



# Flying squirrel in Estonia

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KESKKONNAAMET

**KIK TOETAB**

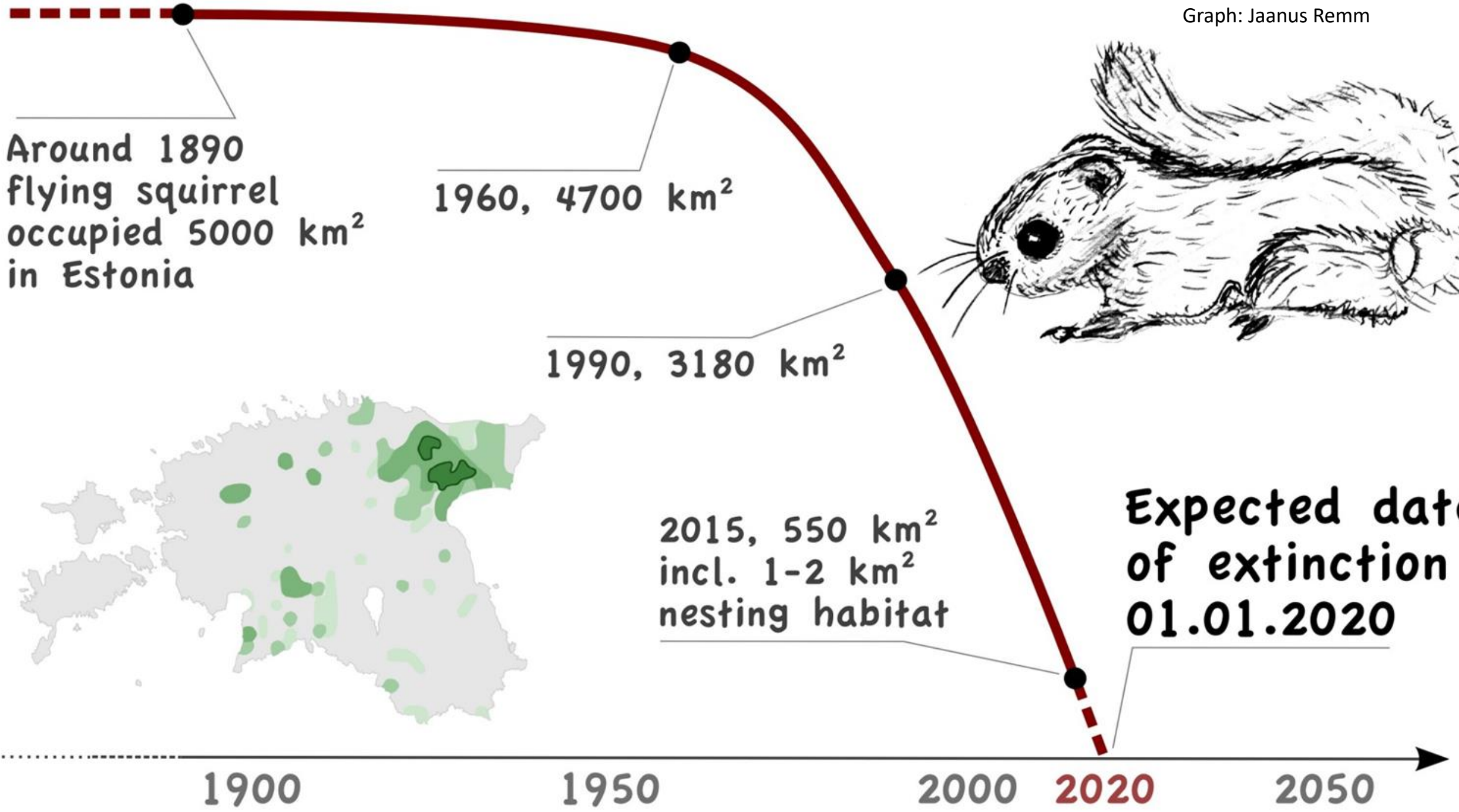
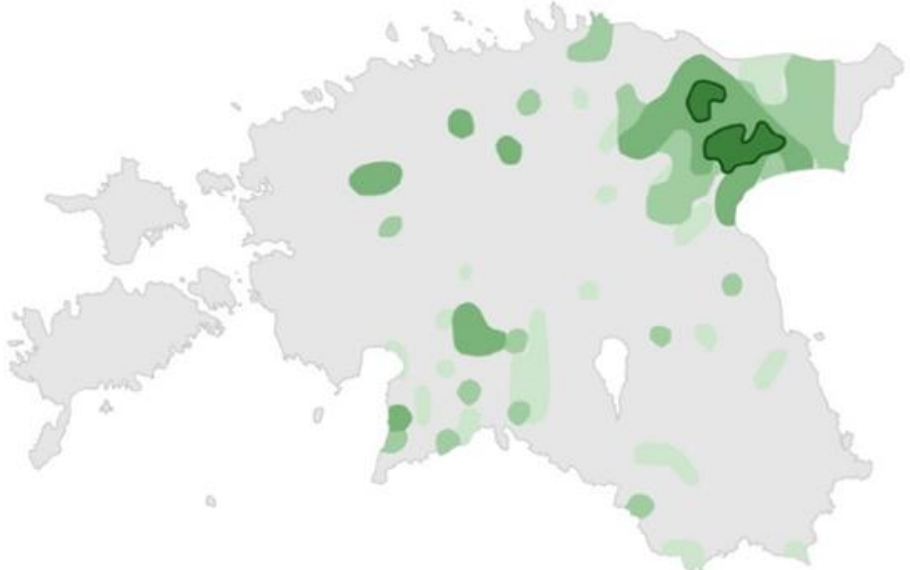
Around 1890  
flying squirrel  
occupied 5000 km<sup>2</sup>  
in Estonia

1960, 4700 km<sup>2</sup>

1990, 3180 km<sup>2</sup>

2015, 550 km<sup>2</sup>  
incl. 1-2 km<sup>2</sup>  
nesting habitat

Expected date  
of extinction  
01.01.2020



1900

1950

2000

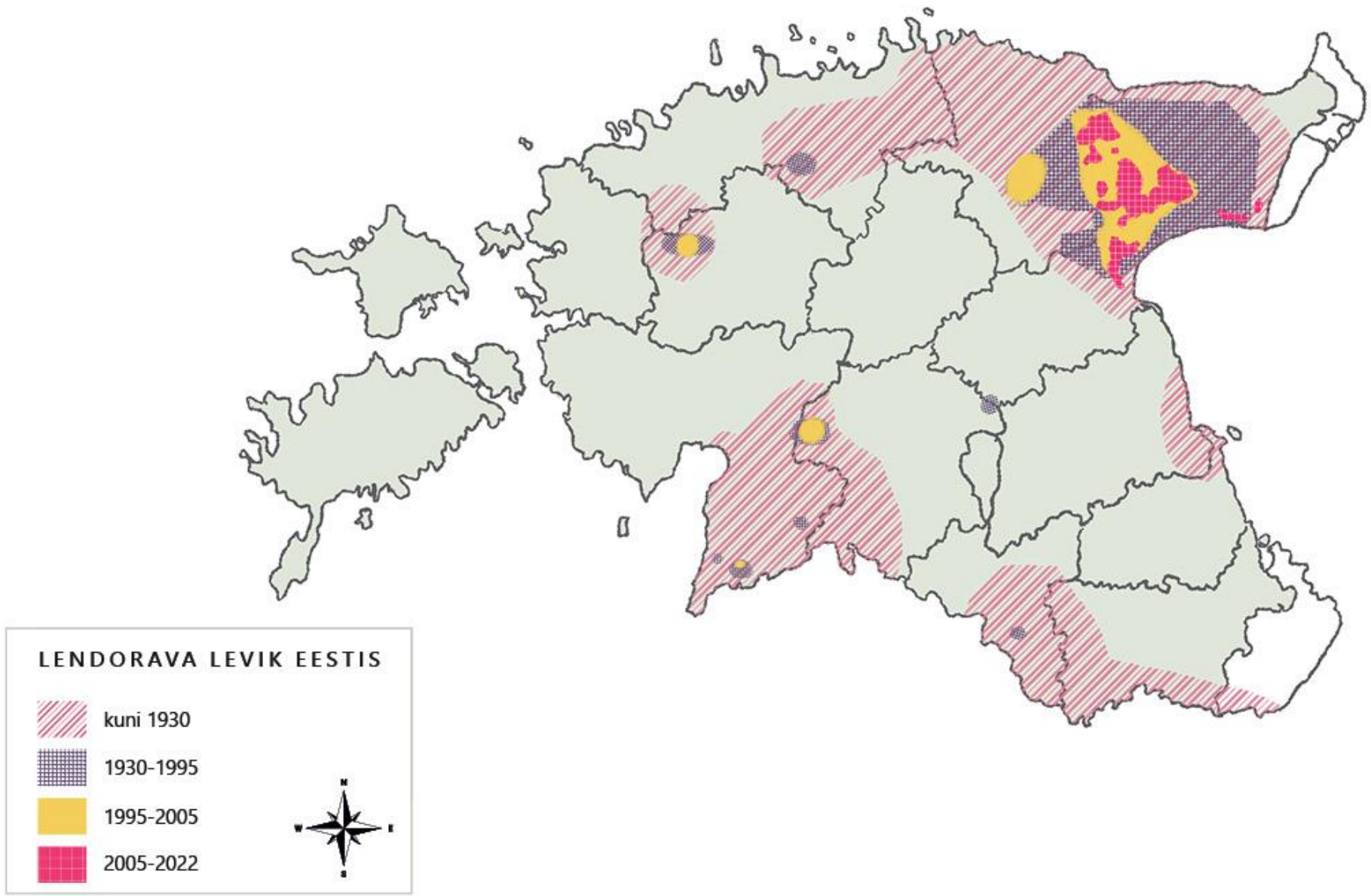
2020

2050

- Flying squirrel is classified under protection category I.
- According to the 2018 assessment, FS is among the critically endangered species on Estonia's Red List.
- All known sites receive strict protection under the Nature Conservation Act, which significantly restricts forestry activities in these areas.
- This year, we estimate the Estonian population to be approximately 400 individuals.



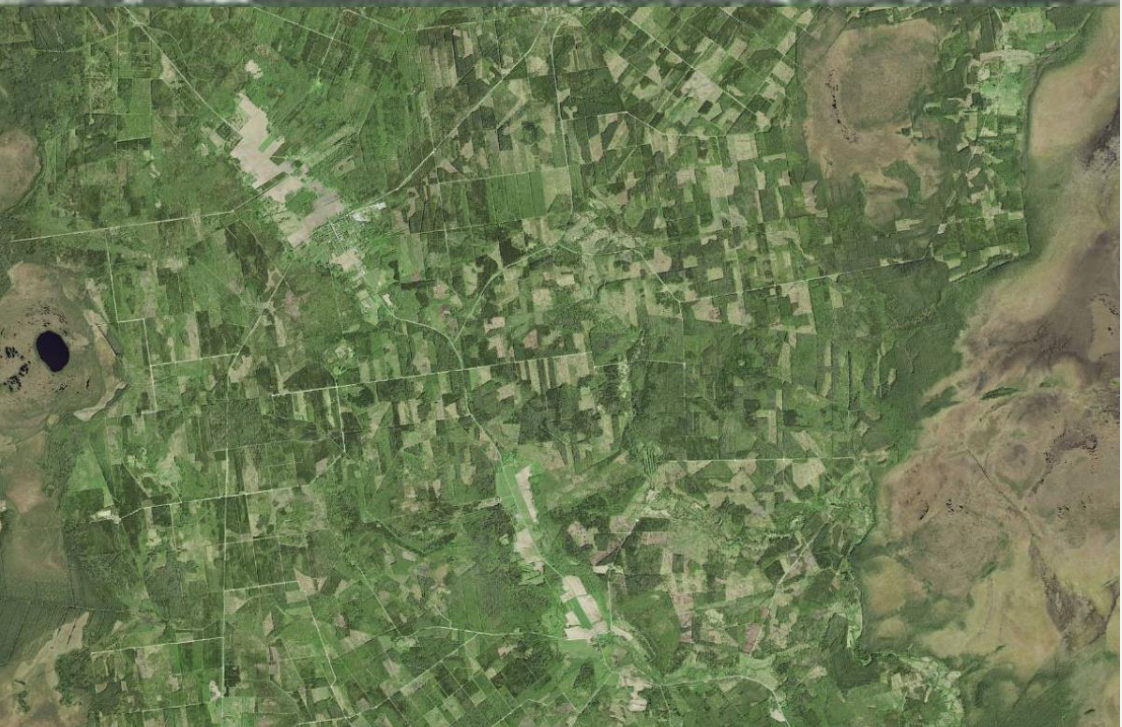
Photo: Tarmo Mikussaar



# THE NUMBER OF OCCUPIED SITES IN ESTONIA



Photo: Tarmo Mikusaar



- The primary threat to the flying squirrel in Estonia is habitat loss and fragmentation.
- In just ten years, one-third of the forests suitable for the flying squirrel in the Alutaguse region have disappeared.
- In small isolated sub-populations, predation with cumulative effects may also potentially become a significant threat.

The forests of Tudu and Oonurme areas in 1988 and 2022.



- The lack of fair compensation hinders constructive cooperation with many landowners.
- There is also a lack of personal approach and flexibility from the state in seeking solutions.



Photo: Estonian Private Forest Union

Landowners' demonstration for fair compensation for restrictions (Toompea, May 29, 2024)



- Flying squirrels must be protected in their natural range. Hundreds of other rare species share their habitat with the FS, whose survival in nature is also at risk.
- Improved data quality helps to make better decisions.
- The State Forest Management Centre is redefining nature conservation and taking more responsibility in protecting rare species.
- The flying squirrel action plan has positive long-term conservation objectives, which include the development of new solutions.