



© Sirpa Peltonen



© Anni Rautio



© Mervi Kunnasranta



© Mervi Kunnasranta

How to safeguard successful breeding for Saimaa ringed seals:

- Avoid moving on island shores and the tips of capes and islets.
- In particular, avoid moving on shores using motor-operated vehicles such as snowmobiles or all-terrain vehicles.
- Try and stick to using commonly used routes (ice roads, snowmobile routes, ice-skating tracks, ski tracks).
- Leave the snowdrifts on shores as they are, including man-made drifts piled up to help the ringed seals.
- Keep your dogs on a leash. Do not let your dog dig at the snowdrifts on Lake Saimaa.
- Avoid logging and any other activities causing noise around the shores from February to April.
- If you spot a ringed seal on the ice, leave it be. You may observe the seal from a sufficiently long distance using binoculars.



Centre for Economic Development,
Transport and the Environment



Safeguard the breeding of ringed seals!

Ringed seals breed and nurse their young between February and April. It is vital to avoid any disturbance to the lairs at this time. Ringed seals give birth to and nurse their pups in the snowdrifts on the shores of islands and islets, even when there appears to be nothing there looking from the surface.

Safeguarding the breeding of Saimaa ringed seals is a matter of, first and foremost, the solutions and choices made by every individual person when moving on the ice and shores. The aim is that the breeding will be successful and that the pups will survive the first few months of their lives with no problems. You can have an influence through your personal behaviour and ensure that the ringed seals in your area will be able to nest at peace and without disturbance.

Steer clear from snowdrifts at the shore

Ringed seal pups are born between February and March and the mother nurses its pup for 7 to 12 weeks. Successful nursing time is the precondition for the pup's survival. Moving on the ice during the nursing period may cause abnormal sounds, which will make the mother and pup dive away from the lair or might spook the mother from returning to feed its pup on open ice. When the pup gets to suckle the high-fat milk of its mother, its chances of surviving its first year are clearly improved.

A newborn ringed seal pup has poor thermal insulation as it has not yet built up a layer of blubber under its skin. This means that the pup will use up energy whenever it has to dive in cold water due to a disturbance. Recurrent disturbances cause stress and changes in nursing patterns. In May, the pup is weaned by its mother and adult ringed seals moult on the rocks along the shoreline.

You can download this brochure on the website of the ELY Centre of South Savo at ely-keskus.fi/etela-savo.

More information about the Saimaa ringed seal: metsa.fi/saimaannorppa

Report your ringed seal sightings at www.norppagalleria.wwf.fi

