



Ympäristöministeriö  
Miljöministeriet  
Ministry of the Environment



# Good practical experiences from Finland

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**Southwest Finland**



Elinkeino-, liikenne- ja  
ympäristökeskus

# ELY-centers taking care of environment

- ELY centers (Centre for Economic Development, Transport and the Environment)
  - Responsible for the regional implementation and development tasks of the central government
  - Finland has 15 regional ELY centers
  - Deal with tasks coming under the administrative branches of Ministries, like the Ministry of the Environment
  - We co-operate a lot with Metsähallitus Wildlife & Parks
    - Metsähallitus takes care mainly of state-owned areas (conservation areas, both state-owned and private)
    - ELY center operates with private landowners (also in conservation areas owned by local people)



# Southwest Finland & grasslands

- Southwest Finland
  - Most of Finland's semi-natural grasslands are situated in sw Finland
  - Hemiboreal zone, "mild" winters
  - Long cultural history
  - Agricultural areas, river valleys, Arkipelago with 40 000 islands and rich history with grazing livestock
  - In Finland we also have a lot wooded pastures and grazed woodlands



# Helmi habitat program

- The Ministry of the Environment started Helmi program at 2020-2030 (helmi = pearl)
- Goal is to increase the area of semi-natural grasslands and other endangered habitats (managed area now: apr. 34 000 ha, goal: 52 000 ha)
- Helmi is focusing on practical work
- Helmi program is biggest nature conservation activity in Finland's history
- National subvention for conservations



# Helmi program is focusing on practical work

- Nature inventories and conservation plans
  - Updated inventories 2016-2023 total amount of 44 000 ha, 5500 areas
- Building pasture fences (including material and work)
- Clearing woods
- Mowing of meadows and reeds
- Special care of endangered species
- Building co-operation with other actors (farmers, landowners, other administration, educational institutions, The Finnish Wildlife Agency, Finnish Forest Centre etc.)





**Landowners mowing their meadow**



**Electric predator fence**



**Clearing of the fence line**





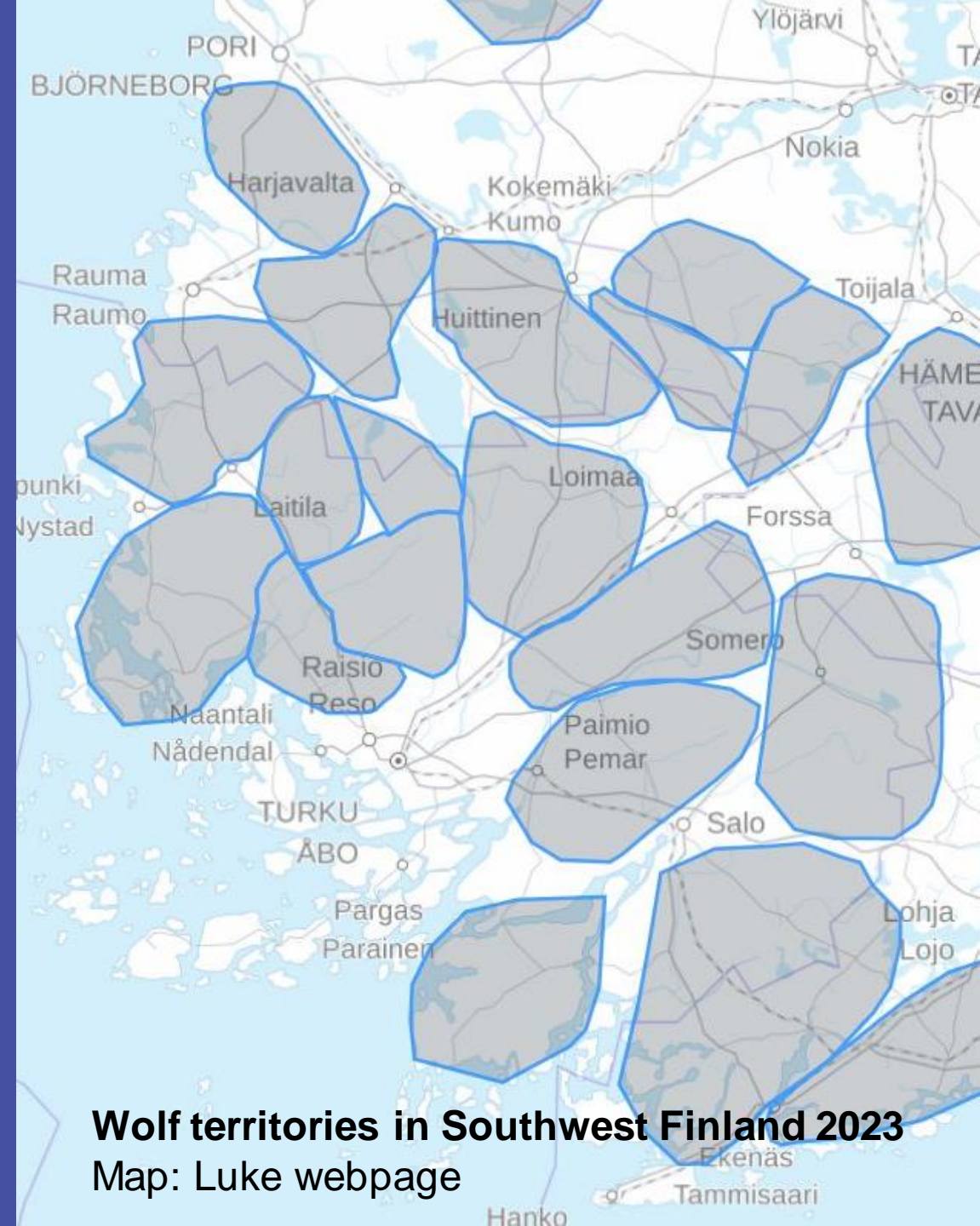
**Reed crushing with new machine in Finland  
(Brielmaier)**

# Challenges: large predators

- In Finland we have wolves, lynxes, bears, wolverines
- Amount of wolf packs has increased in few decades in Finland
- There has been predator damages (mostly on sheep farms)
- Helmi program and The Finnish Wildlife Agency has started co-operation
  - Predator fences for pastures
  - Developing new solutions for fences (for example how to block streams)

All large predators are good swimmers, so shorelines, rivers and small streams has to block.

Predator fences need a lot labour force, because the lowest electric wire can't touch to vegetation.



**Wolf territories in Southwest Finland 2023**  
Map: Luke webpage





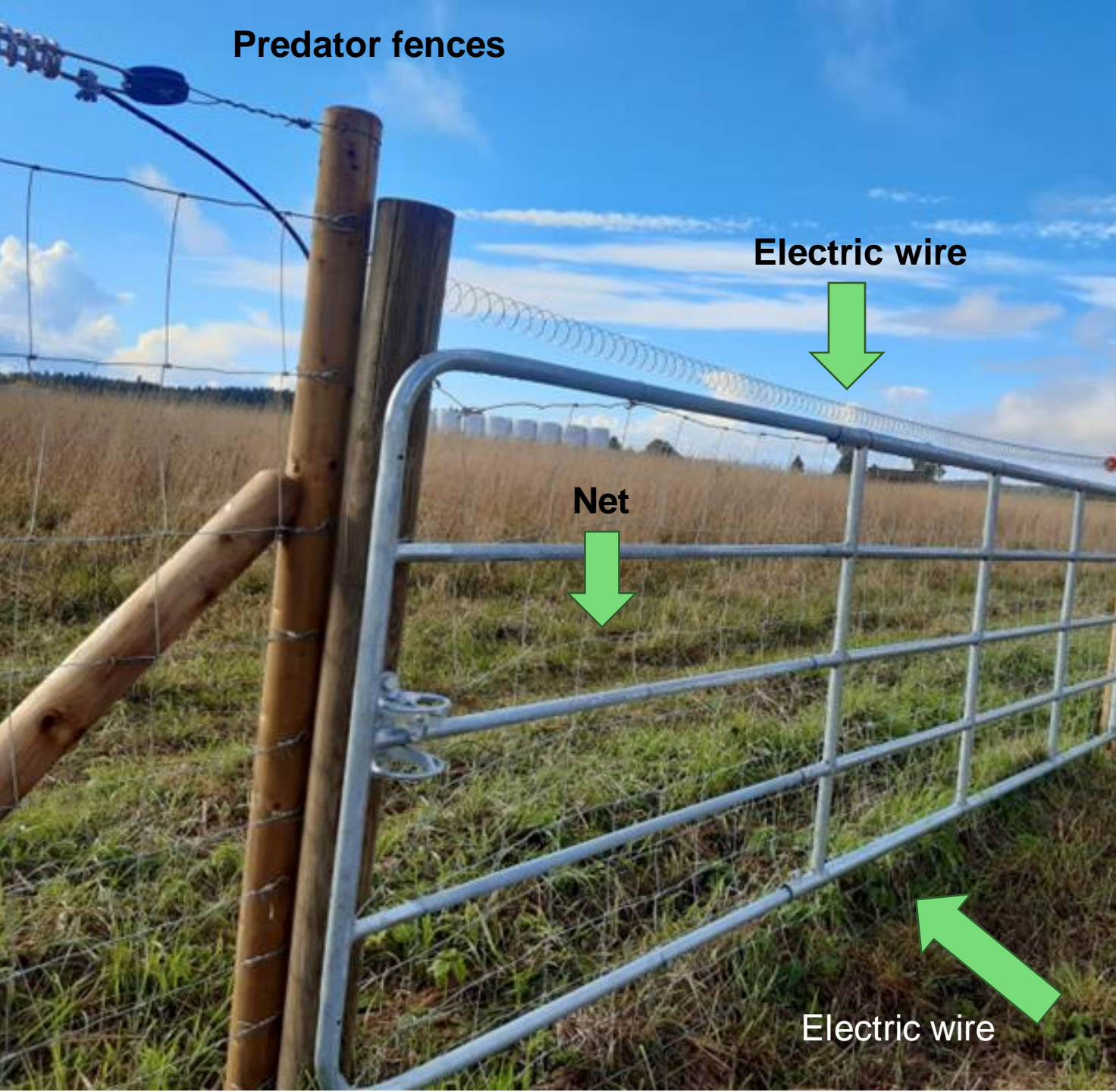
Developing new inventions:

Flowing water poses some challenges for fencing in areas where there are predators.

Here chains are visual barrier for wolves and metal sticks have electricity. If water level rises, electricity switches off.



**Predator fences**



**Floating "fences"**  
**- visual barrier**



# Ways to support grassland management

- "Shepherd for a week by Metsähallitus"
  - Holiday and nature management in same week
  - Very popular
  - Volunteer can work in conservation areas
    - ensuring the well-being of the animals
    - providing fresh water etc.



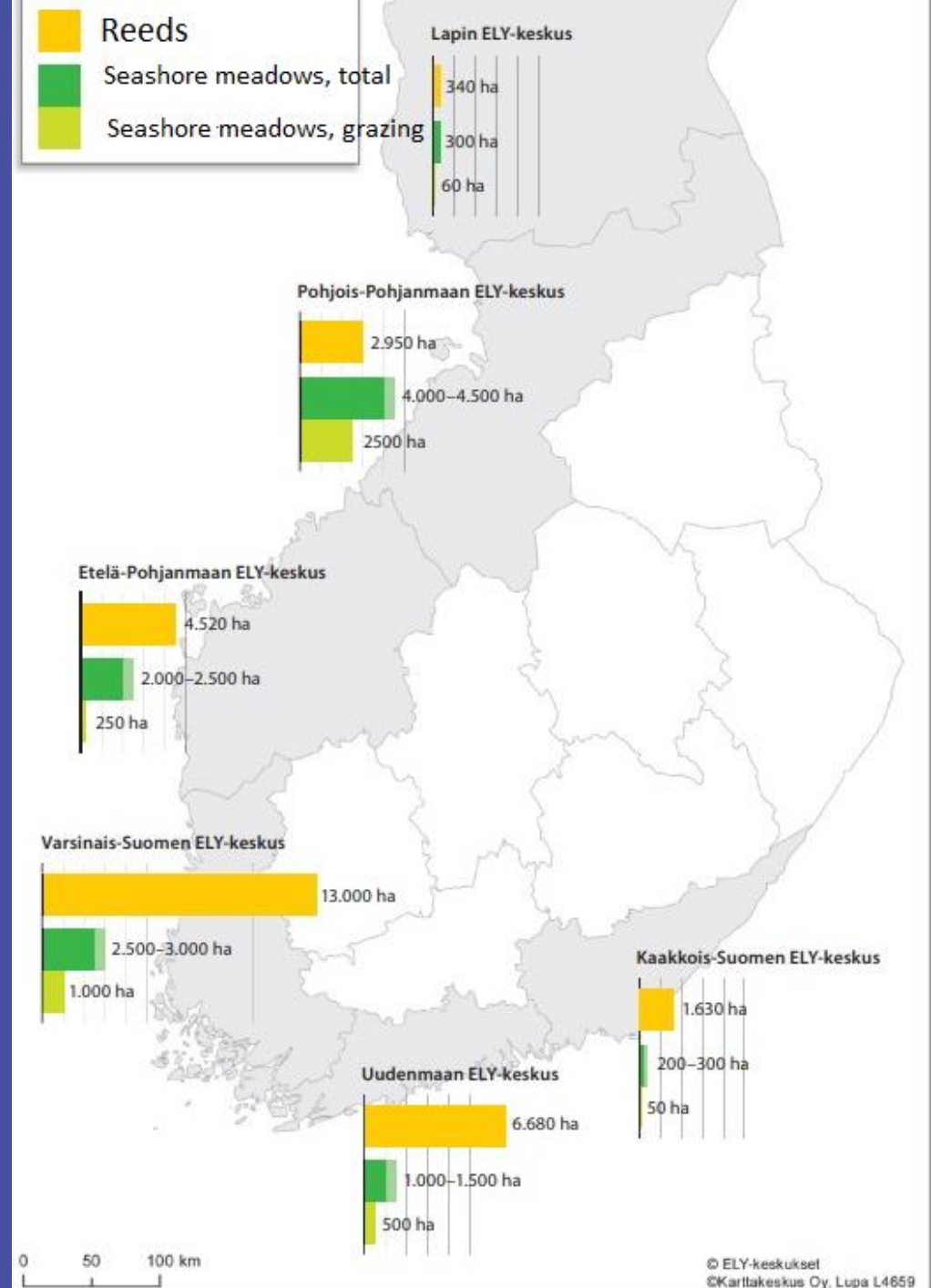
# Ways to support grasslands management

- Pasture-raised livestock products
  - Animal welfare could make pasture-raised products attractive
  - The product's value for biodiversity
  - New association "Luonnonlaidunlihan tuottajat" is developing a product and certification
  - <https://luonnonlaidunlihantuottajat.fi/>



# Reeds are problem in coastal meadows

- Reeds in South Finland appr. 30 000 ha
- Total amount of Finland 40 000 ha (in coastal area)
- Appr 10 000 ha coastal meadows
- Reed harvesting is in synergy with nature conservation needs
- Excellent biomass which can be used is several different ways
  - bedding materials, growing media, drinking straws, heating
- Mowing reed has it challenges, and one of them is creating a cost-effective value chain for reed moving and utilization
- Several on going projects that are trying to achieve this in Finland, such as BalticReed project and the BioDemo project.



# Future sights



## Challenges:

- New CAP policies are tighter, farmers are giving up
- Funding is uncertain
- There are too few grazing animals in some parts of Finland
- Predators

## Opportunities:

- Helmi program continues
- Biodiversity LIFE starting, biggest LIFE project in Finland's history
  - Conservation, management and protection in different habitats, including semi-natural grasslands
  - 8 years project, 50 mil. Euros







Thank You!

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