

9.3.2026

## Report of Raccoon Dog management in Finland for 2025

The Goal for 2025 in Finland was to continue the Actions of MIRDINEC LIFE project to prevent further invasion of Raccoon Dogs to Sweden and Norway.

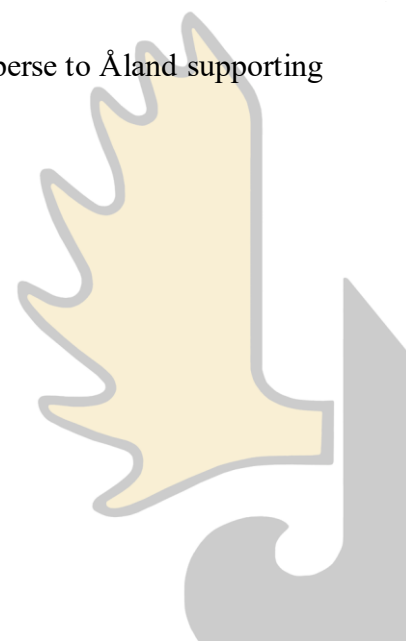
In Finland the following activities were carried out following the project working plan with practical adaptations where needed.

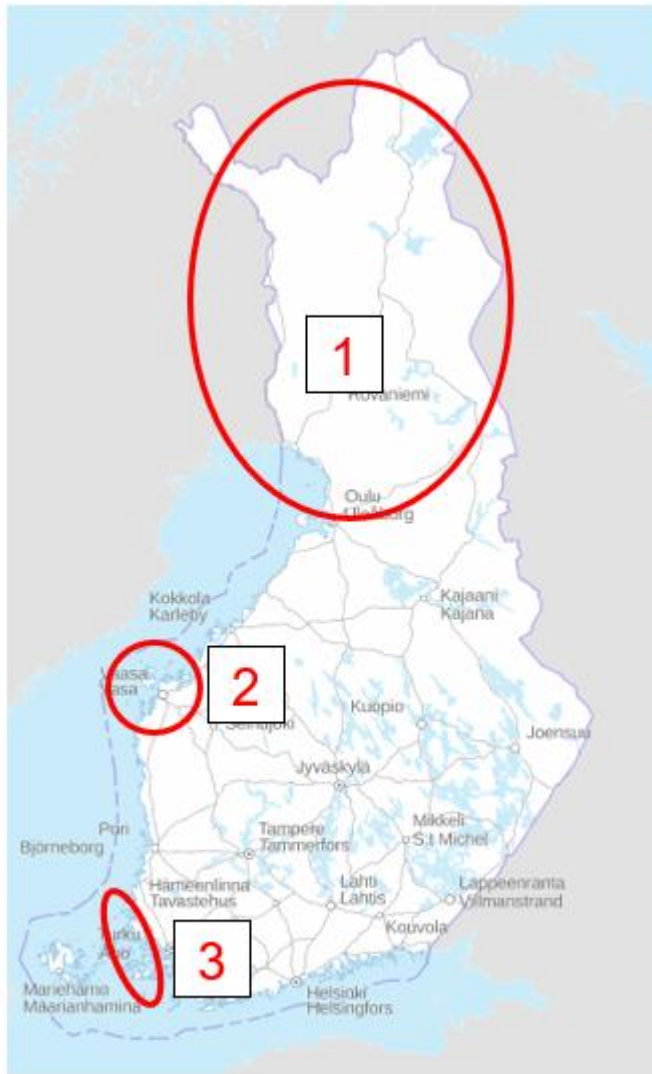
- Continued co-operative management and information activities with volunteer hunters
- Continue the use of monitoring cameras/early warning system EWS and develop the method to allow for rapid response from local voluntary hunters
- Continue the use of Judas animals and develop the method to be more cost effective
- Information about IAS and dissemination of project results
- Legal permissions to allow effective eradication of Raccoon Dogs

The legal context of the Raccoon Dog was changed from game species to an invasive species in 2019, in alignment with the Finnish management plan of the raccoon dog which was produced during the LIFE project.

The project activities were carried out in

1. Lapland, focus areas
  - Tornio River Valley
  - Bothnian Sea coast
  - Inland Raccoon Dog population hotspots
  - Areas of Oulu / Northern Ostrobothnia areas which are adjacent to Lapland and relevant for management from the project perspective.
2. Kvarken area, focus
  - Korsholm archipelago, to decrease the risk of invasion through this potential corridor.
  - especially Valsörarna
3. In South-west archipelago preventing the Raccoon Dog to disperse to Åland supporting effective management in Åland Islands, focus areas
  - Kustavi, Iniö, Keistiö, Houtskari, Korppoo





Working areas

## General overview and Raccoon Dog (RD) harvest

### Northern Finland, Lapland and Oulu

Juha Mäkimartti implemented project activities in Lapland and adjacent areas in Oulu as external contractor for 2017-2025. The annual level of service depends on available funding.

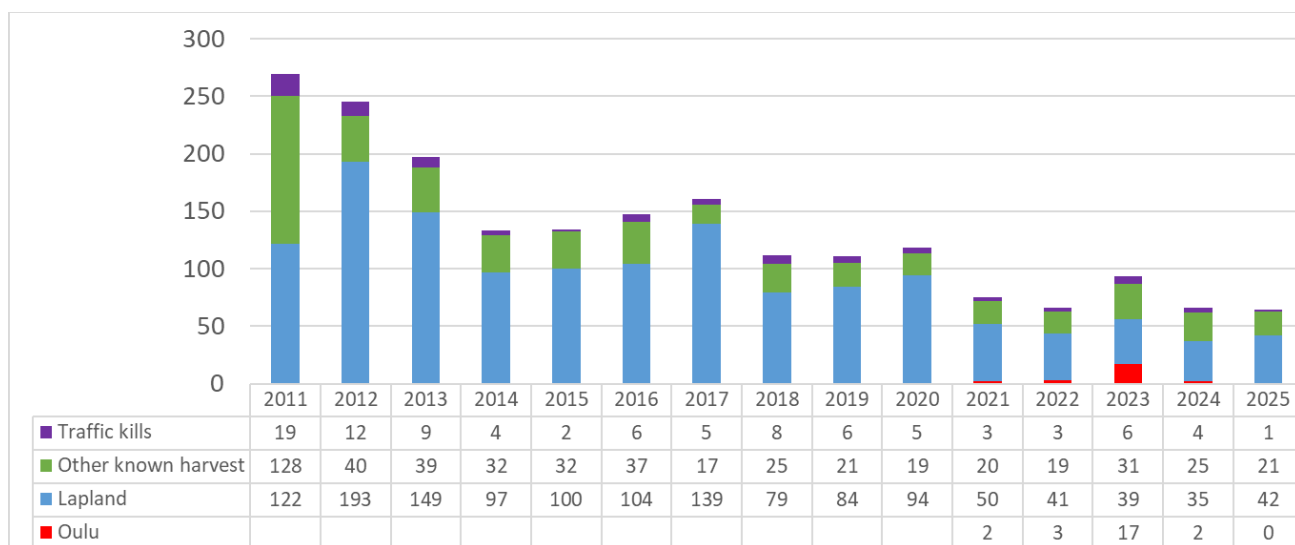
During 2025 the project achieved the set objectives and succeeded to manage the RD population in the Finnish Lapland. The harvest by the project in Lapland has been at all-time low during 2025. The project harvest numbers are declining as the area effectively covered by project has been increasing in Lapland. As described by Mäkimartti, *“the management front has been pushed down to Oulu River level”*. The messages from hunters on observed or caught Raccoon Dogs in Lapland reflect a clear and continued decrease compared to numbers in 2011-2012. Co-operation with the HELMI-IAS project operating on selected SPA bird areas is successful and strengthens overall impact in Northern Finland.

The non-scientific ‘fox index’ indicates that work has been successful and relative proportion of Raccoon Dogs in project traps has continuously decreased and now stabilized in low level while the know-how and number of traps has increased. Number of foxes in the project traps indicate that traps are functioning well.

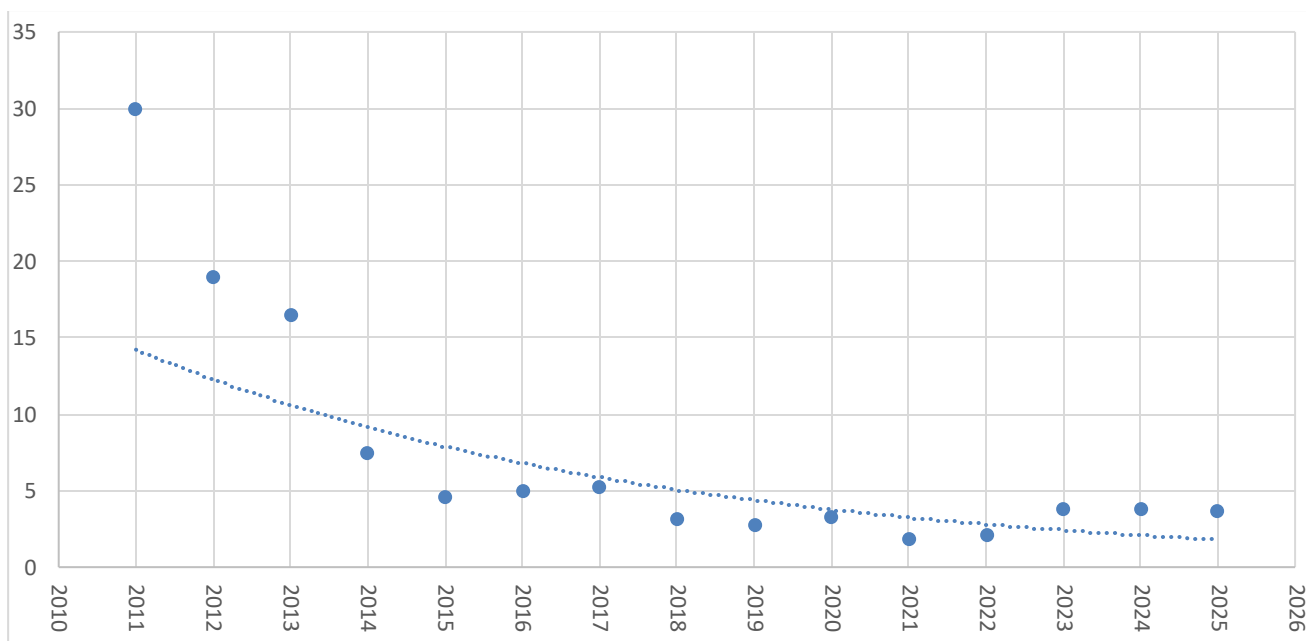
In Lapland, the Raccoon Dog harvest by project staff and involved voluntary hunters were 42 animals. In addition, project staff has received information of 21 RD killed by other hunters and of 1 traffic kills. Total Raccoon Dog mortality known by the project in Lapland was 64 individuals.

Compared to 2024 the number of Raccoon Dogs outside of project framework and traffic kills decreased. The ‘fox index’ indicates that relative abundance of Raccoon Dogs is the same as 2024, while in general at comparable low level.

In addition, the project recorded Raccoon Dogs culled by project activities in Oulu region. The HELMI IAS project is active in Oulu Region, taking care of most of the management efforts nowadays, so there is less need for activities from this project.



Development of known total harvest and trend and Raccoon Dogs culled in Northern Finland within the project framework.



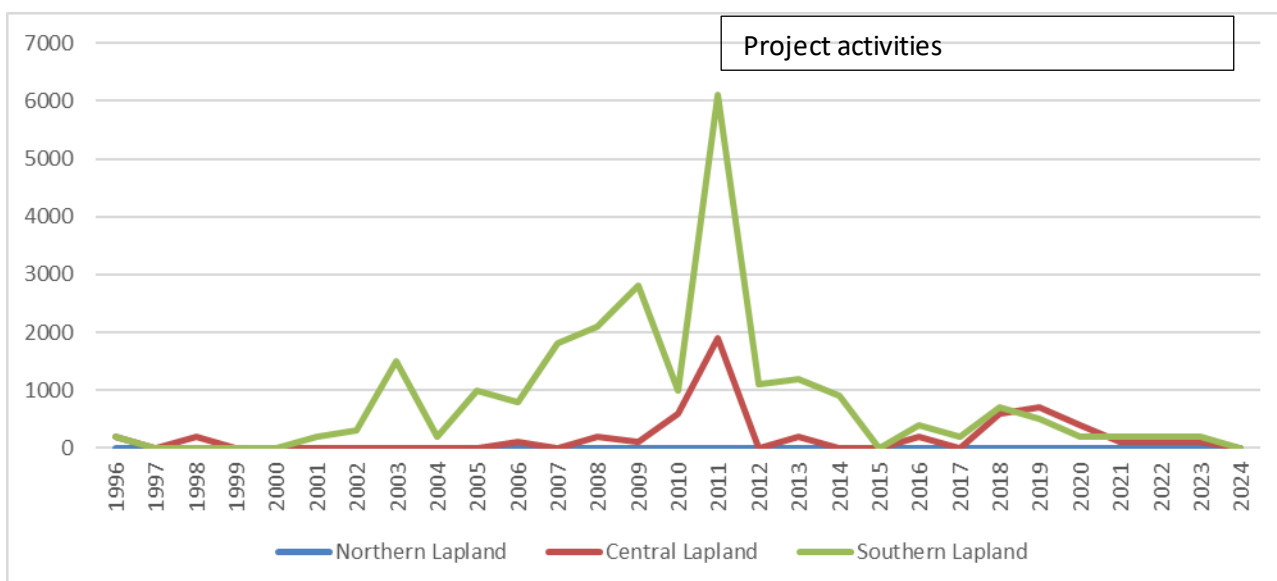
The ‘fox index’ development. Number of caught Raccoon Dog per individual of other small predator in project activities.

MIRDINEC After LIFE	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025
January	0	0	0	3	2	4		5	1	2	4	0	0	2	0
February	6	4	0	10	4	8	20	3	1	4	0	2	6	0	3
March	27	40	10	9	2	10		5	6	12	3	5	3	4	2
April	2	22	23	4	9	12	12	9	6	12	3	0	4	5	3
May	1	9	14	3	4	12	14	2	7	5	4	0	0	0	0
June	8	15	0	3	7	8	7	16	17	2	13	16	1	8	0
July	4	7	15	1	17	11	20	0	0	1	0	2	16	5	2
August	17	8	9	5	10	12	13	2	8	12	1	1	2	0	5
September	22	27	17	14	16	13	15	18	14	15	7	5	6	4	8
October	24	33	28	27	19	8	30	13	15	15	10	9	13	1	10
November	5	26	30	15	7	4	8	4	9	8	4	4	5	6	8
December	6	2	3	3	3	2	0	2	0	6	3	0	0	2	1
<b>Total project</b>	<b>122</b>	<b>193</b>	<b>149</b>	<b>97</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>104</b>	<b>139</b>	<b>79</b>	<b>84</b>	<b>94</b>	<b>52</b>	<b>44</b>	<b>56</b>	<b>37</b>	<b>42</b>
<b>Oulu</b>															
<b>Lapland</b>	<b>122</b>	<b>193</b>	<b>149</b>	<b>97</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>104</b>	<b>139</b>	<b>79</b>	<b>84</b>	<b>94</b>	<b>50</b>	<b>41</b>	<b>39</b>	<b>35</b>	<b>42</b>
Other known harvest	128	40	39	32	32	37	17	25	21	19	20	19	31	25	21
Traffic kills	19	12	9	4	2	6	5	8	6	5	3	3	6	4	1
<b>Total removed Raccoon Dogs</b>															
<b>Lapland</b>	<b>269</b>	<b>245</b>	<b>197</b>	<b>133</b>	<b>134</b>	<b>147</b>	<b>161</b>	<b>112</b>	<b>111</b>	<b>118</b>	<b>73</b>	<b>63</b>	<b>76</b>	<b>64</b>	<b>64</b>
<b>Total removed Raccoon Dogs</b>															
<b>Lapland + Oulu in project</b>	<b>269</b>	<b>245</b>	<b>197</b>	<b>133</b>	<b>134</b>	<b>147</b>	<b>161</b>	<b>112</b>	<b>111</b>	<b>118</b>	<b>75</b>	<b>66</b>	<b>93</b>	<b>66</b>	<b>64</b>
<b>Other small predators, Lapland</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>31</b>	<b>37</b>	<b>42</b>	<b>37</b>	<b>41</b>	<b>31</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>18</b>
Fox	3	5	6	12	14	15	17	11	23	21	25	20	14	7	10
Badger	5	6	4	3	10	6	4	11	9	9	7	3	2	6	1
Mink		2	1		2	3	4	4	4	3	2	4	1	0	3
Pine marten, Stoat	1		1	3	4	6	6	11	6	4	7	4	3	4	4

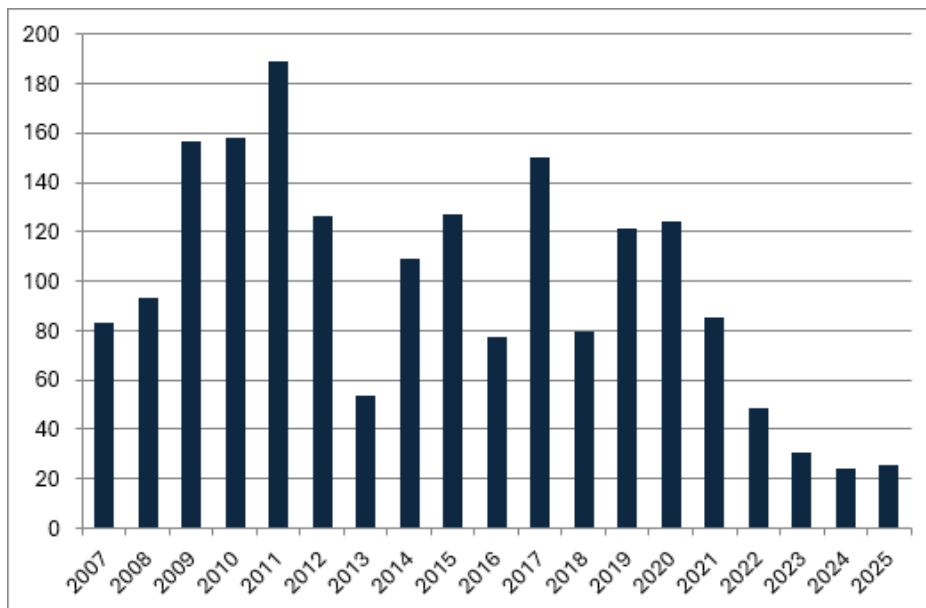
#### Raccoon Dog harvest of the project in Northern Finland

The official game bag statistics is based on hunter questionnaire with relatively small sample size. The official statistics in Lapland can be used as an index reflecting large-scale changes in the Raccoon Dog harvest development.

At large the Raccoon Dog population and harvest increased until 2011, when record harvest, thanks to project activities, lead to significant decline of the population and the harvest. Now harvest levels are back where they were in the end of 1990.



Raccoon Dog harvest in Lapland until 2024 based on official statistics. <http://stat.luke.fi/en/>. 2025 estimates will be available in summer of 2026. Data should be interpreted as an index of population development.



Local Game Management Association organizes annual small predator hunting competitions. Raccoon Dogs reported to small predator hunting competitions of Game Management Associations in Lapland. In 2007 four associations provided data, 2021 data is from 14 associations, and 2024 data is from 13 associations. This non-scientific casual data provides an additional insight into Raccoon Dog population and harvest development.

### Valsörarna, Kvarken area.

The Kvarken area, Korsholm Archipelago, and Valsörarna in particular, is a focus area since 2018. Cooperation is established with all four hunting associations in Korsholm Archipelago. Networks of solar-powered scout cameras, baiting sites and live traps are operative throughout the area along with volunteer hunters using trained dogs. In 2022 and 2023 thermal cameras, which can also be used as a sight, was provided to Björköby and Norra Vallgrund hunting clubs. These devices help local hunters to locate Raccoon Dogs. 2025 Norra Vallgrund hunting club got positive results in using thermal camera as help in eradication.

In addition to voluntary management there were no professional level Raccoon Dog eradication in Valsörarna and adjacent islands during 2025, due to local circumstances. Possible observations from Raccoon Dogs in the Valsörarna exists and therefore plans and actions will be taken in year 2026 to eradicate Raccoon Dogs from islands.

Total Raccoon Dog harvest in archipelago is provided in table below, divided to areas of four hunting associations. Total harvest increased from 210 to 242, to the highest number of Raccoon Dogs. There is annual variation in the local hunting clubs' harvest levels. Norra Vallgrund hunting clubs harvest stayed at a high level.

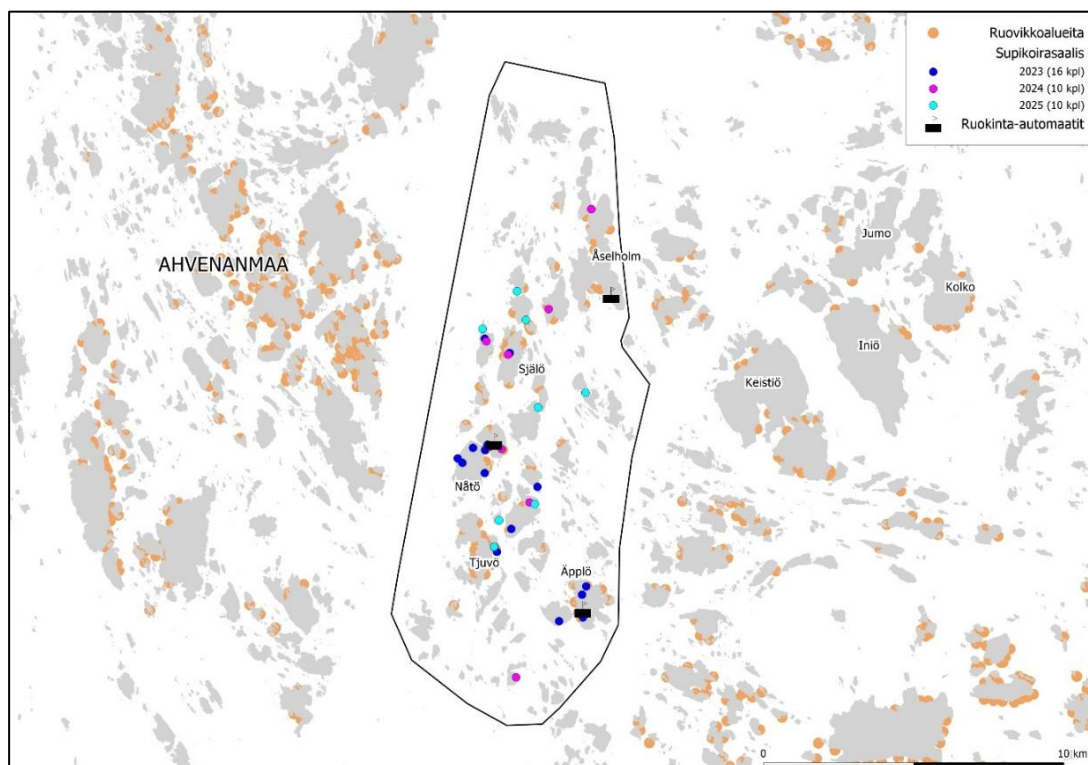
<b>Village/hunting area</b>	<b>2018</b>	<b>2019</b>	<b>2020</b>	<b>2021</b>	<b>2022</b>	<b>2023</b>	<b>2024</b>	<b>2025</b>
1 Björköby	44	50	31	13	23	52	28	68
2 Norra Vallgrund	34	25	38	28	33	85	82	100
3 Replot	27	29	29	18	35	33	23	33
4 Södra Vallgrund	25	33	14	36	29	40	30	41
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>130</b>	<b>137</b>	<b>112</b>	<b>95</b>	<b>120</b>	<b>210</b>	<b>163</b>	<b>242</b>



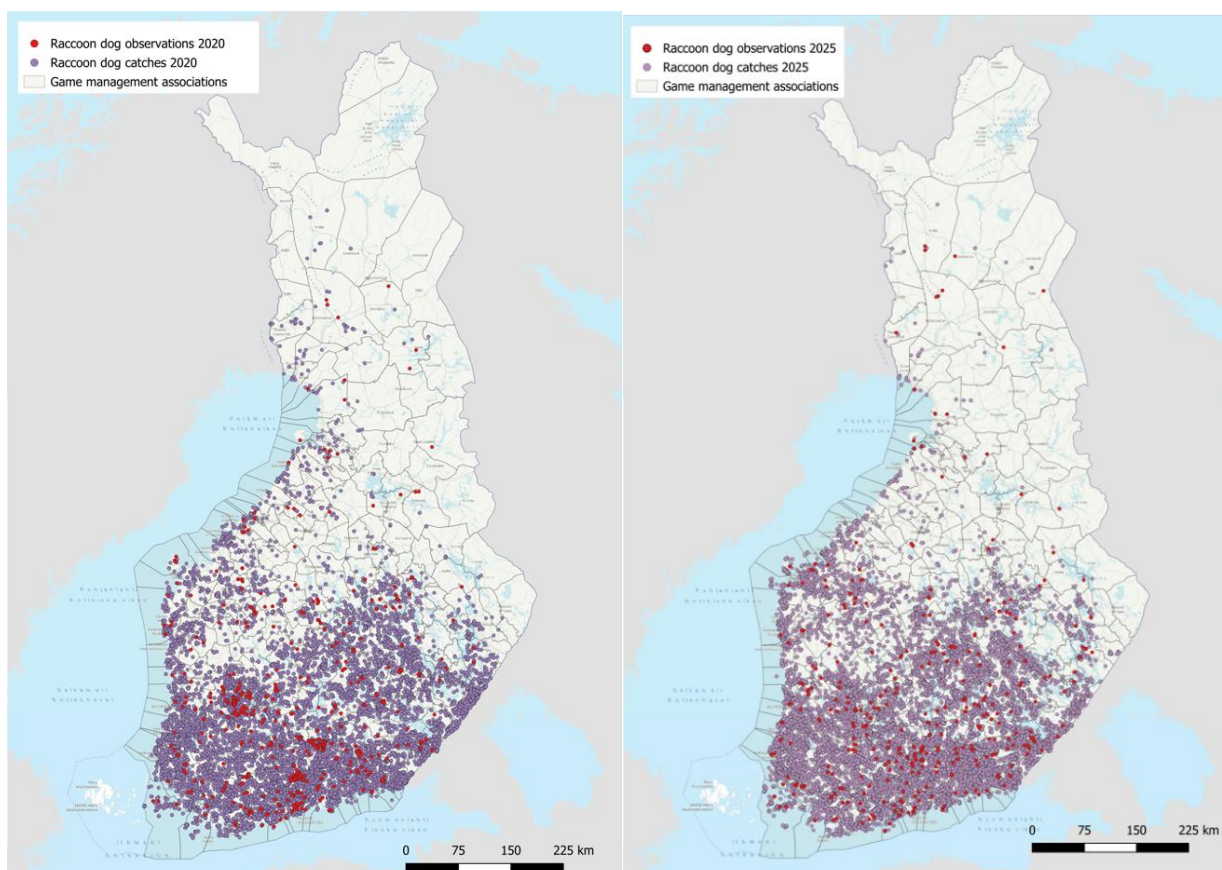
### Åland Access

In the Åland Access area the project activities were continued in close co-operation with parallel projects in the South-West Archipelago. Responsible association (SLHSY/Tommy Arfman) continued to build the co-operation with the local hunting association, building up the effective working model. 2025 was again a big step ahead in building a network of local co-operation in the management area.

Four trips were made to the management area to search for and remove raccoon dogs and maintain feeding stations. All trips included thermal drone search of raccoon dog from the reed beds. At the same occasions 10 raccoon dogs were found and killed (Figure below).



Raccoon dog catches during the years 2023-2025 in the border zone of Åland and Finnish continental Archipelago area. Feeding stations used to attract raccoon dogs are marked with black symbols. One trip was made to Åland to support the use of thermal drone in Åland main island. Trip was done in co-operation with Helmi invasive predator project. As a result [46 raccoon dog was killed](#) from the reed beds of Åland mainland.



Raccoon Dog harvests and observations voluntarily recorded in Oma riista -service during 2020 and 2025. The overall distribution of Raccoon Dog harvest and observations seem to be increasing in Southern Finland during recent years, while dataset indicates the decline in Northern Finland and Lapland. Maps produced by Mikko Toivola.

**Continued use of monitoring cameras/early warning system EWS and developing the method to allow rapid response from local voluntary hunters.**

### Lapland

In South-Western Lapland 15 working GSM game cameras were actively used by project staff to follow the RD situation and to assist eradication. In addition, around 40 older, still functioning, cameras were used by voluntary hunters without GSM function. 10 cameras were in Salla, Eastern border, with no Raccoon Dog observations. The shutdown of 3G networks has greatly reduced the availability of and functionality of the GSM cameras, as 3G was the main network for GSM cameras and it had far greater range than current 4G/5G

### Kvarken/Valsöarna

Approximately 20 functioning cameras in the area and managed by local hunters.



## **Judas animals and development of the method to be more cost effective**

### Lapland

During 2025 there were only 8 recorded Judas animal activities in Lapland. As a result of Followits announcement to quit their wildlife activities, operations with their GPS-collars have been wound down during 2025. Swedish project managers are currently testing new GPS-collars and Finland is waiting these results before re-evaluation of the actions needed within the Lapland project areas. Re-evaluation of the effectiveness of the method and optimal collars is needed for 2026 onwards.

### Kvarken/Valsörarna

No Judas activities during 2025.

### Åland Access

Currently there are no Judas animals in the area. As a result of Followits announcement to quit their wildlife activities only few collars with fully loaded batteries remain to be used in 2026. These collars will be adjusted to the animals that have reed beds in their core habitats. Gps-fixes will provide information to support the drone-assisted removal of Raccoon dogs in reed bed areas. At 2025 new scientific publication was published by Turku university scientist in Ecological Solutions and Evidence series ([Ice cover and partner removal increase movements of invasive mesopredator in the coastal island mosaic](#)). Article summarizes up data set of the 30 Raccoon dogs and their movement patterns in Finnish archipelago. Article have also some management implications concerning the removal of Raccoon dogs and the related behavior resulting the removal operations.

## **Continued co-operative management and information activities with volunteer hunters**

Project continued active working with voluntary hunters. The local people are the key resource for effective Raccoon Dog management in Northern Finland, Kvarken and Åland Access areas.

### Lapland

Project recorded 119 working days or events of Raccoon Dog hunting actively involving 459 person-days by volunteer hunters and in the education events in the project framework.

20 new KaNu traps, were put on the field in the year 2026.

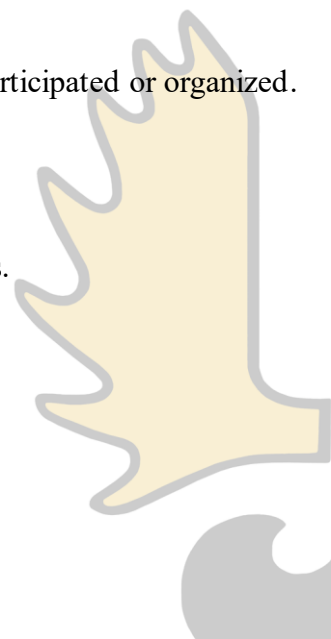
21 education events or project presentation events with 2617 participants participated or organized.

### Kvarken/Valsörarna

There are active hunters with dogs in all 4 hunter associations.

The Finnish Wildlife Agency regional office kept contact with local hunters.

Gift cards sent to local hunting associations to thank local active hunters.



### Åland Access

Two separate trips were made to meet the hunters in the border zone of Åland and Finland mainland. Both trips were educational and hunters of the Åland mainland and Brändö area were given training guidelines for the drone assisted removal of raccoon dog. In the Brändö area there were even field training for the use of thermal drone to locate and remove raccoon dogs in the archipelago reed beds. One trip was made to the Åland mainland and thermal drone was used to remove Raccoon dogs from the ice-covered reed beds. This trip was made by the professional hunter of SLHSY and contacts were built up with the local hunters and landowners together with the Ådans vänner. Some new land-owners have joined the efforts during the year 2025.

Currently Åland is working to eradicate Raccoon dog population in island of Kökar. Finland wildlife agency and wildlife managers in the Åland region have strengthened their cooperation during the 2025.

### Gift card –campaign

The idea of Gift-Card campaign was to motivate the hunters to report and return GPS-collars. This is a way to reward active hunters by providing animals for collaring and to retrieve the lost collars or to reward hunters who have shown remarkable activity. The planned motivation dinners for hunters were cancelled, and resources were reallocated to gift cards.

Total of 70 Gift Cards were purchased and delivered as rewards. The campaign has proven successful and raises awareness amongst hunters and collars has been returning better.

### Information about IAS and dissemination of project results

Project was presented in media several times. The project activities were not as actively raised on the channels of the Wildlife Agency as in previous years due to other IAS management projects with active media work. As a result of the Helmi invasive predator project there were number of articles during the year 2025 that promoted the eradication of raccoon dog populations:

- [Supikoirakanta saatu roimaan laskuun arvokkailla lintuvesillä | Uutisia lyhyesti | Yle](#)

SLHSY has their own web pages which present information about the work that is aimed at eradicating raccoon dogs and mink from the archipelago areas. Pages were translated also in Swedish and published in 2024. SLHSY have also their own Facebook pages. Updates to these pages about the GPS-work, drone searches of raccoon dogs, birdlife development and management principles of alien predators have been actively published during the year 2025. Altogether 30 updates were published in the year 2025.

The Finnish Wildlife Agency has a website for Invasive Alien Predators <https://vieraspeto.fi/sv/>.

### Efforts to renew the current legal context of the raccoon dog and its status as an invasive species, in alignment with the Finnish management plan of the raccoon dog, produced during the LIFE project.

The Raccoon Dog, American Mink and other similar species were listed as ‘alien species’ in the legislative change in June 2019 as reported in 2019 report.

### Legal permissions

- The project was issued a derogation of Hunting Act for effective working though summer and to use forbidden hunting methods (shooting close to vehicle, snare etc.) for 2026-2028
- Metsähallitus issued permit to use ATV and Snowmobile on state lands and outside of designated trails.
- All key hunting associations have permitted the project to take actions on their hunting areas.
- In Finland the drones equipped with thermal cameras are currently legal for lethal management of Raccoon Dogs and other EU/Nationally listed IAS. This has been greatly influenced by the experiences from the work that has been done with drones in the Åland Access during the year 2023-2024.



## Costs of Actions and realized funding

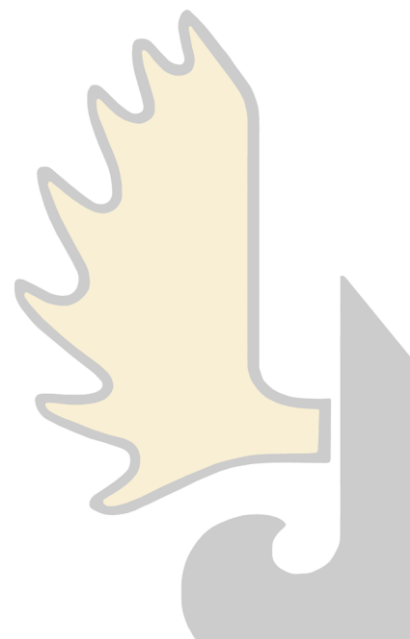
Table 5 Realised costs and funding

Annual costs of Raccoon Dog management in Finland 2025					
	Cost item	€ piece/set	Number needed	Est. total cost	Realized 2025
LAPLAND	1. External assistance, Professional Hunter in Lapland to carry out project activities	9 500	11,5	109 250,00 €	118 712,96 €
	2. Travel costs, estimated total /month	2 250	11,5	25 875,00 €	29 222,53 €
	3. Equipment, traps, trap materials, scout cameras and accessories, trap alarms	250	20	5 000,00 €	- €
	4. Gift Cards for Judas-animals and good co-operation	50	30	1 500,00 €	2 500,00 €
	5. Batteries, timber, screws etc small items, pre-paid services. Estimated total	3000	1	3 000,00 €	2 156,00 €
	6. GPS collars, annual replacement of lost&broke	2000	3	6 000,00 €	- €
	<b>LAPLAND TOTAL</b>			<b>150 625,00 €</b>	<b>152 591,49 €</b>
KVARKEN	1. Part-time external assistance, professional hunters, to carry out focused project activities supporting local volunteer hunters	9500	0,5	4 750,00 €	- €
	2. Travel costs, estimated total	2000	1	2 000,00 €	- €
	3. Equipment, traps, trap materials, scout cameras and accessories, trap alarms	250	10	2 500,00 €	- €
	4. Gift Cards for Judas-animals and good co-operation	50	10	500,00 €	500,00 €
	5. Batteries, timber, screws etc small items, pre-paid services. Estimated total	625	1	625,00 €	234,17 €
	<b>KVARKEN TOTAL</b>			<b>10 375,00 €</b>	<b>734,17 €</b>
ÅLAND ACCESS	1. Part-time external assistance, Professional hunter, to carry out focused project activities supporting local volunteer hunters	9500	0,5	4 750,00 €	
	2. Travel costs, estimated total	3000	0,5	1 500,00 €	11 254,14 €
	3. Equipment, traps, trap materials, scout cameras and accessories, trap alarms	250	10	2 500,00 €	- €
	4. Gift Cards for Judas-animals and good co-operation	50	5	250,00 €	500,00 €
	5. Batteries, timber, screws etc small items, pre-paid services and collar service Followit for old Finnish collars. Estimated total	1000	1	1 000,00 €	944,00 €
	6. GPS collars, annual replacement of lost&broke	2000	2	4 000,00 €	- €
	<b>ÅLAND ACCESS TOTAL</b>			<b>14 000,00 €</b>	<b>12 698,14 €</b>
TO-	<b>General, Followit service</b>	<b>35 000</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>35 000,00 €</b>	35 000,00 €
	<b>Project administration Finnish Wildlife Agency</b>	<b>5 000</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>15 000,00 €</b>	15 000,00 €
	<b>TOTAL FINLAND Planned</b>			<b>225 000,00 €</b>	<b>216 023,80 €</b>
	<b>TOTAL FINLAND Realised*</b>			<b>215 000,00 €</b>	
	Balance, from 2025 budget				- 1 023,80 €
	Balance, saved from 2024 budget				15 669,48 €
Total balance moved to 2026 budget				14 645,68 €	

Annual funding 2025:

<b>ANNUAL Funding</b>	
<u>Finland</u>	
Finnish Wildlife Agency:	85 000
Metsähallitus*:	10 000
<u>Sweden:</u>	35 000
<u>Norway:</u>	85 000
<b><u>TOTAL</u></b>	<b><u>215 000</u></b>

The total costs of project Actions in 2025 was 216 023,80 €. Yearly budget of the project for the years 2025-2028 was 225000 €. The funding of Metsähallitus for the year 2025 was 10000 € compared to the planned 20000 € resulting -1 023,80 € balance for the year 2026. However, additional savings from year 2024 made it possible to add cumulative balance of + 14 645,68 € for the year 2026.



## Conclusions

- The Raccoon Dog population of the project area in Lapland has stayed at a low level compared to 2011. Raccoon Dogs are present throughout Lapland. North of Arctic Circle the population is small, or almost non-existing, and scattered to small cells. Special attention is needed on South-Western Lapland to keep up with achieved results. Declining Raccoon Dog populations makes it increasingly difficult to motivate voluntary hunters to continue their activities.
- New establishment of Raccoon Dog in Kvarken area, Valsöarna, is under management and the whole Korsholm Archipelago is under project activities by local hunting associations supported by the project, while local challenges exist in the effective management of Valsöarna and outer archipelago. Active motivation and championing are required to keep the motivation of local hunters at a good level.
- Project activities were successfully developed at Åland Access in close collaboration with parallel projects and local hunting associations.
- Project actions have been cost-effective and generally well accepted thanks to hands-on working model that is easy to contact and participate for the local hunters.
- Service contracts were made on the professional level field-work in Lapland (Juha Mäkimartti) and Åland Access (SLHSY). In Kvarken area service contract was not made in 2025 due to local circumstances.
- All available means of Raccoon Dog management are needed and different working tools (active hunting, Judas animals, cameras, trapping) together create the frame to control the population.
- New IAS legislation significantly improves the possibilities of regular hunters carrying out effective management.
- The new legislation allows the use of thermal drones for Raccoon Dog management, which substantially increases the effectiveness of Raccoon Dog eradication in the extensive wetland and reedbed areas. Co-operation between Finland and Åland has benefited the adoption of the thermal drone as a management tool for the Raccoon dog.

March 5th 2026.

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