



Centre for Economic Development,  
Transport and the Environment

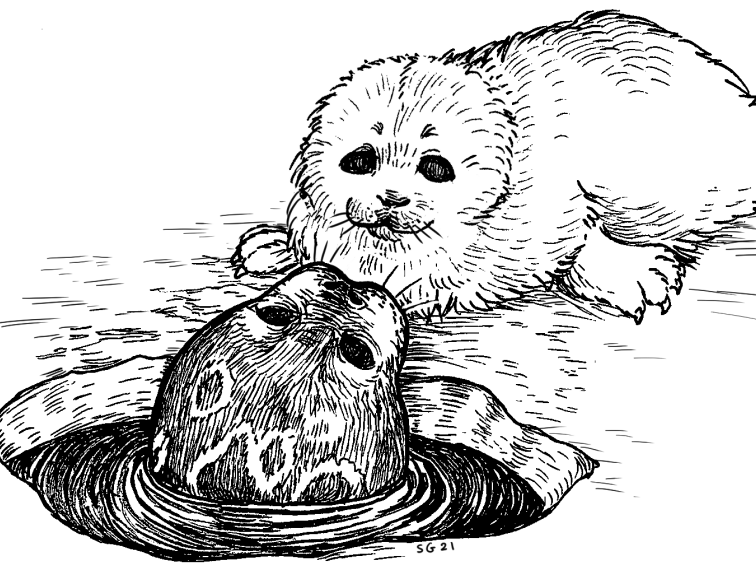
# The peace-loving Saimaa ringed seal

**– How to move on the waters  
and ice of Saimaa**



## Pups grow inside snow banks

Saimaa ringed seals dig their nests in snow banks along the shore. This calls for particular caution when moving on ice, as you cannot see the nests.



## Think of the pups and their mothers when moving on ice

- **Avoid snow banks on the shore**, where seals might be nesting.
- **Avoid driving by the shoreline, peninsulas with snow banks or small islands** by snowmobile or ATV.
- **Keep your dog on a leash.** Dogs may break seals' nests when they dig and may even bite a pup.
- **Keep your distance when you see a seal on the open ice.**



**The mothers and pups are especially sensitive.**

The mothers feed their pups in the nests from February to April. If disturbed, the seals will dive into the water and interrupt feeding.

**Disruptions in feeding will weaken the pup and, at worst, lead to death.** Newborn pups do not yet have the layer of fat that protects seals from the cold, and they need their mothers' milk to thicken the layer. That is why uninterrupted feeding is imperative for the pups' survival.

**In May, the pups are left to their own devices.**

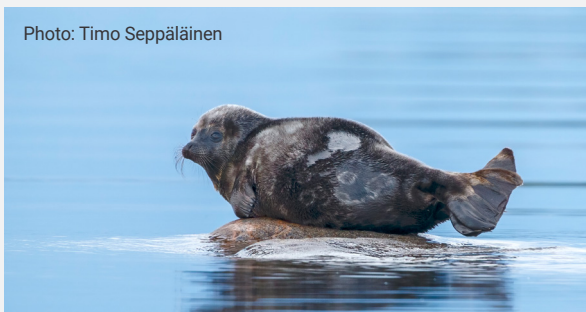
Their additional fat layer from feeding helps them survive until they learn to find their own food. Hungry, underfed pups easily get entangled in fishing gear. No one hopes for such a catch.



# Summer is molting time

In May, Saimaa ringed seals like to spend time lying on rocks. The warmth of the sun helps them molt, and they don't like to leave their rock and go back into the water. Who likes to be disturbed when laying out in the sun anyway?

Photo: Timo Seppäläinen



## Let the seals rest quietly when out boating

- **Keep enough of a distance when you see one.** Binoculars will help you get a closer look.
- **Watch their body language.** When they feel threatened, seals start lifting their heads nervously and wetting their noses in the water, preparing to dive off.
- **Slow down and avoid driving towards it.** Slowly drive past and avoid sudden turns. Seals like to take it slow.
- **Go on your way quietly.** Leave the area without accelerating in order not to make disturbing waves.
- **When you see a seal in the water, slow down.** Be prepared to dodge a ringed seal surfacing in front of your boat.

The Saimaa ringed seal loves the peace and quiet of the national landscape of Saimaa. They especially need their peace in early spring and summer. By following these guidelines, let's make sure the endangered ringed seal can continue its life in Saimaa alongside us humans.

**The South Savo Centre for Economic Development, Transport and the Environment** has an important role in protecting the seal. It negotiates for new nature reserves and compensations, where necessary, provides statements on projects and handles derogations to protection orders. The centre is also in charge of the national working group for protecting the ringed seal and participates in the Our Saimaa Seal LIFE project.

[www.ely-keskus.fi/etela-savo](http://www.ely-keskus.fi/etela-savo)



Our Saimaa Seal LIFE

[Our Saimaa Seal LIFE, LIFE19 NAT/FI/000832]

The project is funded by the EU LIFE programme.

The contents of this material reflect the views of its authors.

The European Commission and CINEA are not responsible for the use of this material.

South Savo Centre for Economic Development, Transport and the Environment

Cover photo: Jouni Koskela, drawings: Sonia González López