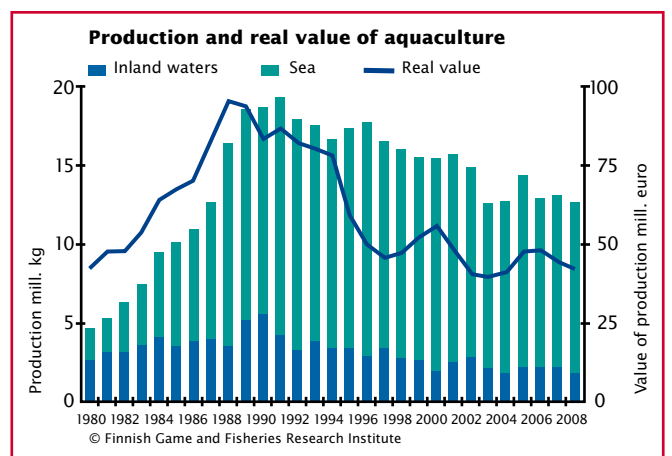
In Finland the role of aquaculture in the fisheries sector is much more important than in the other EU countries. The value of the fish raised for food is higher than the value of the catch of professional fishing. Aquaculture products, especially roe, constitute the most valuable part of the Finnish fisheries exports.

Annually about 13 million kilos of fish is raised for food in Finland, most of this in the south-western sea areas. The most important farmed fish species is rainbow trout, which represents about 95 per cent of the output. The farming of European whitefish, arctic charr, trout and sturgeon is becoming increasingly common. The farming of crayfish is also on the increase.

Aquaculture produces a lot of fish and crayfish fry for both farming and stocking into natural waters. Finland has long traditions in the management of fish populations on the basis of extensive and diversified stocking programmes.

DELICIOUS FISH PRODUCTS TO THE CONSUMERS

Typically the Finnish fish processing firms are small, often multisectoral enterprises. Most of them are located in the coastal regions. In recent decades the focus in the processing has shifted from frozen and preserved fish to the production of fresh and smoked fish products. The species mostly used in the processing are Baltic herring and rainbow trout. Domestic aquaculture is highly important for the fish processing companies.





GREAT FISHING EXPERIENCES – YOU WILL GET HOOKED!

Recreational fishing is an important element of our special relationship with the nature. Almost two million Finns enjoy fishing for leisure.

More than 80 per cent of the catch of recreational fishing comes from inland waters. The most important species are perch, pike, roach, pikeperch, bream and European whitefish. Two thirds of the fishers use the most common, simple fishing gear, angle. Reel fishing as well as ice fishing in winter are also very popular.

In Finland the fishing rights are usually held by the owner of the water area. Most of the Finnish waters are jointly owned, which is quite rare in the other European countries. Water areas that are not privately owned belong to the state.

Excessive general fishing rights allow everybody to enjoy fishing. Under the “everyman’s right” (or public right of access) we can all angle or practise ice fishing free of charge, while lure fishing is subject to charge. In

most cases a permit from the owner of the water area is needed for the other types of fishing.

Finnish nature provides a superb setting for fishing and nature tourism. There is a great variety of services available for fishers, and serious efforts are being made to improve them further.

ACTIVE MANAGEMENT OF FISHING WATERS

The funds collected from recreational fishing to the state as fishing management fees are used to the benefit of both fishers and fishing waters. About a third of the funds are being used directly for the management of fishing waters, i.e. for fish stocking, improvement of fishing waters and organisation of fishing. The improvement of fishing waters includes selective fishing and restoration of rapids to make them again suitable for spawning and fishing.

RECREATION FROM FORESTS

Forests have always been an important element of the Finnish way of life. There are about 300,000 hunters, which relative to the total population is higher than in any other EU country.

Finnish hunting is sustainable. Game animals may be caught only during the hunting season and the populations are monitored carefully. The most common game animals are grouse, waterfowl, hares and deer, which offer a delightful addition to the everyday diet of many Finns. However the catch is not the only reason to go to the woods. Hunting is excellent outdoor recreation, as well as important social activity. Moose hunting, in particular, involves whole village communities.

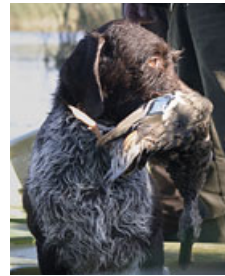
In Finland the hunting rights are in most cases held by the landowner, who may lease the rights, for example, to hunting clubs.

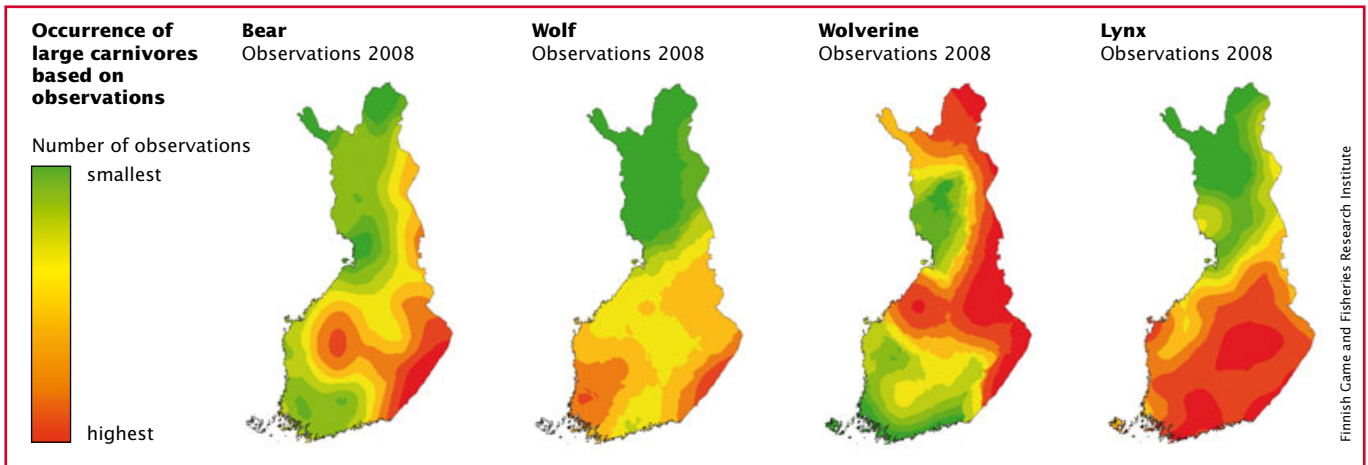
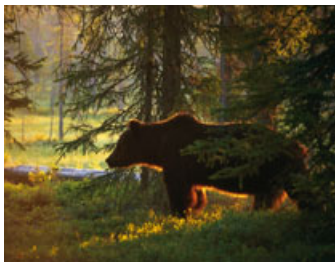
GAME MANAGEMENT ENSURES VIABLE ANIMAL POPULATIONS

Hunters take care of the game management, calculate the populations and organise hunting in practice. The state uses the funds collected from hunters as so-called game management fees mainly for the administration of game husbandry, advisory services and promoting game management.

Game management includes the removal of small predators of foreign origin, such as minks and raccoon dogs, and improving the game habitats. Game management also influences the living conditions of animals other than game, and thus it is an important part of the wider effort to care for the nature.

Of the large carnivores bear, wolf, lynx and wolverine are found in Finland. Their populations are growing. The management plans for the large carnivore populations take account of the needs of the animals as well as the local citizens and livelihoods.





WELFARE AND FOOD FROM REINDEER HERDING

Reindeer herding is highly important for the livelihood of people living in Northern Finland, but it is also an integral element of the nature, history, as well as modern culture of the region.

Most of the Finnish reindeer herding area is situated in the Province of Lapland, the north-easternmost part of the European Union. The herding area represents 36 per cent of the total surface area of Finland. The reindeer roam and graze freely in this area.

The reindeer herding area is divided between 55 herding cooperatives. Reindeer owners are partners in these cooperatives, which organise the herding in their own territories. The size of the cooperatives and the number of reindeer in these vary a great deal. The Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry regulates the reindeer population by establishing the maximum number of reindeer that may be left to live over the winter.

Reindeer herding is based on natural pastures. The Finnish Game and Fisheries Research Institute surveys and monitors the size and state of the grazing grounds. Research data is used to adjust the numbers of reindeer to the pasture area and its productivity.

The annual output of the most significant product obtained from reindeer, meat, totals about two million kilos. Reindeer meat is a wholesome and pure natural product, which is very well suited for both gourmet and everyday cooking. Reindeer skins, bones and antlers

can be used to manufacture various kinds of ornaments and clothing.

In Lapland reindeer herding and tourism are closely linked to each other, and for many people just seeing reindeer is a very exotic experience.





Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry
PO Box 30, FI-00023 GOVERNMENT
Helsinki, Finland
Tel: +358 9 16001 Fax: +358 9 160 54202
www.mmm.fi

