



## MONITORING OF MUSKRAT *ONDATRA ZIBETHICA* L. ON THE KOLA PENINSULA

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Materials on acclimatization of muskrat *Ondatra zibethica* L. on the Kola Peninsula (1931 -2009) are presented. The species was monitored in the Pasvik international reserve and the Lapland biosphere reserve. Muskrat was first introduced in Murmansk Region by releasing three groups of animals in the Lapland reserve territory: from Moscow Region (38 ind., 1931), from Solovetsky Archipelago (45 ind., 1932) and from Finland (86 ind., 1932). In 1932-1936, 530 muskrats were released on the Umba River. The species colonized the north-west of the region in 1950-1969. In 1980 already, muskrat was sighted outside Murmansk Region, on the Paz River in Norway. After regulation by a series of hydropower plants, this river changed its trophic status, and muskrat colonized its banks reaching an average abundance index of 3.9 ind./km (lim 0.8 - 9.2) of the waterfront. According to data from Lapland reserve, muskrat abundance is rather low – 0.8-1.1 ind./km of the waterfront on average. Current species range covers the whole of Murmansk Region, the species is firmly settled in the regional fauna, occupying all suitable habitats in river mouths and shallow parts of lakes. Muskrat abundance today is low. No clear cycles can be discerned in the dynamics of muskrat numbers, the period between population decline years lasts 4 - 7 years.

