the sections where the current state and problems of conserving the last surviving large areas of pristine forest are considered. These areas are the habitation centres and sources of native taiga fauna. Waterside protection zones, which act as ecological corridors for animals, are indicated and described. They keep populations continuous by maintaining links between PAs and other intact or relatively undisturbed pieces of the taiga biome. Thus, populations of specialized animal species can live sustainably. Of particular interest in terms of preventing fragmentation of the species' range are several territories in Eastern Fennoscandia: "Green Belt" and three taiga "corridors" – north, mid-, and south-taiga ones (Kurhinen et al. 2009; Gromtsev et al. 2009). Surveys of these territories with view to assessing their value for conservation of the species diversity and populations of taiga animals are still underway.

GREEN RING OF FENNOSCANDIA

A.N. Gromtsev[1], A. Kryshen[2], J.P. Kurhinen[3], A. Titov[2]

[1]Forest Research Institute, Karelian Research Centre, Russian Academy of Science, Petrozavodsk, Russia;
[2] Karelian Research Centre, Russian Academy of Science, Petrozavodsk, Russia;
[3]Finnish Game and Fisheries Research Institute, Viikinkaari, 4, P.O. Box, Helsinki, Finland

Available information about the system of protected areas (PAs) that has formed in the north of Europe is summarized. The backbone of the system is large PAs along the Russian-Norwegian and Russian-Finnish borders – so-called Green Belt of Fennoscandia (Titov et al., 1995; Titov et al., 2009), and the equally important green belt along the eastern and south-eastern boundary between Fennoscandia and the

Russian Plain (Titov et al., 2010). The two belts converge in the north and in the south forming a kind of the "Green Ring of Fennoscandia", which creates the framework of the nature conservation system in the north of Europe. To enhance the strength of the system one should maintain the existing waterside protection buffers, which connect the PAs in a natural way, and promote latitudinal connectivity of the PAs, focusing primarily on boreal corridors (Lindèn et al., 2002; Kurhinen et al., 2009) which connect the Fennoscandian and the East-European taiga biomes.

DEVELOPMENT OF THE NUMBER OF INDIVIDUALS IN THE KUHMO-KAMENNOJEOZERO SUBPOPULATION OF THE WILD FOREST REINDEER (*RANGIFER TARANDUS FENNICUS* LÖNNB.) FROM 1950´s TO 2010 WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO THE PASSED DECADE

K. Heikura[1], **J. Tuomivaara**[2]

[1]MSc., Curator (retired) of *the Zool. Mus. Univ. Oulu, Finland;*
[2]MSc., Research scientist at *Finnish Game and Fisheries Research Institute, Oulu Game and Fisheries Research, Finland*

The wild forest reindeer was hunted to extinction in Finland in the early 20th century. The subspecies survived in the area of the Russian Karelia, from where the reindeer returned to Finland in the 1940s through the eastern parts of Kuhmo. During the 1960s a permanent, calving reindeer population was established in the Kainuu region, the population being common with Kostomuksha in the Republic of Karelia (the Kuhmo-Kamennojeozero subpopulation). In the 1970s the population grew steadily and in the early 1980s consisted of over 500 animals. In the 1980s the growth almost halted and the population