# Alien species in Finland

2000 Ministry of the Environment

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# Introduction

Biological invasions coupled with environmental modification and climatic changes are a major threat to global biodiversity. Human-caused habitat deterioration and fragmentation promote the loss of those local species that cannot tolerate impacts from human activities. At the same time, new invasion corridors and increased global transport facilitate the spread of non-indigenous species.

Many of these alien species do best in human-disturbed environments, mainly affecting species composition . Some, however, can invade undisturbed natural habitats which thus are homogenized on regional, intercontinental and even global scales (Dukes & Mooney 1999, McKinney & Lockwood 1999, Williamson 1999).

Because alien species may affect local biotas strongly, more and more actions are needed to prevent unintentional introductions, to analyze possible intentional introductions, and to study the ecological and economic effects of already established aliens in order to assess the need for control.

## COP decisions

The fifth Conference of the Parties (COP 5) to the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) in Nairobi (15 to 26 May 2000) urged parties to submit case studies to the Executive Secretary, focusing on alien species that threaten ecosystems, habitats or species (decision V/8). The outline for the case studies is provided in UNEP/CBD/COP/5/3 Annex II. Case studies are an important tool in invasion biology since the outcome of a certain introduction is difficult to predict (Kareiva 1996, Williamson 1996).

Underlying the decision is the objective of the CBD to "prevent the introduction of, control or eradicate those alien species which threaten ecosystems, habitats or species". To help this, the Scientific Committee on Problems of the Environment (SCOPE) has launched the Global Invasive Species Programme (GISP) with support from the United Nations (the Global Environment Facility, GEF; the United Nations Environment Programme, UNEP), the World Conservation Union (IUCN) and others (Williamson 1999).

## Nordic report

The Nordic Council of Ministers has recently published a report "Introduced species in the Nordic countries (Weidema 2000) to clarify the situation concerning introduced species. Also, an Internet based "Nordic Network on Introduced Species" (NNIS 2000) has been established. The website contains a list of administrators and scientits working within the field of introduced species. Additionally, the network includes databases on marine, freshwater and terrestrial biomes. Earlier, a risk assessment for marine alien species in the Nordic area was made (Gollash & Leppäkoski 1999).

The "Introduced species" report identifies over 1350 species that have been introduced either intentionally or unintentionally to the Nordic countries. The report also contains 17 detailed descriptions of the more invasive introductions in the marine (e.g. *Sargassum muticum, Balanus improvisus*), freshwater (*Elodea canadensis, Salmo salar*), and terrestrial (*Rosa rugosa, Nyctereutes procyonoides*) biomes (Weidema 2000).

The report also contains recommendations to the Nordic Council of Ministers. Recommendations are given for each of the three biomes and are grouped under three headings (Weidema 2000).

1) Legal and institutional needs:
Unintentional introductions should be prevented, e.g. international conventions should be implemented nationally, and vectors of introduction must be identified and controlled.
Intentional introductions should be controlled, e.g. national legislation should be reviewed, national authorities in charge of control of introductions should be established, and risk assessment before and monitoring after an intentional introduction is to be established.
2) Management and control:
Monitoring and dissemination of information should be improved, e.g. introduced species should be included in monitoring programmes (also regional co-operation), and "early warning systems" should be developed to enable early detection of alien species.
Control methods must be developed, e.g. appropriate efficient and environmentally sound control methods are needed.
3) Knowledge and research:
Research on introduced species should be funded and encouraged, groups involved in preventive work should be informed and educated, and the public should be given more information on introduced species and their impacts.

## Invasive species and their success in Finland

"All communities are invasible, perhaps some more than the others" states Williamson in his book "Biological Invasions" (1996). He notes that what seems obvious *a priori* is often irrelevant when introductions are concerned. But, nevertheless, he identifies some factors to consider as causes of a successful invasion. Of them, climatic matching and abundance in native habitat are considered here.

Two contradictory features may influence the establishment of non-indigenous species in Finland. On one hand, the harsh climate prevents invasion of most southern species. On the other hand, the relatively low number of species in Finnish ecosystems allows new species to establish themselves quite easily – if they are physiologically adapted to northern conditions (Moulton & Pimm 1986, Brown 1989, Nummi 1996a). And – especially concerning plants – new species encounter barren soils here (A. Kurtto, pers. comm.).

The aquatic environment can buffer climatic conditions; hence, the conduct of organisms living in or by the water is often especially unpredictable. For example, species of relatively southern origin – such as the zebra mussel *Dreissena polymorpha*, the spiny water flea *Cercopagis pengoi*, an opossum shrimp *Hemimysis anomala* and the round goby *Neogobius melanostomus*, all native to the Ponto-Caspian region – have invaded the Baltic Sea (Salemaa & Hietalahti 1993, Leppäkoski 1993, Gollash & Leppäkoski 1999).

Typically, invaders are originally widely distributed and are abundant (Moulton & Pimm 1986, Erlich 1989, Williamson 1996). In Finland, American mink *Mustela vison*, white-tailed deer *Odocoileus virginianus*, muskrat *Ondatra zibethica*, Canadian beaver *Castor canadensis*, Canada goose *Branta canadensis* and ring-necked pheasant *Phasianus colchicus* exemplify this (Nummi 1996a; for muskrat, see also Danell 1996).

But also the opposite can be true. For example, the Himalayan balsam *Impatiens glandulifera* has a restricted (800 km x 50 km) natural range in the western Himalayas. However, it is the most invasive species of its genus, and has invaded much of Europe and North America (Williamson 1996), and also Finland (Kurtto 1996) (see Case studies).

Non-indigenous organisms brought to Finland by man could be classified into three categories:

1) ancient unintentional introductions (species that came along with early agriculture; many plants, house mouse)
2) historical intentional introductions (species that were brought here for economic benefit; mainly fish and game, garden plants)
3) modern, predominantly unintentional introductions (species whose dispersal is facilitated by modern technology and trade; ballast water species, genetically modified organisms, agricultural and forestry pests)

This is by no means a clearcut classification. But it may help in discriminating between the present alien species problem and the the organisms that have been in Finland quite long without doing much harm.

## Ancient alien species

About 200 alien plants have spread to Finland with traditional agriculture practices during the last three or four thousand years (Suominen & Hämet-Ahti 1993). They have mostly been confined to agricultural areas and are not notoriously invasive in more natural habitats. Moreover, their survival is often linked with traditional agricultural practices, for example, grazing and haymaking. Many of these species are in fact declining along with modernization of agriculture (Lappalainen 1998). On the other hand, many of them replace native plants in strongly human-influenced habitats, such as annual knawel *Scleranthus annuus* and common bent *Agrostis capillaris* on trampled rock outcrops (A. Kurtto, pers. comm.).

It is not known when the house mouse *Mus musculus* spread to Finland, but it undoubtedly came with man (Myllymäki 1997). Likewise, the time of the introduction

of the black rat *Rattus rattus* is unknown but it most likely arrived in Finland a few centuries after it arrived in Europe around time of the Middle Ages (subspecies *R. r. rattus*) (Marcuzzi 1990).

The Norway rat, on the other hand, came to Finland only in the early 19th century. Its invasion through the country in the 20th century – when it also outcompeted the black rat – is rather well documented. The house mouse and Norway rat live in close proximity with man, especially during winter. In summer rats may move to luxuriant wetlands (Myllymäki 1972).

## Historical alien species

Game were the first animals imported on utilitarian grounds into Finland starting in 1901 with the release of over one hundred pheasants *Phasianus colchicus* in the vicinity of Helsinki. After that, nine additional alien "game" birds and mammals have established a wild population.

Table 1. Introduced "game" species which have wild established populations in Finland (Nummi 1988, 1996). No mark = wide distribution, * = restricted distribution.

| | Area of origin | Introduced |
|---|---|---|
| Mink<br>*Mustela vison* | North America | 1930s |
| Raccoon dog<br>*Nyctereutes procyonoides* | East Asia | 1930s |
| Fallow deer*<br>*Dama dama* | Turkey | 1930s, 1950s |
| White-tailed deer<br>*Odocoileus virginianus* | North America | 1934, 1948 |
| Mouflon*<br>*Ovis musimon* | Europe | 1939, 1949 |
| Rabbit*<br>*Oryctolagus cuniculus* | Iberian peninsula | 1990s |
| Canadian beaver<br>*Castor canadensis* | North America | 1933-37 |
| Muskrat<br>*Ondatra zibethicus* | North America | 1920s |
| Canada goose<br>*Branta canadensis* | North America | 1964 |
| Mute swan<br>*Cygnus olor* | Asia minor | 1934 |
| Pheasant<br>*Phasianus colchicus* | East Asia | 1901 |

Of the introduced game, minks have escaped from fur farms, the raccoon dog population originates from introductions made in the former USSR, and the origin of the feral rabbit population in Helsinki is not known (Pietilä 1999). Other introductions have been deliberate (Nummi 1988). The beaver is a special case, because the original purpose was to reintroduce a vanished species (see Case studies).

In game introductions made in the Nordic countries, a high success rate (about 80% of the species introduced have established themselves) has been found (Nummi 1996a). This resembles the 100% success rate of mammal introductions into Ireland and Newfoundland (Williamson & Fitter 1996), and reinforces the fact that the success rate can be much higher than the general "tens" rule. The tens rule roughly predicts that 1 in 10 of those imported appear in the wild, 1 in 10 of those introduced become established, and that 1 in 10 of those established become invasive or even a pest in the recipient area (Williamson & Fitter 1996). One obvious reason for the success of game introductions in Finland is that the species have been selected on the basis of their natural distribution, hence species adapted to cold climate (see above; see also Climatic matching, Williamson 1996).

Animals have also been released into waters for economic purposes. Of many fishes, brook trout *Salvelinus fontinalis* (introduced in 1965), peled whitefish *Coregonus peled* (1965), brown bullhead *Ictalurus nebulosus* (1922), and brook stickleback *Culaea inconstans* (1958) have established reproducing populations in Finnish waters (Koli 1997, Makkonen et al. 2000).

Likewise, the American signal crayfish *Pasifastacus leniusculus* was introduced into Finland in 1967. This release is, in fact, an indirect result of a previous unintentional invasion by crayfish plague caused by the fungus *Aphanomyces astaci*. This fungus spread to Europe in the 1860s, probably with American crayfish introductions. It reached Finland via Russia in 1893, devastating the best crayfish waters in 1907-1909 (Järvenpää et al. 1986, Westman 2000).

Among the garden plants, the most aggressive ones have been giant hogweeds *Heracleum mantegazzianum*, *H. persicum*, Himalayan balsam *Impatiens glandulifera* (see Case studies), lupin *Lupinus polyphyllus* and Japanese rose *Rosa rugosa*. The lupin has recently been spreading fast along roadsides, but it is quite restricted to human-modified areas. The other above-mentioned species, on the other hand, seem to be capable of invading natural habitats, especially shores (Kurtto 1996, Koponen et al. 1997, Suominen 1997, Lappalainen 1998).

Recently Japanese knotweed *Fallopia japonica,* white dogwood *Cornus alba*, butterbur *Petasites hybridus* and giant butterbur *P. japonicus* have also shown a growing tendency towards invading natural habitats. Additional cases (*Glyceria maxima, Aster* × *salignus* etc.) concerning wetlands and shores are discussed below in 'Competition'. In other kinds of environments, recently or relatively recently introduced garden plants are - at least for the time being - less invasive, for example, red-leaved rose *Rosa glauca* on rocks, hautbois strawberry *Fragaria moschata* in fertile forests, and garden shadblow *Amelanchier spicata* and shiny cotoneaster *Cotoneaster lucidus* both in woodland and on rocks (A. Kurtto, pers. comm.).

In Finland, as also widely elsewhere in Europe, greater celandine *Chelidonium majus* exemplifies plants which were introduced in ancient times for medical purposes and are now thoroughly naturalized in their secondary areas. In the Finnish wild flora ramsons *Allium ursinum*, field garlic *A. oleraceum* and sand leek *A. scorodoprasum* seem to belong to the same historical element (e.g. Pettersson 1942, 1943). Woad *Isatis tinctorial,* in turn, is an ancient dye plant, which originates from the steppes of easternmost Europe and Asia, but has completely naturalized on European, also Finnish, seashores. Although present also in more or less natural vegetation, the historical alien species mentioned above are considered to be rather harmless in Finnish nature, but alpine elder *Sambucus racemosa* may be regarded as harmful (see 'Competition' below).

Since the early 19th century fairly many unintentionally introduced plant species have become established in Finland. Their main vectors have been hayseed, foreign (mainly Russian) troops, ballast soil of sailing ships, grain imports and garden seed (see, e.g. Suominen 1979, Kurtto & Uotila 1999). Almost all of these relatively recent alien plant species (neophytes) are still strictly bound to waste land, railways, harbours, arable fields, cultural grassland and other man-made or strongly human-influenced habitats. In other words, they are not capable of invading areas of natural or even semi-natural vegetation.

However, there are some exceptions. The three North American willowherb species *Ebilobium adenocaulon, E. ciliatum* and *E. glandulosum* were first discovered in Finland in the 1910s and 1920s. Since then especially the *E. adenocaulon* has rapidly become common in southern and sentral Finland. It and *E. ciliatum* have invaded natrural shore and spring habitats, too. The hayseed immigrant sneezewort *Achillea ptarmica* is nowadays quite common as a seemingly native plant on shore meadows, particularly on stony seashores. The closely related *A. salicifolia*, brought by Russian troops, has locally invaded alluvial vegetation in and around the town of Hämeenlinna in the south (Uotila 1978). Still more local cases include the ballast immigrant pale toadflax *Linaria repens* and the grain immigrant Russian lettuce *Lactuca tatarica* (Erkamo 1976) on seashores of the south.

Some of the neophytes have proved to be detrimental to their native relatives due to hybridization (see below).

## Modern alien species

Although intentional introductions are nowadays more or less controlled, an increasing number of invasive propagules are crossing former distribution barriers and reaching new areas. The reason is increased trade. Woody material, seeds, food products and various garden plants are transported between continents. They may harbour many kinds of organisms that thus are unintentionally introduced into new biogeographical areas (Marchant & Borden 1976, Simberloff 1986). In a study comprising fourteen lots of pine pulpweed, three new species not found in Finland originating from Siberian samples were found (Siitonen 1990). The control of forest pests is based on human economic interests, but they, of course, pose an ecologic threat, too.

Some alien agricultural pests have also invaded open fields, for example, the yellow potato cyst nematode *Globodera rostochiensis* (Smith et al. 1997, J. Tomminen, pers. comm.). In 1998, the strongest invasion so far of the Colorado beetle *Leptinotarsa decemlineata* was seen in southeastern Finland. The beetle was successfully repelled from all infested fields (Tomminen 1999). The snail *Arion lusitanicus* also invaded Finland in 1990 (Kivipelto 2000). Of forest pests, the pinewood nematode *Bursaphelechus xylophilus* is considered a major threat. It has been carefully studied (Tomminen 1993) and, based on this risk assessment, stringent phytosanitary regulations have been issued to prevent its introduction into Finnish forests. Rigid border control inspections of commodities most likely to carry the pinewood nematode have resulted in numerous findings of this organism, and the commodities in question were intercepted (see Case studies).

Even more alien species are spread in the ballast water of ships. This invasion route is becoming more common because the speed of ships is increasing, the number of ship visits is increasing and because of higher amounts of ballast water are being discharged. Both the quality of the ballast water as well as the quality of water in the area of uptake have ameliorated which again increases the number of viable organisms shipped to new areas. In fact each ship may contain several million specimens of macrofauna and hundred million specimens of smaller organisms. The number of species transported by ships is estimated to be 3000-4000 at any time (Carlton 1985, Gollasch & Leppäkoski 1999).

Ballast water aliens along in the Finnish coast include a barnacle *Balanus improvisus* (arrived already in the 19$^{th}$ century), the New Zealand mud snail *Potamopyrgus antipodarum*, polychaete worms *Polydora redeki* (1960s) and *Merenzelleria viridis* (1980s), the zebra mussel (1995), as well as the spiny water flea (1995) (see Case studies) (Leppäkoski 1995, Leppäkoski & Olenin 2000).

These marine invaders have typically spread at a rate of 50 km per year, although *Merezelleria* widened its range at a rate of 480 km per year. Many of the introduced species have also moved to lower depths. They live in shallow bottoms in their native range, but have penetrated to depths of 40-50 m in the Baltic Sea. Some of the alien species, for example, *Balanus* and *Potamopyrgus* can also survive in fresh water (see also *Cercopagis* in Case studies) (Leppäkoski & Olenin 2000).

There are also many common disease and parasitic organisms of domestic animals which have been kept outside Finland by strict control. They are not included in this report although some of them may spread from domestic animals to wildlife and vice versa (Watson & Charleston 1985).

## Impacts of alien species in Finland

As anywhere, invasive species can affect Nordic ecosystems in many ways.
At least six factors can be considered (Ebenhard 1988, Nummi 1996a, Olenin & Leppäkoski 1999):

1) Herbivory

2) Predation
3) Competition
4) Diseases
5) Hybridization
6) Change in habitat structure

## Herbivory

The muskrat is known to affect vegetation success patterns (Danell 1977), and it has changed species dominance relations in small lakes in Finland: *Phragmites* and *Typha* have increased at the expense of *Equisetum* and *Schoenoplectus* (Toivonen & Meriläinen 1980). Along with the vegetation thinning, the muskrat affects invertebrate assemblages apparently by changing the fish predation rate (Malinen 1997).

Little is known about the effects of other alien herbivores. Mute swans, which are known to affect the amount of submerged vegetation (Cobb & Harlin 1980), live in high densities in the southwestern archipelago. The density-dependent decline in breeding success found in the growing population points to the possibility of overpopulation, or even vegetation degradation (Nummi & Saari 2000).

## Predation

The effect of predation is not easily shown, if it is not as dramatic as it has been on oceanic islands or in Australia (Ebenhard 1988, Dickman 1996). According to Kauhala (1996a), the raccoon dog in Finland mainly eats small mammals, plants and carcasses and does not seem to affect native biota strongly. She notes, however, the heavy predation by raccoon dogs on waterfowl nests in Estonia (Naaber 1971). The predation studies also often meet with technical difficulties in the crucial breeding time of birds.

The mink probably has affected native species more than the raccoon dog (Kauhala 1996a). This is because it has also colonized the outer archipelagos of the Baltic Sea, where such a predator has not existed earlier. The indigenous European mink apparently did not cross large waters (Westman 1968, Maran et al. 1998).

Seabirds appear to differ in their ability to adapt to mink predation. In some areas common eider ducks have gradually returned to islands near the mainland, where they disappeared during the initial colonization by mink (Gerell 1985). In other areas eider populations have increased in spite of the mink (Niemimaa & Pokki 1990). The black guillemot *Cepphus grylle* and the razorbill *Alca torda*, which feed their young in crevice nests for several weeks, are more vulnerable than eiders. Hario et al. (1986) noted a clear decline in the numbers of breeding black guillemot in the Finnish archipelago as a result of heavy nest predation in several successive years; in some years a considerable number of hens also were killed.

## Competition

There are at least three species pairs in which the American counterpart seems to outcompete the Eurasian species: signal crayfish and noble crayfish *Astacus astacus*, European and American mink and European and Canadian beaver (see Case studies).

The North American signal crayfish is a stronger competitor than the native noble crayfish in many ways. It is more aggressive and has greater fecundity and a faster growth rate than the native species (Westman et al. 1993, Westman 2000). The aggressiveness affects, for example, predation because the noble crayfish is excluded from refuges giving protection from the predation by European perch *Perca fluviatilis* (Söderbäck 1994). To protect the noble crayfish, the introductions of the signal crayfish is, according to the management plan by the fisheries officials (fisheries units in local agriculture offices) allowed only in southern Finland (Kalataloushallinnon rapustrategia 2000).

In Finland the American mink apparently has hindered the recovery of the European mink - the decline of which, however, started already before the population of the American species increased (Maran & Henttonen 1995). At least some degree of food competition seems to exist between the European otter *Lutra lutra* and the American mink (Clode & Macdonald 1995). The two species seem to be able to coexist, and it seems that the generalist mink is more or less excluded from the habitat of the specialist otter: the density of mink is low in dense otter areas in Finland (Kauhala 1996b).

The possible competition between white-tailed deer and roe deer *Capreolus capreolus* has also been discussed (Nummi 1988). The two species have rather similar ecological niches: the white-tail is the smallest member of the deer guild in North America, while the roe holds a similar position in Eurasia. The size difference between these deer is probably large enough to permit coexistence of the two species. The white-tailed deer appears to feed more on juniper than the roe deer (Anderson & Koivisto 1980, Helle 1980).

Likewise, the greylag goose *Anser anser* and the Canada goose seem to be able to coexist since they both have increased in the same areas during the last decades (Fabricius 1983). The situation is, however, becoming more complicated as the barnacle goose *Branta leucopsis* is also entering the Baltic Sea (Forslund & Larson 1991), and Finland as well (Hilden & Hario 1993, Väänänen & Nummi 2000).

In brackish waters with low species number, the alien invertabrates are generally thought to occupy vacant niches. The polychaete *Marenzelleria,* for example, lives deeper in the sediments than the native polychaetes and oligochaetes (Leppäkoski & Olenin 2000). The outcomes of alien invasions are hard to predict, however, since aliens may even develop a new kind of niche in their novel environment (Olenin & Leppäkoski 1999). The effects of the spiny water flea on food webs of the Baltic Sea, for example, are still unknown (see Case studies).

The competition between alien and native plants has not been studied in detail in Finland. The effect of alien plants can be enormous. The European purple loosestrife *Lythrum salicaria*, for example, is spreading at a rate of 115 000 ha per year in North America (Pimentel et al. 1999). As a result, it is changing the structure of most of the invaded wetlands. The monotypic stands of purple loosestrife have reduced the biomass

of 44 native plants and endangered wildlife that depend on them (Gaudet and Keddy 1988, Malecki et al. 1993).

In Finland parallel, though more local wetland cases include reed sweet-grass *Glyceria maxima* (first introduced in the 1760s; see Linkola 1942) with its extensive monotypic stands on shores and in shallow water of many southern lakes and rivers (e.g. Uotila 1971), and the group of several garden escapes, which has replaced natural vegetation in long sections of the river corridors of the Vantaanjoki water system in the south (e.g. Ranta 1990). The most invasive species of the group are *Aster* × *salignus*, a vigorous hybrid of two North American asters or daisies, and hedge bindweed *Calystegia sepium*. In both cases the success of the alien species is greatly promoted by water pollution, especially through higher nutrient input. Himalayan balsam, which is becoming a true nuisance of wetlands in Finland, is apparently able to outcompete its native relative touch-me-not *Impatiens noli-tangere* both by invading its habitats and by more effectively attracting insect pollinators (see Case studies). Locally in southwestern Finland, the originally North American orange balsam *Impatiens capensis* has taken over at least potential habitats of touch-me-not (for the species' history of introduction, see Krogerus 1977).

Canadian pondweed *Elodea canadensis*, which was introduced into Finland in 1884, is extremely abundant in some years in many lakes and ponds of southern and central parts of the country (for the species in general, see Weidema 2000). Observations of a lake in southwestern Finland (A. Kurtto) point to the possibility that the alien is capable of outcompeting several native submerged plants, among them one of the world's rarest aquatics *Najas tenuissima*.

Japanese rose (cf. Weidema 2000) is continuing to take over Finnish seashores, especially beaches. Its extensive, dense stands easily outcompete populations of native pioneer plants, such as sea sandwort *Honckenya peploides* and sea pea *Lathyrus japonicus*. In the future, Scots lovage *Ligusticum scoticum*, which was first discovered in Finland as late as in 1968, may prove to be a threat to native plants of stony seashores.

Alpine elder *Sambucus racemosa* has been cultivated in Finland since the Middle Ages, but it began to naturalize much later, apparently at the very end of the 19$^{th}$ century. Nowadays, the species is common and often abundant in fertile forests in the south – so abundant that it must have outcompeted at least some native bushes (A. Kurtto, pers. comm.).

## Parasites and diseases

Crayfish plague is the disease having the most detrimental effect on a native species, mainly the noble crayfish. Upon spreading in Finland at the beginning of the 20$^{th}$ century, the fungus also ruined the country's important crayfish export trade (Westman 2000). Because the plague is not fatal to the signal crayfish, the alien species can act as a reservoir for the plague and pose a chronic threat to the noble crayfish (Kalataloushallinnon rapustrategia 2000).

The introduction of white-tailed deer into Finland met with good luck because the meningeal worm *Parelaphostrongylus tenuis* did not become established in Finland (Andersson et al. 1968). The parasite is not very harmful to the white-tail but moose

*Alces alces* usually die of complications associated with the meningeal worm (Karns 1967). The population level importance of this is under discussion (Nudds 1990, Gilbert 1992). Most likely the worms did not invade Finland because they died out during the time when there were very few deer as hosts for the parasite (V. Haukisalmi, pers. comm.).

The deer-worm system represents a case where a species will gain advantage by leaving its parasite behind; this is more likely to happen with parasites with indirect life cycles (Dobson & May 1986). Similarly, the American mink has left some of its parasites behind (A. Tolonen, pers. comm.).

Barberry *Berberis vulgaris* was introduced to Finland for ornamental purposes in the late 18$^{th}$ century at the latest and has locally naturalized in the south. The species may serve as an alternate host of black rust *Puccinia graminis*, a parasite infecting grasses, also cereals. To better protect cereal fields from the parasite, the commercial cultivation of barberry is nowadays forbidden by decree in Finland (A. Kurtto, pers. comm.).

## Hybridization

Hybridization is a very difficult part of the alien species problem because it is often hard to even detect (Simberloff 1996). Concerning plants, Jalas (1961) published a survey of hybridisation cases between native and alien taxa in the wild Finnish flora. From the point of view of the native flora protection, two cases of secondary introgression must be considered highly alarming, also for the future. *Artemisia campestris* subsp. *bottnica* is endemic to the seashores of the northernmost part of the Gulf of Bothnia. On the Finnish side of the gulf, it is nowadays very difficult to find genetically pure plants of the taxon, since almost all populations are more or less affected by field wormwood *A. campestris* subsp. *campestris*, which is a newcomer in the area.

At species level, the most alarming case is that of lady's bedstraw *Galium verum*, a native of dry grassland and fertile rock outcrops. Though the species once gained much additional habitats in traditional agricultural landscapes, its genetically pure stands have become more and more rare on the Finnish mainland and larger islands. The decline is partly due to the loss of suitable habitats. However, a much more important cause is the introgression with the newcomer upright bedstraw *Galium album*, one of the most successful of the hayseed immigrants which have invaded Finland from the 19$^{th}$ century on. Evidently the introgression is leading to the genetic merging of lady's bedstraw into upright bedstraw in extensive areas; only on the outer islands does lady's bedstraw still survive as a pure species.

In addition, hybridisation has occurred between the native crab apple *Malus sylvestris*, which is a quite rare southwestern species in Finland, and the cultivated apple *M. domestica*. According to Murto (1985), the hybridization is especially threatening single trees and small groups of crab apple in the margins of its distribution.

A Finnish example of hybridization between an ancient immigrant and a native plant is the recently discovered case of celery-leaved crowfoot *Ranunculus sceleratus* and *R. reptabundus*, a rare and vulnerable species belonging to the eastern taiga. Another plant of the same element, *Stellaria fennica*, is threatened both by the regulation of water level

and hybridization with lesser stitchwort *S. graminea* on the shores of the Kemijoki river and its tributaries in the north. Lesser stitchwort is so far predominantly a relatively recent immigrant in the north.

Because local gene pools should also be protected, the introduction of southern forms of mallards *Anas platyrhynchos* for hunting purposes was not a good policy (Siekkinen & Nummi 1992), and, should no longer be practised.

Likewise, the hybridization of a domestic animal, such as the pig *Sus scrofa domesticus* and its wild relative *Sus scrofa,* should be forbidden to prevent possible genetic mixing of the wild species. In some cases, such as wiht the dog and wolf *Canis lupus,* other problems may also arise. The present legislation does not take into account these.

There is an increasing interest to grow wildflowers, both in private and public areas. This is risky since foreign seed sources may pollute the gene pools of truly indigenous or in ancient times introduced strains of the plants concerned. So far, this and other problems (Pykälä 1995) related to wildflower seed mixtures have received very little attention in Finland.

### Change in habitat structure

New ecosystem functions of alien species are mainly reported from the Baltic Sea. Examples include the mud snail *Potamopyrgus,* which is a surface deposit feeder on extremely soft bottoms, the barnacle *Balanus,* which is a suspension filter feeder in the uppermost littoral, and the polychaete *Merenzelleria,* which bioturbates deep in the sediment (Olenin & Leppäkoski 1999).

Intensive new kind of herbivory can also affect vegetation structure. At least the muskrat represents a case of novel effect on wetland plants (e.g. Danell 1996).

## Legislation

Section 43 of the Nature Conservation Act (1096/1996) restricts the introduction of non-native species into Finland. Non-native plant species without an established range in the Finnish wild are not to be planted or sown outside gardens, fields or other sites designated for special purposes, nor in natural waters, in so far as there is cause to suspect that the species may become established permanently. This shall not apply, however, to the planting or sowing of trees for the purpose of forestry.

If a non-native plant or animal species is known to spread rapidly in the wild, and there is reasonable cause to suspect that it might constitute a health hazard or have a detrimental effect on indigenous Finnish species, the Ministry of the Environment may issue any regulations as prove necessary for preventing the spread of such a species. Measures for preventing the spread of animal disease are set forth in the Animal Diseases Act.

Non-native species falling outside the purview of the Hunting Act or Fishing Act are not to be released into the wild if there is cause to suspect that the species may become established permanently.

The Plant Protection Law (1203/1994) lays down provisions to prevent the introduction into Finland of pests and diseases of plants. Additionally, plant pests and diseases which are present in Finland (introduced or native), but which are not widely distributed are controlled in order to prevent their further spread. Secondary legislation lays down detailed provisions for import, monitoring, eradication and control (containment) and is enforced by a central service (Plant Production Inspection Centre = KTTK). The main functions of this authority are the monitoring of borders and the territory of Finland in order to detect at an early stage possible introduced species which are pests or diseases of plants.

In accordance with Article 42 of the Hunting Act (615/1993; 1268/1993), wild bird or mammal species of foreign origin, as well as game species of foreign origin, cannot be imported or released in the wild without the permission of the Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry. A statement on a permit application must be requested from the Ministry of the Environment. If import or release into the wild would cause significant harm to the natural environment or animals dependent upon the same, the permit application will be refused. However, if permission is granted, the permit may contain stipulations on how importing and releasing into the natural environment are to be carried out. The same regulations apply to the bringing of an animal from the Åland islands for release into the wild in some other area of Finland.

In accordance with Article 94 of the Fishing Act (286/1982; 252/1998), fish or crayfish species (or strains or gametes of them) not found in the wild in Finland cannot be imported without the permission of the responsible ministry. The ministry may also stipulate conditions for import. If the import would cause significant harm to the natural environment or animals dependent upon the same, permission will be refused.

## Research and education

Studies concerning introduced species in Finland have been separate projects, most often directed to unravel aspects of a single species' ecology or biology (e.g. doctoral theses by Artimo 1960, Pankakoski 1986, Kauhala 1992, Tomminen 1993, Westman 2000). No general research programme has dealt with introduced species, but some studies focusing on the Baltic Sea have taken an ecosystem approach (Olenin & Leppäkoski 1999).

To gain background information for management of introduced species, Finnish researchers have organized international meetings or taken part in the risk assessment of special aspects of the problem.

In 1996, the Department of Applied Zoology (Univ. Helsinki) together with the Department of Animal Ecology (Swedish Univ. Agr. Sci.) and the OECD organized a workshop focusing on the management of introduced wildlife. Among other things, the workshop emphasized the Nordic aspect of the matter (Nummi 1996b) and

produced a set of recommendations (Sjöberg & Hokkanen 1996). The Dept. Appl. Zool. has also partizopated in OECD research programme "Biological Resource Management". The themes of the programme include the benefits and risks of introducing agents for biocontrol of insects and weeds (Hokkanen & Lynch 1995, Ehlers & Hokkanen 1996).

The Department of Environmental and Marine Biology (Åbo Akademi Univ.) has compiled a risk assessment of alien species in Nordic coastal waters in collaboration with Institut für Meereskunde, Kiel. A semi-quantitative model was developed for the assessment and applied to five representative ports from St. Petersburg, Russia to Bergen area in Norway (Gollash & Leppäkoski 1999). The Åbo Akademi also organized a Nordic post-graduate course in marine invasion biology in 1997.

To increase public awareness, the University of Helsinki (Dept. of Appl. Zool. and the Finnish Museum of Nat. Hist.) put on an exhibition ALIENS in 1999. In association with the exhibition a national symposium was organized which brought together experts in various fields of research and management and which served as training for students at the same time.

## Control

New intentional or unintentional introductions are controlled by laws and orders (see Legislation) and imported plant material is checked according to EU-legislation. Of already established organisms, active control is used in the case of the raccoon dog and especially the mink (see below) to protect other game and archipelago birds. Additionally, the hunting of Canada goose, Canadian beaver and white-tailed deer serves to prevent economic damages.

To control unintentional introductions, new methods are needed and planned for the elimination of ballast water animals (Gollasch & Leppäkoski 1999). In the case of garden plants, again, probably new provisions are needed in the legislation to prevent the introduction of new species.

An action plan is needed to protect the noble crayfish, and for studies on the control of crayfish plague and interactions between the noble crayfish and signal crayfish (Westman 2000).

Special mink eradication project in Finland

In the Archipelago National Park in southwestern Finland a mink eradication project covering a 12 x 6 km area has been carried out to protect birds (Nummelin & Högmander 1998).

In the Park, minks have been hunted with the aid of a portable air blower (normally used for leaf collection) and a dog. The dog locates the mink's hiding place, and high pressure air is blown into crevices to scare the mink out (Nummelin & Högmander 1998).

In the first year, 65 minks were taken. Since then only 5-7 minks needs to be taken yearly to control the population. The numbers of many birds species have increased after the control started. Among them are black guillemot *Cepphus grylle*, velvet scoter *Melanitta fusca*, tufted duck *Aythya fuligula*, mallard *Anas platyrhynchos* and black headed gull *Larus ridibundus*. On the other hand, common eider *Somateria mollissima*, the greylag goose *Anser anser*, common merganser *Mergus merganser* and large gulls did not respond to mink eradication (Nummelin & Högmander 1998, Nummi 1999).

## Conclusions and recommendations

Measures should be taken both in research and management:

- clear authority concerning alien species on the national level needed (actions and resources)
- a national working group on invasive aliens should be established
- more public awareness and education needed of alien species impacts (e.g. private import of aliens and eradications)
- more research of ecological effects and management of invasive alien species should be funded and encouraged: preparation of a national research programme on alien species
- legislation changes, e.g. who is responsible for intentional introductions
- new approach might be needed, e.g. in control of garden plants
- collaboration is needed on the international level and between different agreements on alien species

Acknowledgements: Kari Heliövaara, Heikki Hokkanen, Sauli Härkönen, Christian Krogell, Ralf Lopian, Ari Mannonen, Elina Nikkola, Marina von Weissenberg, Kai Westman gave valuable comments and/or important references. The contribution of Arto Kurtto and Erkki Leppäkoski on plant aliens and invertebrate aliens in the Baltic Sea, respectively, is especially acknowledged. Likewise, thanks are due Sauli Härkönen, Ralf Lopian and Marina von Weissenberg who provided the legislation texts. Terry Forster kindly checked the language.

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