

Recreational fishing in Finland



The 2nd Meeting of the Joint Bycatch Working Group (JBWG) of
ASCOBANS and ACCOBAMS
5 -6.2.2025 ,online.

Penina Blankett, Ministry of the Environment, Finland

Content of the presentation

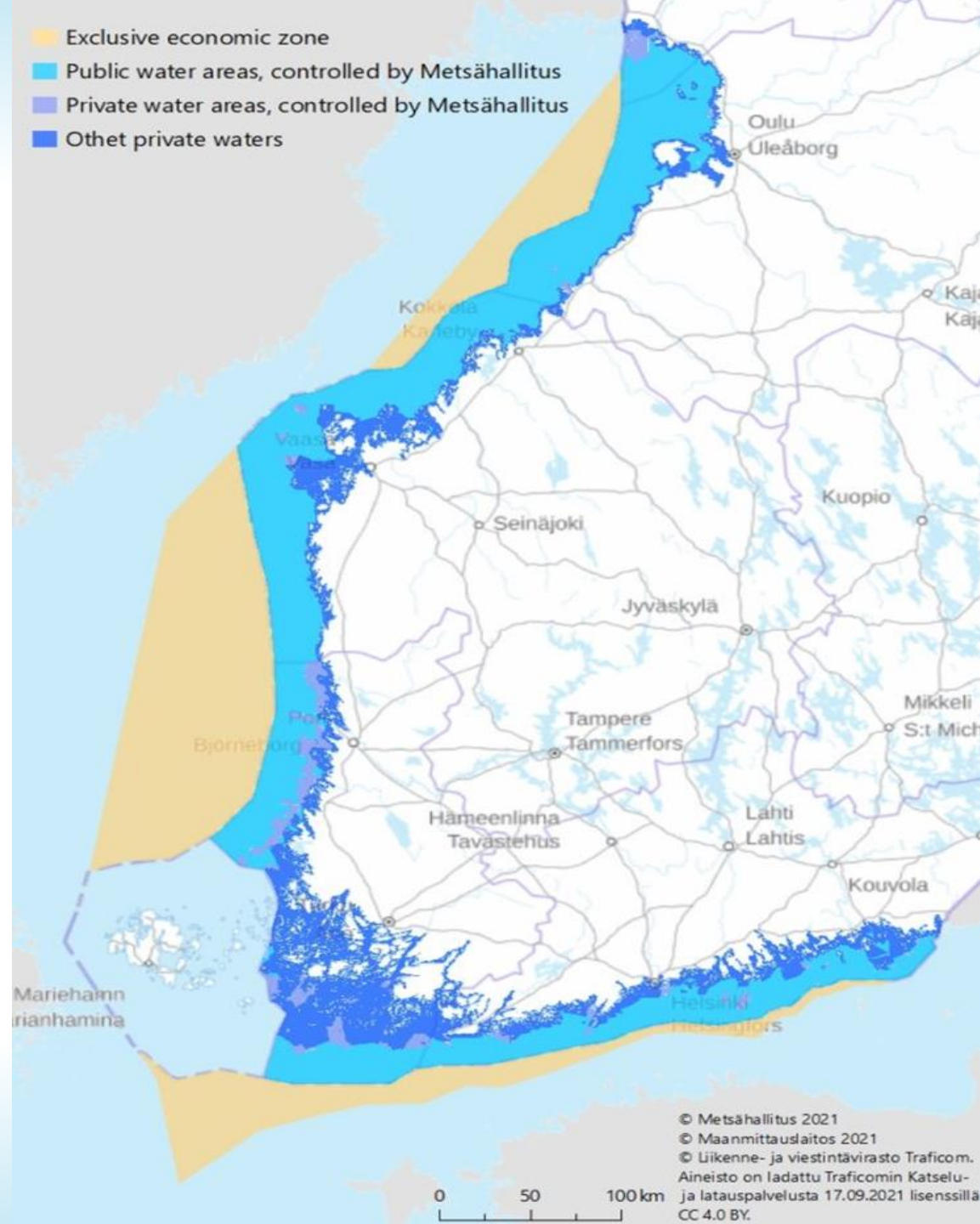
- **Management of the sea**
- **Legislation**
- **Number of recreational fishermen**
- **Catch statistics**



Photo: Penina Blankett

Management of the sea areas

- The Finnish sea area consists:
 - EEZ
 - Territorial waters
 - External territorial waters (Territorial sea)
 - Metsähallitus controls 2.8 million hectares of sea areas, accounting for more than one half of Finland's territorial waters.
 - Internal territorial waters
 - A significant proportion of the internal waters closest to the coast are private and often managed by co-operatives.



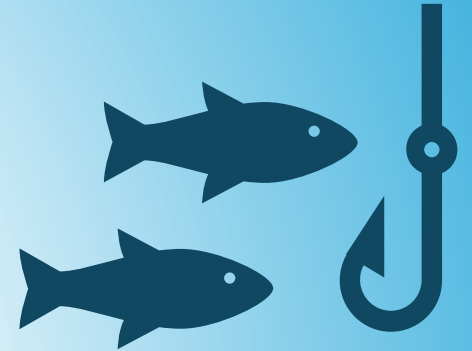
Fishing Act (379/2015)

Section 4 Definitions,

- Recreational fishing means fishing for recreation and domestic needs

Section 7, Common fishing rights

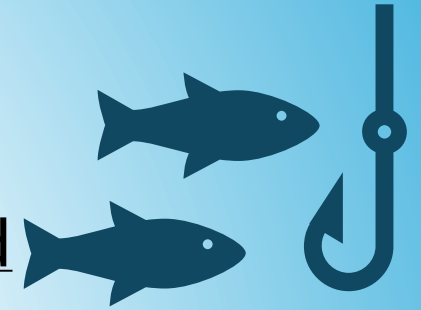
- Everyone has a right to engage **in angling and ice fishing and to fish Baltic herring with a rod and vertically moved hooks attached to a line** free of charge.
- Everyone who has paid the fisheries management fee and everyone under 18 or at least 65 years of age has the right to engage in **lure fishing**.
- The provisions above **apply to State-owned water areas**





Fishing Act (379/2015)

Section 8: Fishing in the exclusive economic zone and public water areas



(1) Every citizen of a state belonging to the European Economic Area who has paid the fisheries management fee and everyone under 18 or at least 65 years of age has the right to engage **in recreational fishing** in Finland's **exclusive economic zone and public water areas at sea.**



Fishing Act (379/2015)

Section 62 Bycatch report

The owner or user of the fishing gear shall notify the National Resources Institute Finland without delay of any **seal or whale caught in the fishing gear.**



In winter, December 2018, the harbour porpoise was bycaught in the recreational fisherman's net. The porpoise was named Lucia and it was released alive.





Fishing Act (379/2015)

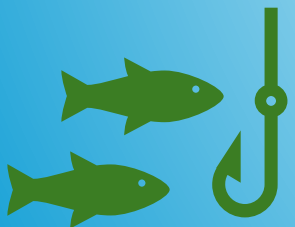
- Section 62 a Catch reporting in recreational fishing
 - catch data for certain **endangered fish species** are needed for recreational fishing from the beginning of 2025.
 - The notifications are used to collect important information on the state of fish stocks
 - in marine waters e.g.: salmon, seatrout, eel, marine spawning grayling





Nature Conservation Act (9/2023)

- Common fishing rights (Fishing Act, section 7) are also valid in **state nature reserves, such as national parks and nature parks.**
- Provisions on fishing in **public waters in the sea and in other state nature reserves** located in Finland's exclusive economic zone are laid down in section 8(1) and (3) of the fishing Act.
- However, provisions may be issued by government decree **on restricting fishing** in public waters in a state nature reserve located in the sea or in Finland's exclusive economic zone **if fishing endangers the purpose of establishing the area or causes harm to other uses of the area.** The restrictions may be spatial or temporal.





Recreational fishing in Åland

- Åland has its own separate fishing laws that differ from Mainland Finland.
- The main difference is that **fishing is not free**.
- The fishing grounds in Åland are **partly privately owned** and **partly community owned** by villages or groups of fishing ground owners.
- Additionally there are **public, province owned** waters that stretch 12 nautical miles outside the village's borders and the province of Åland's private waters
- All Nordic citizens have the right to fish for their own needs in the **province's public water areas**,
- The water owner's **permission or a fishing license** is required for sport fishing both on privately or community owned waters, and in the province of Åland's public waters.
- There is no common fishing license in Åland that would cover the entire region.
- There are 56 separate fishing licence areas and 16 fishing areas owned by the province.



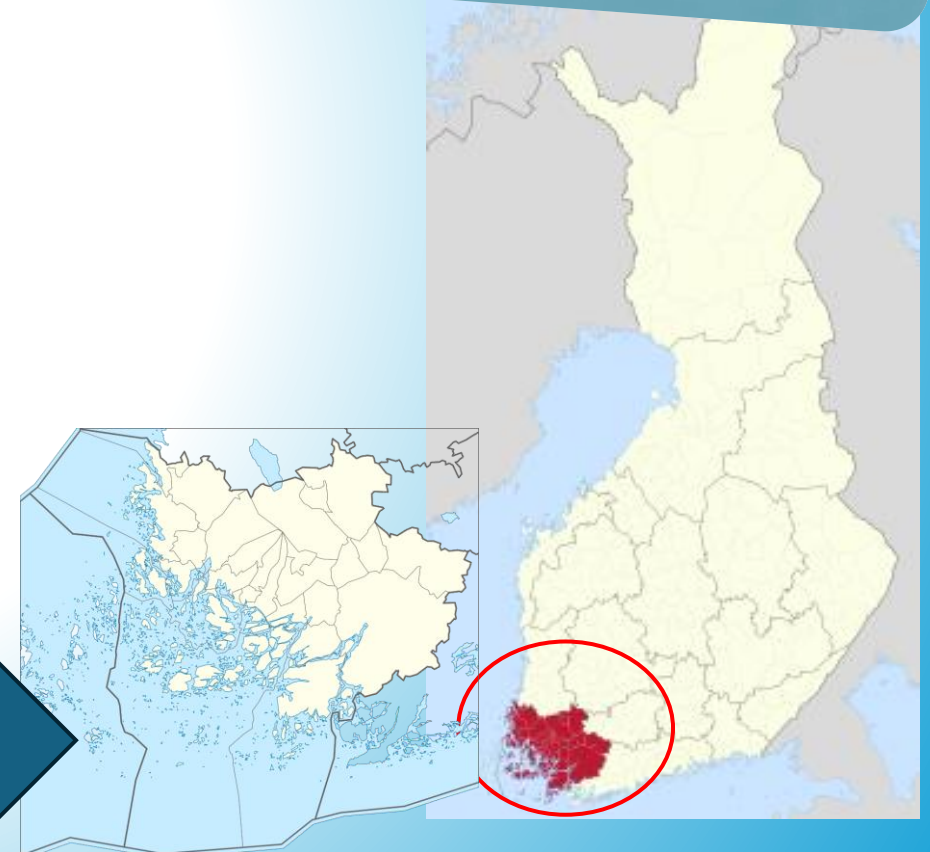
Number of recreational fishermen

- Fishing is one of the most popular free time activities in Finland.
- Ca. 1.8 million recreational fishers (2020)
 - 43 % men and 23 % women

• Ca. 350,000 fish in the marine areas (2022)

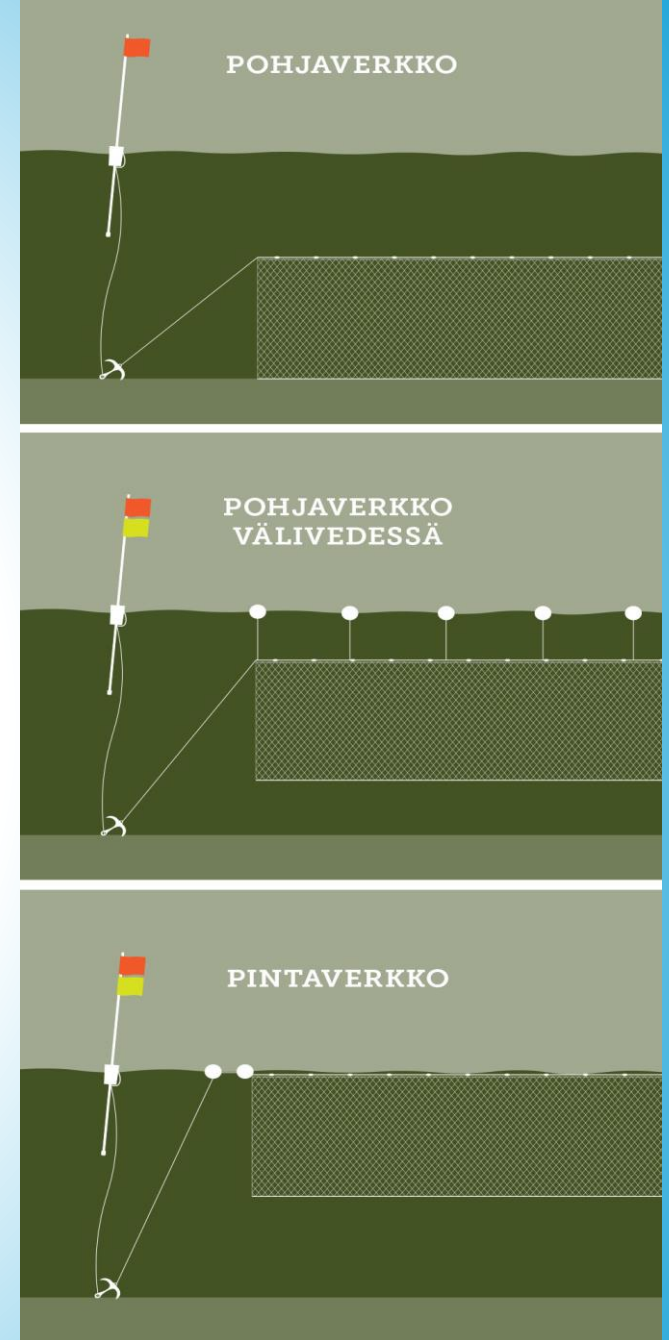
- 70 000 used nets
- 720 000 fishing days

157 000 fishermen, of which ca. 30 000 fish with nets.



Net fishing

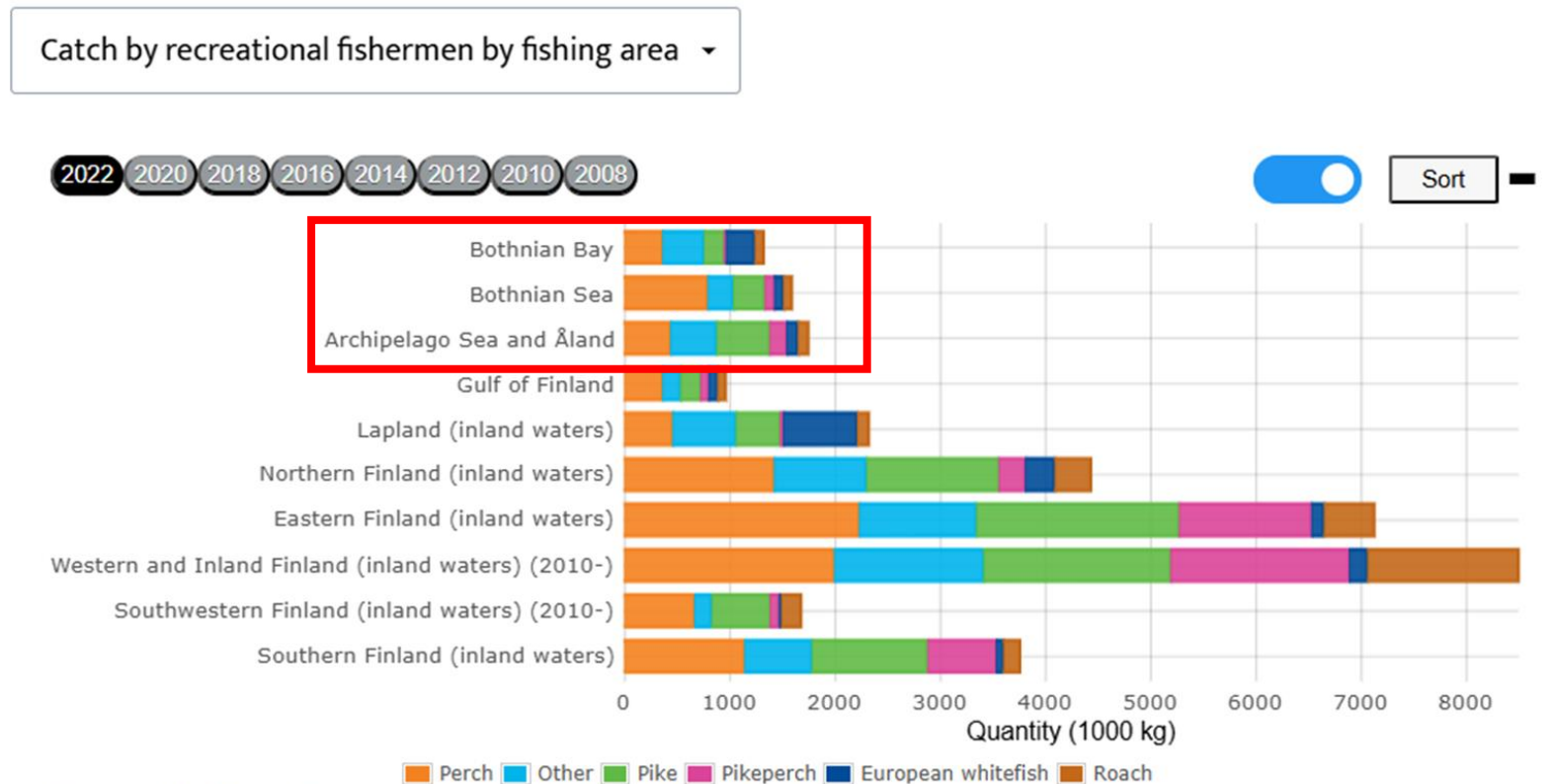
- For net fishing, fishermen always need a **separate fishing license** from **the owner of the waters**.
- In addition, a fisherman aged between 18 and 66 must pay a fishery fee to the State.



Catch of recreational fishing

- Yearly catch : 2.3 million kg (2022)

- The most common prey species were perch, whitefish (*Coregonus*), common bream, herring and pike.



Source: OSF: Natural Resources Institute Finland, Recreational fishing.

Summary

- Finnish (incl. Åland) marine areas consists of state owned waters and privately owned waters.
- Common fishing rights also in MPAs
- Net fishing needs permits
- Net fishing is used commonly in marine areas
- Net fishing is an effective way of catching fish for home use all year around.
- Very few by-catch reports from recreational fishing (1996, 1999 and 2018)

Thank you!

Thanks to the Natural Resources Institute
Finland, Mika Rahikainen and Miikka Husa for
fisheries statistics!

Penina.blankett@gov.fi

Photo: Penina Blankett, Jussarö