

## Reindeer husbandry in Finland

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*Abstract:* Reindeer are herded in the northernmost Finland over an area of 114 000 km<sup>2</sup>, about 35% of the area of the country. Herding is carried out both by Sami and Finns. The paper gives some statistics on the reindeer industry and underlines the importance of reindeer husbandry in Finland.

**Key words:** *Rangifer tarandus*, reindeer industry, statistics.

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### Reindeer area

In Finland, reindeer husbandry is practised in a region that comprises the Province of Lapland and parts of the Province of Oulu, and its surface covers 114 000 km<sup>2</sup> which is more than one third of Finland's total area. The herding year begins 1 June and ends 31 May next year. During this period of time there are two peak seasons: calf marking from June to July and round-ups from September to January. Reindeer husbandry has significant importance in maintaining the marginal regions inhabited. It is one of the cornerstones of Sami culture and it is of vital importance for the tourism in northern Finland.

### Administration

Reindeer husbandry is governed by a herding co-operative system consisting of 56 reindeer herding co-operatives (Fig. 1). Each herding co-operative

has its own administration, defined borders and area. The number of reindeer and the size of the area vary. All reindeer owners are members of the herding co-operative and their respective rights and responsibilities are determined on the basis of the number of reindeer owned by them. The chief who is appointed by the General Meeting of the herding co-operative heads the herding co-operative. All co-operatives are members of the Reindeer Herders' Association that is the central body for them. In the meetings of the Association each chief can vote in accordance with the number of reindeer in "his" co-operative.

### The number of reindeer and other statistics<sup>1</sup>

The number of reindeer is determined by the Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry through the maximum number of reindeer that each herding

<sup>1</sup> The lecture referred to the herding year 2001/2002 but newer statistics are included in the article. Statistics of Finnish reindeer husbandry are published every year in issue no. 2 of the journal *Poromies*.

MARKING DISTRICTS  
and  
co-operatives

Max. number  
of reindeer  
allowed

Actual  
number  
of reindeer

UTSJOKI

1. Paistunturi 6 300 6 328

2. Kaldoaivi 5 300 5 252

INARI

3. Näätämö 3 600 3 457

4. Muddusjärvi 5 200 4 836

5. Vätsäri 3 000 2 527

6. Paatsjoki 1 600 1 336

7. Ivalo 6 000 5 297

8. Hammastunturi 5 500 4 889

9. Sallivaara 7 500 7 275

10. Muotkatunturi 6 800 7 257

ENONTEKIÖ

11. Näkkälä 8 300 8 242

12. Käsivarsi 10 000 9 962

PALLASTUNTURI

13. Muonio 6 000 5 702

14. Kyrö 3 500 3 276

KITTILÄ

15. Kuivasalmi 6 000 5 062

16. Alakylä 5 300 4 932

SODANKYLÄ

17. Sattasniemi 5 300 5 108

18. Oraniemi 6 000 5 876

19. Syväjärvi 5 500 5 277

21. Lappi 8 000 7 176

KEMINKYLÄ

22. Kemin Sompio 12 000 12 736

23. Pohjois-Salla 4 800 4 666

SALLA

24. Salla 5 300 5 417

25. Hirvasniemi 2 300 2 376

RAUDANJOKI

26. Pyhä-Kallio 6 500 6 328

27. Vanttaus 1 200 1 182

28. Poikajärvi 4 600 4 523

LÄNTINEN

29. Lohijärvi 1 400 1 386

30. Palojärvi 5 000 4 803

31. Orajärvi 1 500 1 700

32. Kolari 2 600 2 565

33. Jääskö 1 000 1 011

ITÄKEMIJOKI

34. Narkaus 2 000 1 902

35. Niemelä 1 400 1 360

36. Timisjärvi 1 900 1 880

37. Tolva 1 900 1 833

38. Posion Livo 1 500 1 507

39. Isosydänmaa 2 000 1 908

40. Mäntyjärvi 1 100 1 094

41. Kuukas 1 500 1 518

KUUSAMO

42. Alakitka 1 600 1 605

43. Akanlahti 1 000 986

44. Hossa-Irni 3 000 2 826

45. Kallioluoma 2 300 2 247

46. Oivanki 2 400 2 346

PUDASJÄRVI

47. Jokijärvi 900 878

48. Taivalkoski 1 600 1 584

49. Pudasjärvi 2 200 2 213

50. Oijärvi 1 300 1 181

51. Pudasjärven Livo 1 500 1 493

52. Pintamo 2 600 2 588

53. Kiiminki 800 693

54. Kollaja 1 100 1 061

55. Ikonen 500 470

KAINUU

56. Näljänkä 2 000 1 752

57. Halla 2 700 2 042

203 700 196 727

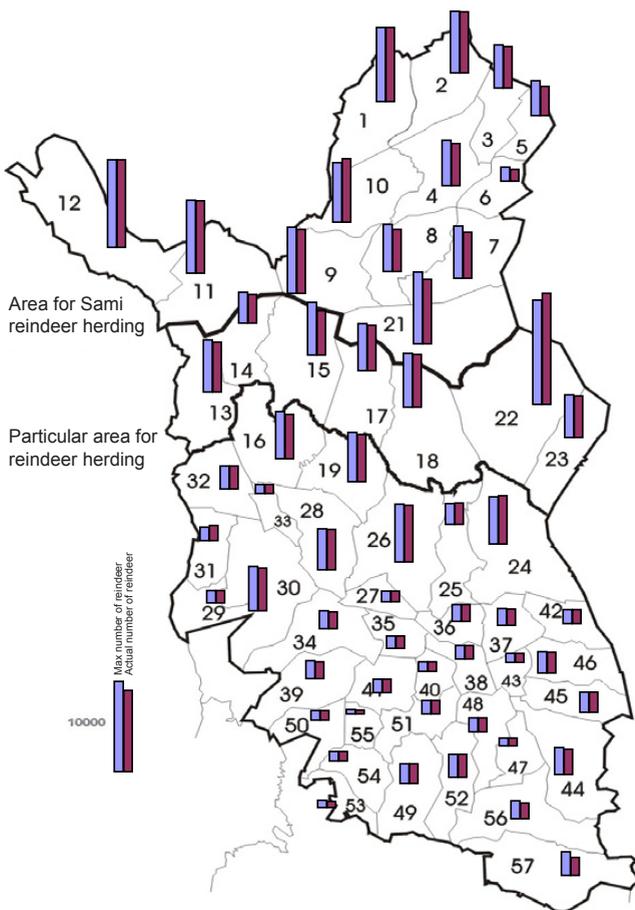


Fig. 1. Areas of reindeer husbandry in Finland 2002/03.

Table 1. Statistics of reindeer husbandry in Finland 1980/81 to 2003/04.

Reindeer herding year	1980/81	1985/86	1990/91	1995/96	2000/01	2003/04
Reindeer owners	7 086	7 483	7 556	6 960	5 682	5 243
Highest allowed number of reindeer	187 700	187 700	228 900	228 900	203 700	203 700
Slaughtered reindeer	58 554	102 965	169 023	120 702	87 397	106 318
Living reindeer over winter	177 676	229 843	259 611	212 851	185 731	201 058
Calves	70 669	106 210	142 686	112 865	89 581	115 075
Production million kg	1,44	2,42	4,01	2,73	2,02	2,55
Medium weight kg	24,65	23,47	23,80	23,11	23,38	-
EURO/kg	3,70 €	5,00 €	4,25 €	4,43 €	5,49 €	4,15 €
Income of reindeer herding (million EURO)	-	13,62 €	20,83 €	19,10 €	17,89 €	18,51 €
Costs of reindeer herding (million EURO)	-	11,32 €	16,92 €	15,51 €	14,70 €	16,74 €

co-operative can own; a number regulated each decade (Table 1). During the current decade maximum revised number of reindeer is 203 700. The permitted number of reindeer owned by a herding co-operative member is likewise restricted; in the southern part of the reindeer husbandry region the maximum number is 300 while the corresponding number is 500 in the northern reindeer husbandry area.

There was in 2002/2003 5344 reindeer owners in Finland of which 800-1000 are Sami. During that reindeer herding year the total number of reindeer living over winter was 196 727. Reindeer husbandry produced about 2.5 million kilograms of meat, 90 000-110 000 skins and 100 tons of antler material. The total income of meat production was 13.2 million € in 2001/2002. One third of the slaughtered reindeer and the slaughtering income come from the Sami region. The economical turnover of reindeer husbandry amounts to 55-60 million € annually when foodstuffs, souvenirs and reindeer travel services are included in the calculations. About 690 families live from full-time reindeer husbandry and about 850 families practises reindeer husbandry as a secondary occupation.

Damages caused by predators have shown a growing trend but are now decreasing. The present number of predators and eagles should be reduced because the compensation systems do not cover all the losses for the herders. Either conservation ar-

eas should not be made as predator reservations. Losses from traffic are also substantial.

#### EU and Finnish reindeer husbandry

Finland joined the EU in 1995. The membership brought heavy investments into the reindeer husbandry caused by renewing the network of slaughterhouses. The previously existed >200 field-abattoirs had to be fully renewed to bring meat hygiene up to a uniform standard. Today there are about 14 reindeer abattoirs network meeting the EU directives. In addition to construction costs (6,7 million €), permanent costs have also increased for the fact that almost all reindeer must be transported by trucks to the abattoirs. Reindeer husbandry became also liable to VAT (Value Added Tax). The respective advantages from the reindeer herders' point of view are limited. The import restrictions from the third countries to Finland have not been completed. Reindeer meat is still imported from the low-cost countries, mainly from the east. The competing raw materials and various meat products have likewise been imported from third countries. Some of these products have even been marketed as reindeer meat because of a higher price level.

EU legislation should have special adaptations for reindeer husbandry in many cases. EU has approved Finland Northern Aid Funds for the reindeer industry based on the number of reindeer. The maximum aid is 27 € per head but the Ministry

of Agriculture and Forestry paid 22 € per reindeer in 2001/2002. Considering the raising production costs the aid is needed. But the Finnish herders have also challenged themselves to consider time-saving ways of organizing herding for example by using fences to control reindeer movements, and they take part in tourist services and small scale meat processing. By offering reindeer services to the tourists and high quality local products to consumers, the herders can attain a supplementary income source.

**Information of the Finnish reindeer husbandry**  
The Reindeer Herders' Association created their own website in 1999 to serve information dissemination better. It is developed continuously side by side with the projects which give new information and bring up new questions. You will find updated information about the Finnish reindeer husbandry in the website of Paliskuntain yhdistys (The Reindeer Herders' Association): [www.paliskunnat.fi](http://www.paliskunnat.fi). The journal Poromies (in Finnish) published by Paliskuntain yhdistys gives annual information about reindeer husbandry in Finland.

#### **First Announcement**

### **Nordic Conference on Reindeer and Reindeer Husbandry Research in 2006**

NOR's 14<sup>th</sup> conference is planned to be held in Helsinki, Finland in March 2006.

National co-organisers are the Finnish Game and Fisheries Research Institute (RKTL) and probably other institutions as well.

The conference is arranged in conjunction with the Annual Meeting of the national delegations of NOR and will also be a 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary celebration for NOR.

In due time you will find more information about the conference, the registration and the conference languages in NOR's web pages [www.rangifer.no](http://www.rangifer.no)

Participants are invited to give oral or poster presentations on all relevant topics concerning reindeer and reindeer husbandry.

Contact persons are:

for the co-organisers Mauri Nieminen ([mauri.nieminen@rktl.fi](mailto:mauri.nieminen@rktl.fi)) and for NOR, secretary Rolf Egil Haugerud ([nor.rangifer@sami.uit.no](mailto:nor.rangifer@sami.uit.no)).