

# FORESTS AND FORESTRY IN FINLAND

July 2023

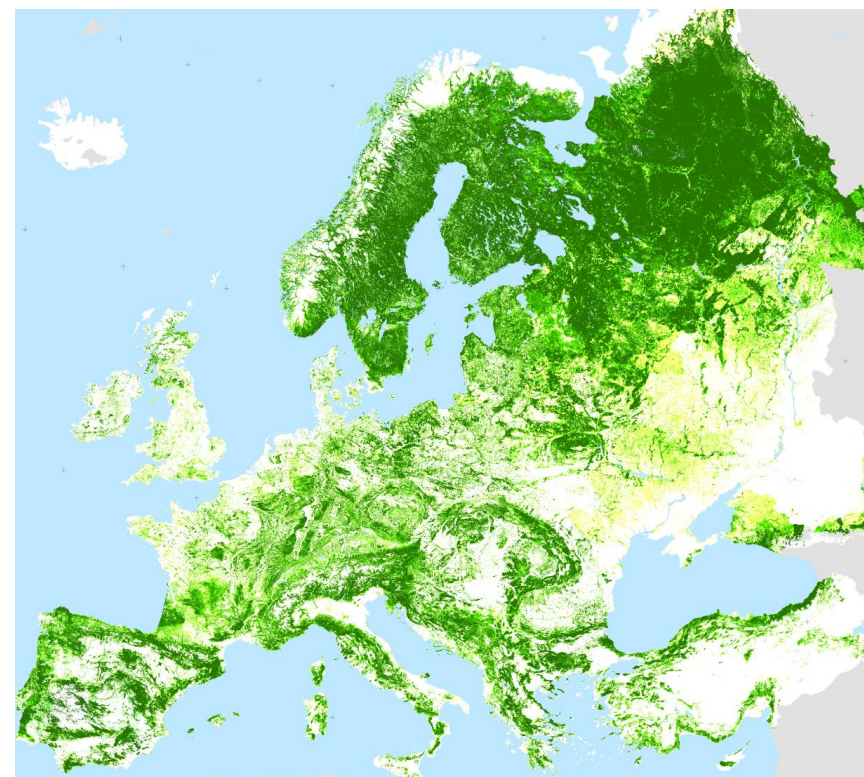


Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry of Finland

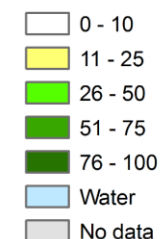
## FOREST IS ONE OF THE DOMINATING ELEMENTS OF FINNISH NATURE

Forests cover more than 75 percent of Finland's land area, which measured by the proportional share of forest land makes Finland the most forested country in Europe. In total, 20.3 million hectares of land is available for wood production in Finland.

Forests cover more than 75 percent of Finland's land area



Proportion of forest from land area (% at 1km x 1km resolution)



0 250 500 750 Kilometers

Forest cover as a percentage of land area.

Map source: Kempeneers, et al. 2011: Data fusion of different spatial resolution remote sensing images applied to forest type mapping, IEEE Transactions on Geoscience and Remote Sensing, in print.

Päivinen, et al. 2001. Combining Earth Observation Data and Forest Statistics. EFI Research Report 14. European Forest Institute, Joint Research Centre - European Commission. EUR 19911 EN. 101p.

Schuck, et al. 2002. Compilation of a calibrated European forest map derived from NOAA-AVHRR data. European Forest Institute. EFI Internal Report 13, 44p. plus Annexes.)

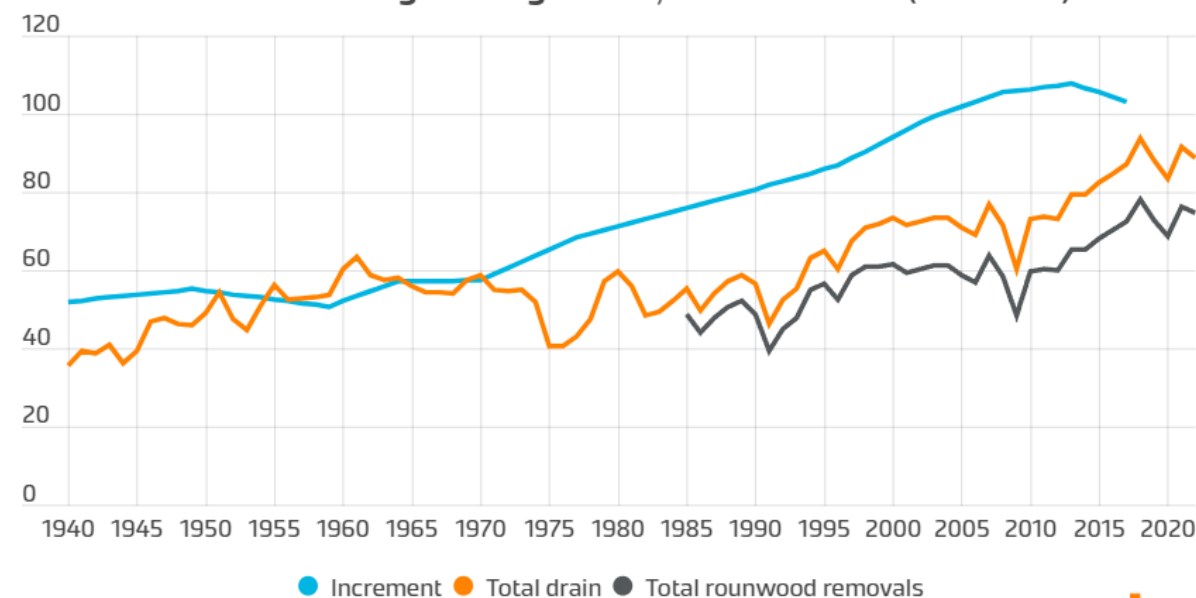
# FOREST GROWTH EXCEEDS HARVESTINGS

In 2022, about 73% of the annual increment of the growing stock was harvested.

Finland's annual increment of growing stock is 103 million cubic metres each year.

In 2022, roundwood removals totalled around 75 million cubic metres.

Total roundwood removals, increment and drain of growing stock, 1940 - 2022\* (mill. m<sup>3</sup>)



\* Preliminary

Annual increment of growing stock, roundwood removals and total drain of roundwood 1940-2022, (preliminary) million m<sup>3</sup>.

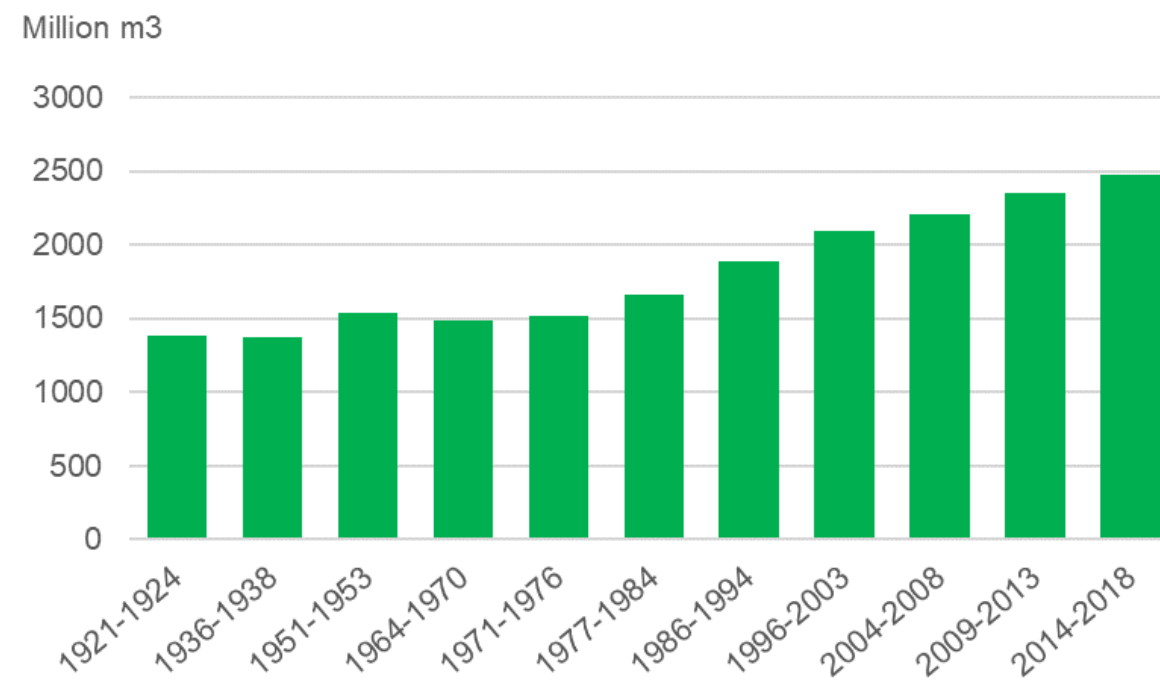
Source: Natural Resource Institute Finland

## GROWING STOCK IN FINLAND'S FORESTS HAS INCREASED OVER THE LAST 50 YEARS

Sustainable forest management ensures that the increasing trend will continue also in the future

The volume of growing stock and the state of forests have been monitored in Finland since the 1920s.

The growing stock volume in Finland's forests totals 2.5 billion cubic metres. This is 1.7 times the volume recorded in the 1920s.



Total volume of growing stock by inventory period, million m<sup>3</sup>

Source: Natural Resources Institute Finland

## HARSH NORTHERN CLIMATE SHAPES FINLAND'S BOREAL FORESTS



Only four species dominate the Finnish forests: Norway spruce, Scots pine, Downy birch and Silver birch.

Finland's climate zone is an intermediate between maritime and continental climates. While the growing conditions tend to be harsh, the Gulf stream's warming impact makes the climate in Finland relatively mild considering the country's Northern location.

A large majority of Finland is in the boreal vegetation zone but with the country stretching over 1.100km (685.5mi) North to South, the climatic conditions vary greatly across the country. In Finnish forests, the thermal growing season is restricted to few summer months due to the variation in temperatures and the amount of sunlight between the four distinct seasons.

Only four tree species naturally dominate the Finnish forests, being common throughout the country. Those are Norway spruce, Scots pine, Downy birch and Silver birch.

# IN FINLAND FORESTS ARE MANAGED WITH DIFFERENT SILVICULTURAL METHODS

The Finnish Forest Act allows the use of different silvicultural methods in forest management.

The majority of forest owners manage their forests in an even-aged manner.



Even-aged forest management



Uneven-aged forest management

The choice of a suitable silvicultural method is influenced by the structure of the forest and the characteristics of the soil, as well as the goals of the forest owner in managing the forest property.

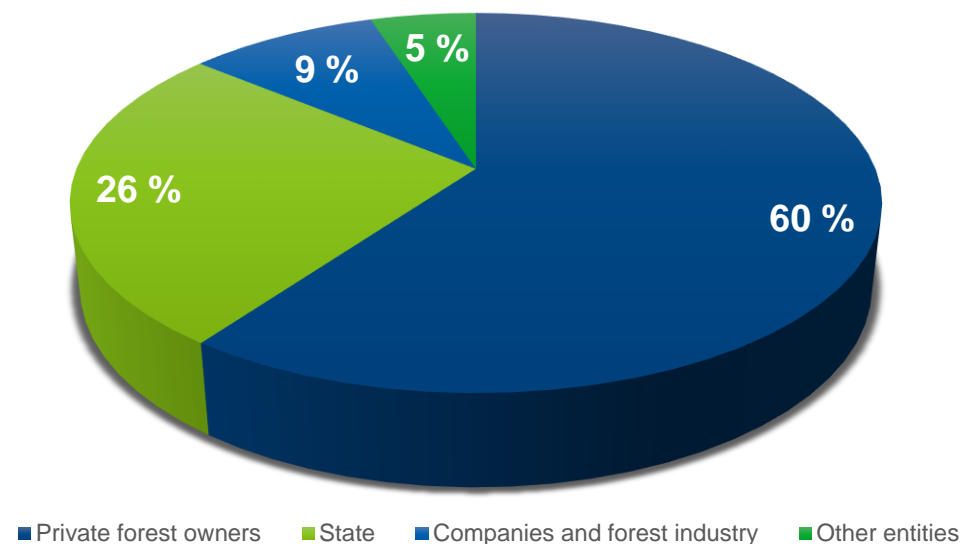
In even-aged forest management, there is a distinction between the growth phase and the regeneration phase in forest development. The timing of forest regeneration is influenced by tree species, geographical location of forest and the objectives of the forest owner.

Uneven-aged management methods create and maintain an uneven-aged forest character and forest cover. In uneven-aged felling, management actions focus on specific groups of trees, while selective felling mainly comprises the removal of single trees. Trees are removed on a small scale and the forest is both regenerated and grown simultaneously. Seedlings are born naturally.

## MOST OF THE FINNISH FORESTS ARE OWNED BY PRIVATE FOREST OWNERS

Private forest owners own 60 percent, the state owns 26 percent, companies (including forest industry) own nine percent and other entities own five percent of productive forest land. State forests are managed by the state forest company Metsähallitus.

Wood production is an important objective for many private owners. Forest industry purchases 80 percent of its domestic wood from private forest owners.



About 60 percent of productive forest land in Finland is owned by private people.

There are about 620 000 forest owners in Finland and 350 000 family forest holdings which average size is 30 hectares.

# WOOD IS USED IN MANY EVERYDAY ITEMS



Building and living



Packaging



Medicine and wellbeing



Material combinations



Energy, bio fuels and chemicals



Bio-polymers and bio-plastics



Pulp and paper

Source: Finnish Forest Industries

Read more about newest wood-based products and services:  
[Forest Bioeconomy Future catalogue](#)





# FOREST LEGISLATION AND STRATEGIES IN FINLAND

# FOREST LEGISLATION IN FINLAND

Forest legislation is the strongest policy means of safeguarding the sustainability of forestry.

Forest legislation in Finland includes several acts and regulations, such as the Forest Act, the Act on the Financing of Sustainable Forestry, and the Act on the Finnish Forestry Centre, the Act on Metsähallitus and the Forest Management Association Act.

The Forest Act is the main law regulating the use of managed forests. Its implementation is monitored by the Finnish Forest Centre.



Laws and regulations safeguard forests and sustainable forest management.

## FOREST ACT

The first Forest Act was passed in 1886, prohibiting the destruction of forests and striving to ensure that new stands would be generated after loggings.

The current Forest Act came into force in 1997.

The latest reform of Forest Act came into force in 2015, increasing the freedom of choice and responsibility for forest owners in managing their own forest property.

Finland has a forest regeneration obligation which is defined in the Forest Act and applies to all forest owners.

The purpose of the Forest Act is to promote economically, ecologically and socially sustainable forest management in order that the forests produce a good output in a sustainable way while their biological diversity is being preserved.

The Forest Act sets standards for wood harvesting, forest regeneration and safeguarding the biodiversity of forests. On this basis, forest owners make detailed forest management decisions in accordance with their objectives.

In addition to the Forest Act, the forest management in Finland is also regulated, for example, by the Government Decree on Sustainable Management of Forests and by the Forest Damages Prevention Act. Also environmental legislation, such as the Nature Conservation Act, has implications on forestry.

## FOREST INVENTORIES PROVIDE A GREAT AMOUNT OF INFORMATION ABOUT FOREST RESOURCES IN FINLAND



In Finland, forest inventories have been conducted every five to ten years since the 1920s.

The national forest inventories form a unique time series of the development of Finnish forests.

Forest inventory gathers information on the volume, growth and quality of forests. The inventory also provides information on the land use, state of health and diversity of forests. In addition, it is used to investigate changes in carbon sequestration and carbon stocks in forests.

Two forest inventories systems are used in Finland:

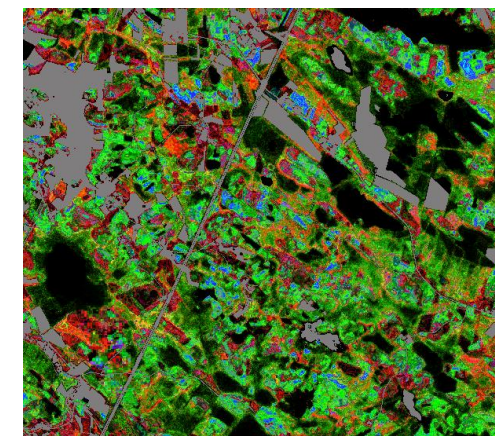
- The National Forest Inventory (NFI) is a monitoring system providing information about forest resources in Finland. This type of inventory is conducted by Natural Resource Institute Finland.
- The Finnish Forest Centre (Metsäkeskus) collects forest data and updates it with growth calculations and information on management activities.

In addition, the Finnish Forest Centre provides an eService for forest owners. They can directly find information about their properties on the metsään.fi portal. This portal helps forest owners to conduct their business.

# FOREST INVENTORIES PROVIDE DATA FOR DECISION MAKING

Forest inventory results are widely used:

- as a basis for national and international forest policy making
- as a basic knowledge of regional and national forest planning
- to support investment decisions in the forest industry
- for forestry sustainability assessment and forest certification
- in evaluating carbon sinks and greenhouse gas emissions
- as a research data



Source: Natural Resource Institute Finland

# IMPORTANT STRATEGIES

## **The National Forest Strategy 2035**

The strategy aims for the growth of welfare and overall sustainability. It takes into account e.g. climate sustainability and the safeguarding of forest biodiversity.

➤ [National Forest Strategy - Maa- ja metsätalousministeriö \(mmm.fi\)](https://www.mmm.fi)

## **The Finnish Bioeconomy Strategy**

The Finnish Bioeconomy Strategy aims to generate new economic growth and new jobs from an increase in the bioeconomy business and from high added value products and services while securing the operating conditions for the nature's ecosystems.

➤ [Finnish Bioeconomy Strategy](https://www.mmm.fi)

## **Forest biodiversity programme for southern Finland, METSO**

The METSO Programme 2008–2025 aims to halt the ongoing decline in the biodiversity of forest habitats and species, and to establish at least stable or preferably favorable trends in Southern Finland's forest ecosystems.

➤ [Forest Biodiversity Programme for Southern Finland \(METSO\) - Maa- ja metsätalousministeriö \(mmm.fi\)](https://www.mmm.fi)

## **Climate plan for the land use sector**

The climate plan for the land use sector defines the means to reduce climate emissions from the land use sector and to strengthen carbon sinks and carbon stocks.

➤ [Climate plan for the land use sector - Maa- ja metsätalousministeriö \(mmm.fi\)](https://www.mmm.fi)

## **Energy and climate strategy**

The Energy and Climate Strategy contributes to Finland's objective of increasing the share of renewable energy to more than 50% of the final consumption by 2030, increasing energy self-sufficiency to more than 55%, halving the domestic use of oil imported into Finland and increasing the share of renewable fuels.

➤ [Energy and climate strategy - Ministry of Economic Affairs and Employment \(tem.fi\)](https://www.tem.fi)

## **Strategic programme to promote a circular economy**

The aim is to transform the economy into one that is based on the principles of circular economy by 2035.

➤ [Strategic programme to promote a circular economy - Ministry of the Environment \(ym.fi\)](https://www.ym.fi)



MORE INFORMATION:  
[mmm.fi/en/frontpage](http://mmm.fi/en/frontpage)



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