GreenInCities Helsinki Longinojanpuisto nature survey 2025 Summary

2026

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101139730 — HORIZON-MISS-2023-CLIMA-CITIES-01

Contents

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1. Summary

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Summary

Based on nature surveys carried out in the summer of 2025, the Longinojanpuisto park and Longinoja watercourse with their surroundings, located in Malmi, Helsinki, are, in terms of their natural values, largely average and, in many respects, influenced by human activity.

The most valuable sites are located in the western part of the survey area, where the watercourse is surrounded by a variety herb-rich forest habitats.

The Longinoja watercourse itself is classified as an endangered habitat, but its representativeness and degree of natural state vary across sections. The western section was found to have more diverse aquatic vegetation and other species than the eastern section of the park. In the park section, the area surrounding the watercourse consists of open meadows and fields, where a pollinator survey identified bee and butterfly species with the conservation status of 'near threatened' (NT), as well as rare and locally occurring bee and butterfly species. During the pollinator survey, a Siberian winter damselfly, a species strictly protected under the EU Habitats Directive, was also observed in the area.

Measures for increasing the biodiversity in the area of the Longinojanpuisto park and the Longinoja watercourse were assessed in connection with the survey. The biodiversity of the area along the watercourse can be enhanced, for example, by promoting the growth of trees and vegetation. The survey identified, for example, a number of harmful invasive alien plant species that must be taken into account in the management and development of the area. Developing a flying squirrel corridor along the watercourse can also benefit other nature in the area, for example by providing shade along the watercourse.

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2. Ecological status

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Habitats

The habitats in the Longinojanpuisto park do not meet the criteria of the LuTU assessment very well. Of the 52 habitats in total, only three compartments (compartments 14, 26 and 51) could be classified as habitats meeting the criteria. Of these, two, compartments 26 and 51 (Figure 2-5 and Figure 2-6), were classified **as mesic, eutrophic herb-rich forests** (conservation status EN), and one, compartment 14, **as riparian shrub** (conservation status LC). However, in their current state, the compartments are not particularly representative.

All other compartments were classified on a case-by-case basis, drawing on the LuTU classification system and the management method classification provided as baseline data**, into various types of meadow and old meadow and field compartments at different stages of reforestation succession in herb-rich forest areas**. In addition, one herb-rich forest compartment, compartment 10 (Figure 2-7), was demarcated on the north-eastern edge of the area. However, no precise classification was carried out due to the significant influence of human activity and abundant meadow vegetation in the area. As they grow and develop, all the forest compartments in the area will, due to the soil's high nutrient content and moisture conditions, transform into herb-rich forests that have the potential to become of high representative value.

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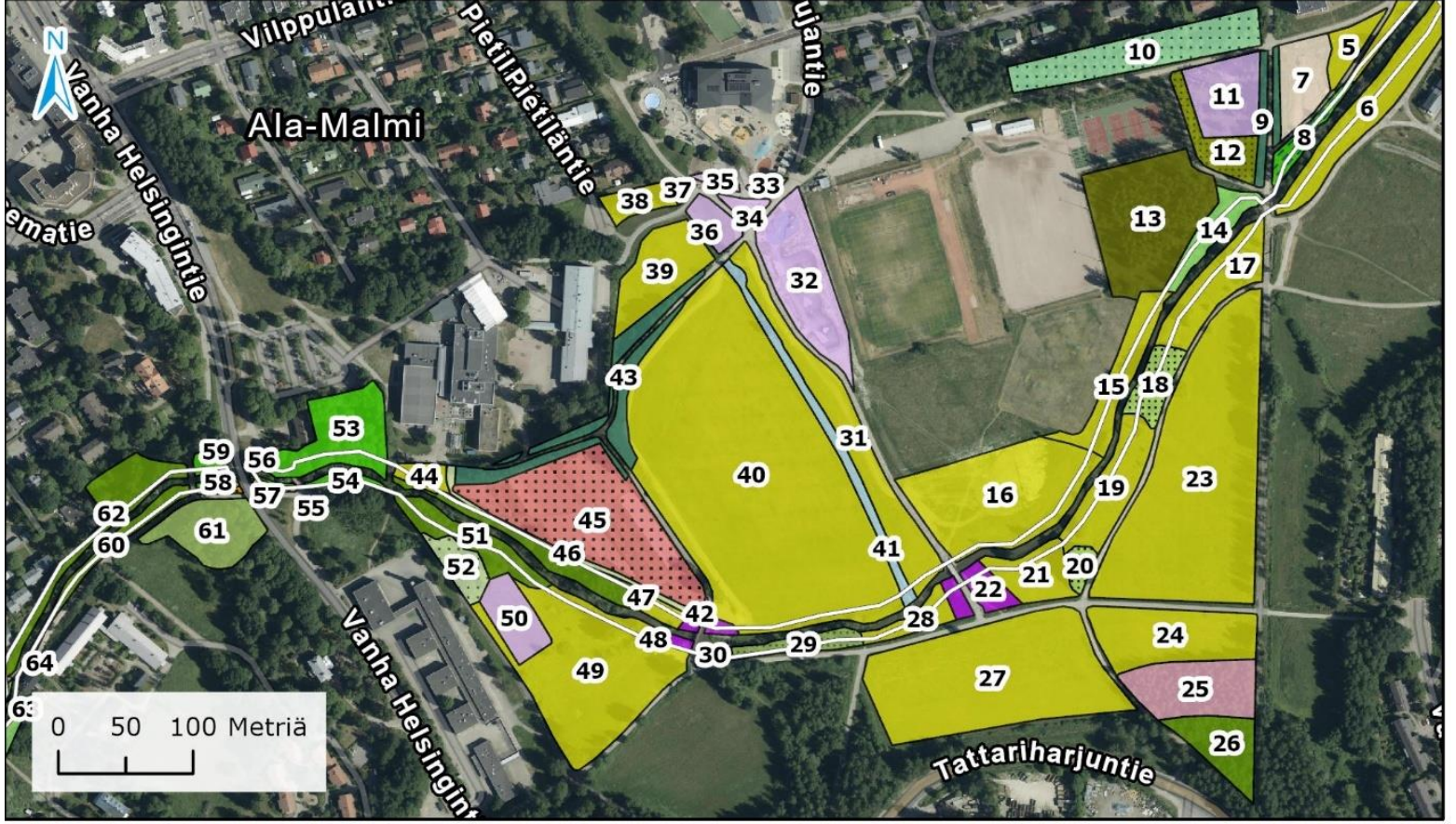
Habitats



Luontotyypit

- Jokien rantapensaikot (LuTU)
- Tuore keskiravinteinen lehto (LuTU)
- Tuore runsasravinteinen lehto (LuTU)
- Vaahteralehto (LuTU)
- Vuorijalavalehto (LuTU)
- Avoin puisto (RyTY)
- Ruderaatti (RyTY)
- Viljelypalsta (RyTY)
- Kukkaistutus (RyTY)
- Tien reunan puustoinen vyöhyke (RyTY)
- Pengeralue (RyTY)
- Heinäniitty
- Metsitetty pelto
- Metsittynyt niitty
- Metsittynyt ruohoniitty
- Metsittyvä niitty
- Metsittyvä suurruohoalue
- Oja
- Pienruohovaltainen niitty
- Ruohoniitty
- Kulttuurivaikutteinen lehto
- Metsittyvä pelto
- Kulunut alue
- Luonnonsuojelualueohjelman rajaus

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Habitats in the built environment

Habitats in the built environment (RyTy) is a new classification system for urban environments. It aims to describe the biodiversity and natural values of environments influenced by human activity. The RyTy classification is currently being developed, and the Longinojanpuisto park has been one of the assessment sites where the new method has been piloted.

The ecological status of the RyTy habitats was assessed on a scale of 0.1 to 1. The value of the ecological status varied between the different sections of the survey area. In the area of the Longinojanpuisto park, the ecological status of the RyTy compartments is, on average, higher — the ecological status of the majority of the park's RyTy compartments is 'moderate', scoring 0.6 or 0.7, due to the diversity of plant species and low number of invasive alien species in the compartments. Two compartments scored the highest ecological status in the area: the ruderal vegetation in the north-east corner, whose structural characteristics and plant species met the criteria for high ecological status, and the meadow compartment containing a disc golf course.

Based on its varied structural characteristics, the meadow compartment was assigned a higher ecological status class than other newly-established meadows. The lowest scores were given to the two newly-established meadow compartments in the south-western corner of the survey area. Despite the diverse range of species, the ecological status scores were lowered by the presence of invasive alien species in the area, found in the compartments either as multiple species or in large numbers. The open, grassy park area next to the Filpuksenpuisto park, by the yard of the daycare centre, also received a low score. Compared to the other compartments, the score was lowered by the area's east-west orientation. (A south-south-west orientation yields a higher score.)

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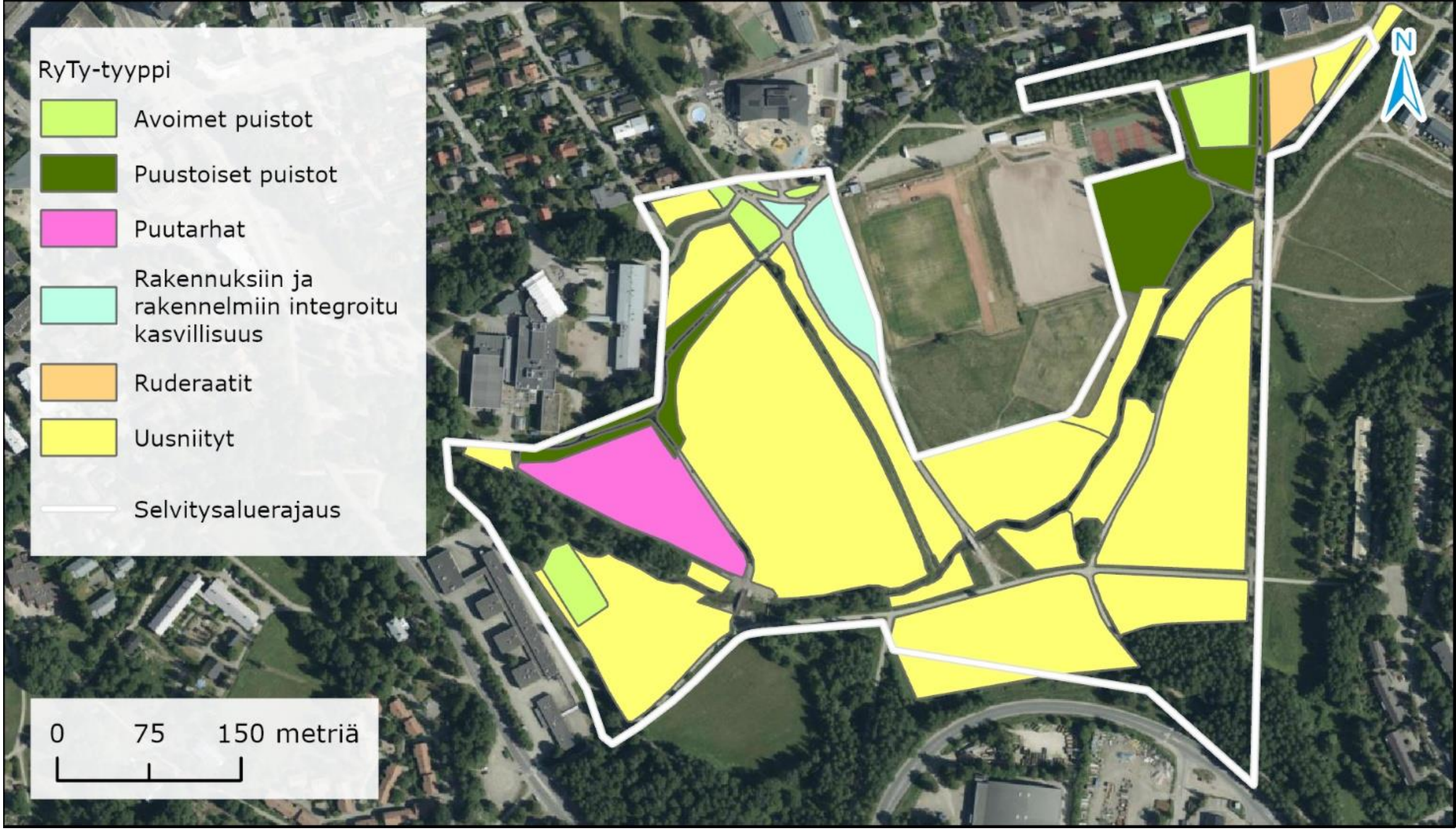

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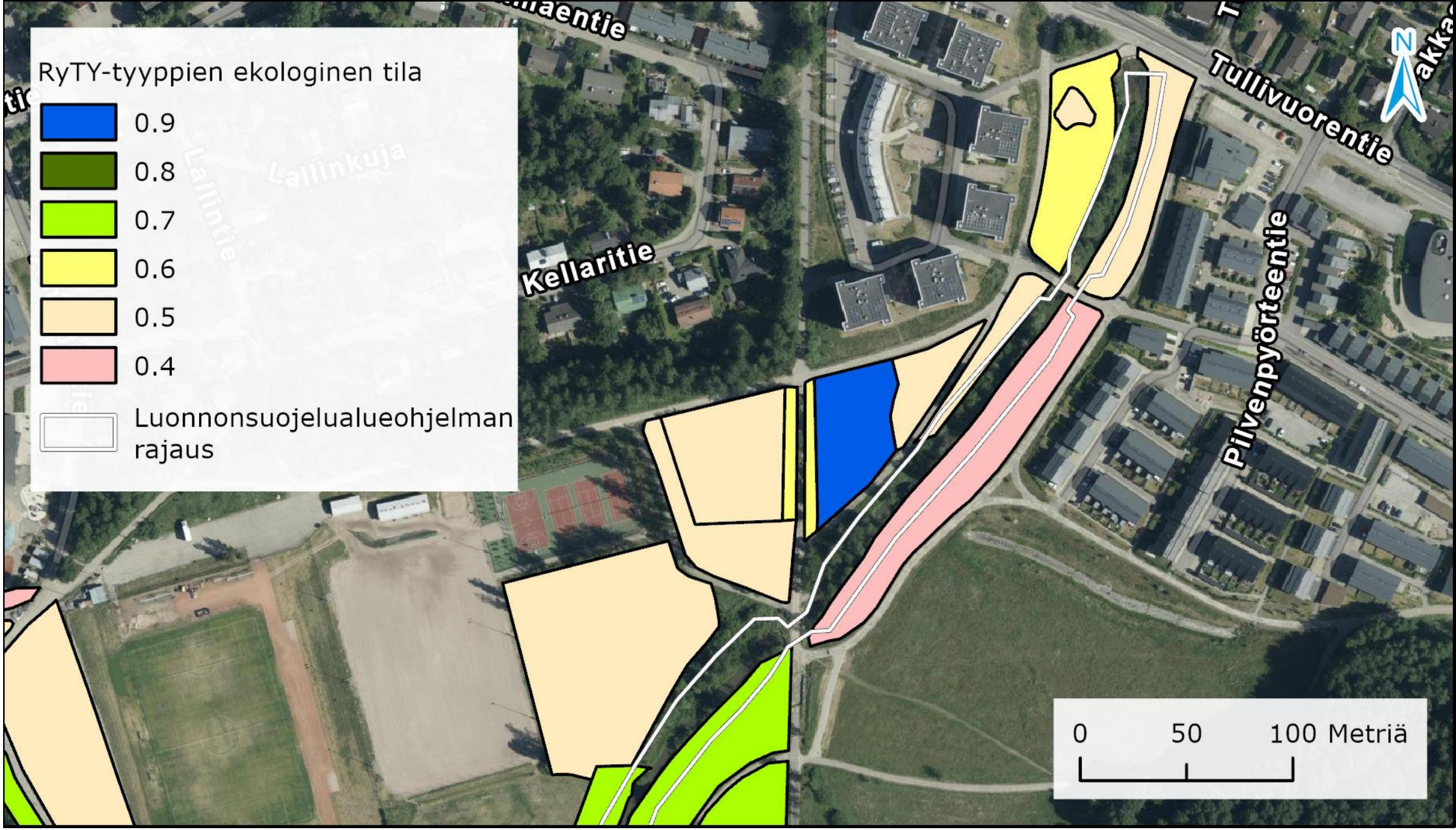

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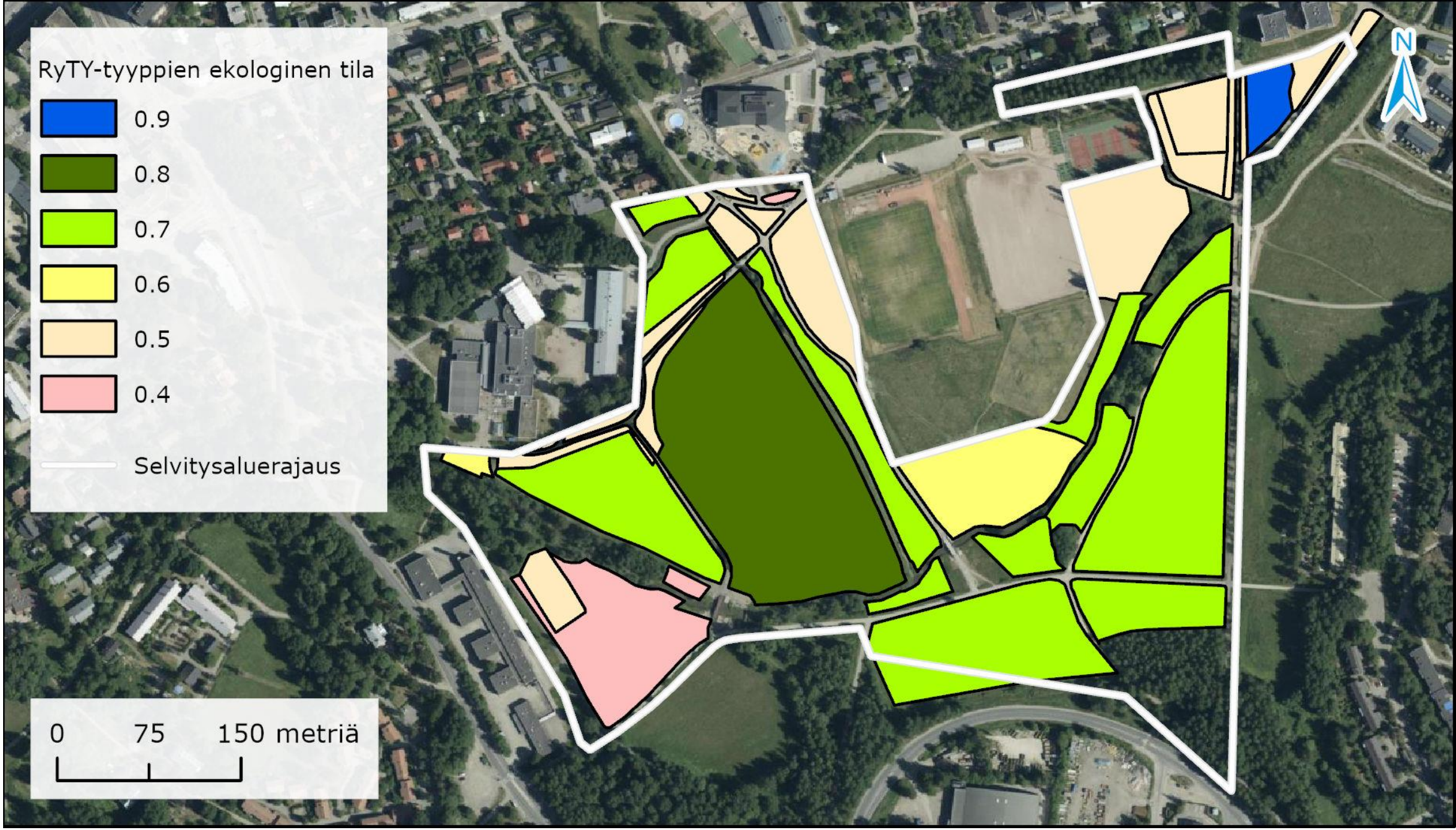

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Insect count

Photograph Jani Järvi

Based on the survey, the Longinojanpuisto park provides a habitat for dozens of pollinator species found in meadows, including some that are rare or near threatened. The flower-rich meadow sections, verges and planted areas, as well as the willows along the ditches, provide nectar for adult pollinators, whereas the locally overgrown willow thickets, dead standing trees and rotten trees in the park woodlands, and areas of bare ground on path verges and elsewhere, provide nesting sites for pollinators. The meadows are also home to an abundance of plants that serve as food sources for butterfly caterpillars, for example, while the slow-flowing waters of the Longinoja watercourse provide a habitat for the larvae of hoverfly species that thrive in water.

There are a few dry, sun-baked slopes in the park with exposed mineral soil that could provide nesting sites for species thriving in such habitats. However, overall, the park is quite diverse in terms of requirements for pollinator reproduction. As for flowering plants that are important for pollinators, the Longinojanpuisto park has many good sources of nectar and pollen, including bird's foot trefoil, plume thistles, welted thistles, knapweeds, clovers, woundworts, dead-nettles, hemp-nettles, meadow vetchling, vetches, scentless mayweed, yarrow and common tansy. It is important to preserve and increase the number of these plant species through park management in order to support pollinators.

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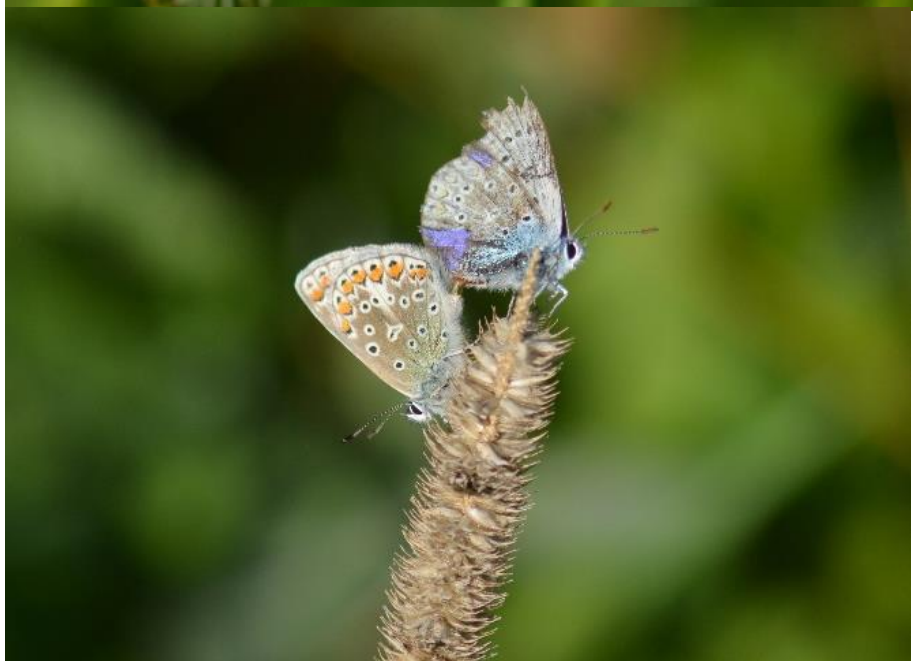
Insect count

The strictly protected Siberian winter damselfly, which was discovered by chance during the pollinator survey, is a testament to the natural values of the Longinoja watercourse. To take better account of the Siberian winter damselfly in the Longinojanpuisto park, and particularly in the area surrounding the ditch, the presence of the species in the area should be investigated separately if any land-use changes were to be made in the ditch environment. However, Siberian winter damselfly is a challenging species to study, as it overwinters as an adult and takes to the air early in the spring, as soon as the sun begins to warm the air. Consequently, it is often difficult to spot it at exactly the right time. The species can be found in its reproduction areas in early summer and, in the autumn, in the vicinity of these areas as well as in the places where it overwinters.



Photograph Jani Järvi

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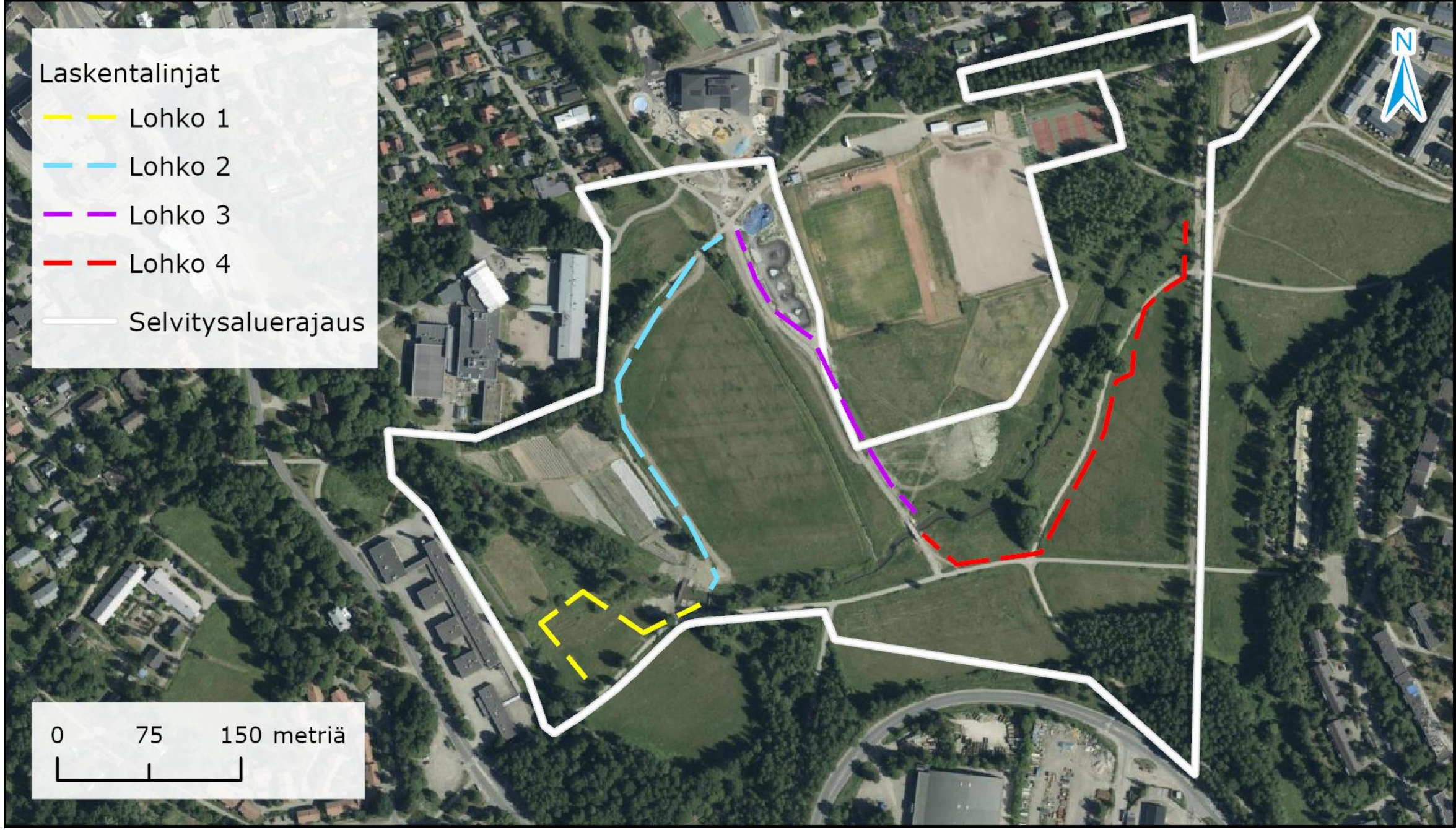

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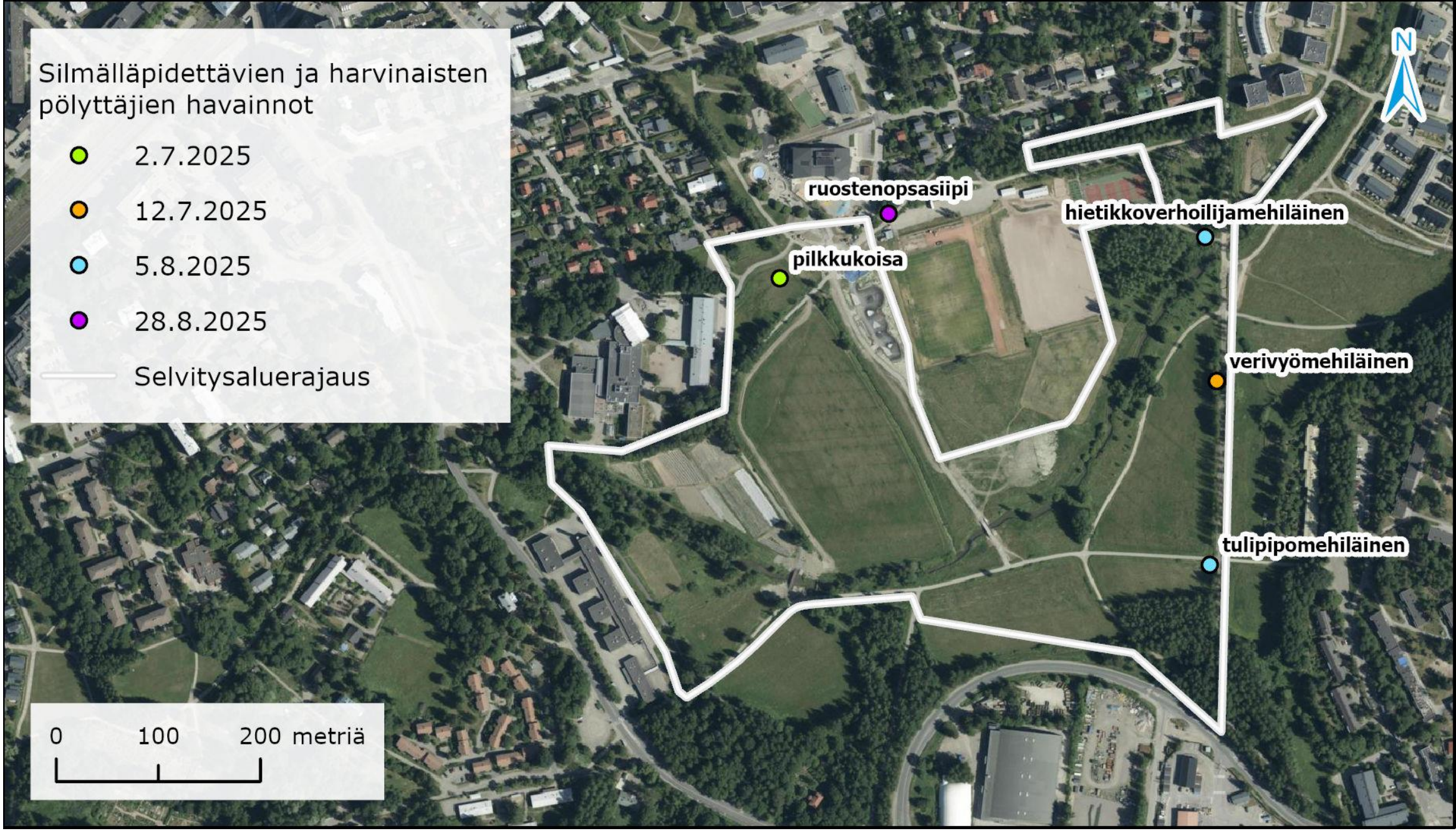

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Endangered plant species of conservation concern

In the survey area, fly honeysuckle (*Lonicera xylosteum*), which is included in the City of Helsinki's list of species of conservation concern, was observed in habitat compartments 62, 78 and 79. However, it is difficult to say with certainty whether the fly honeysuckles in these compartments are naturally occurring specimens indicative of herb-rich forest in the area, or whether they are specimens influenced by human activity, spread from planted areas. In compartment 79 in particular, the fly honeysuckle was so abundant that it is reasonable to assume it had spread there from the adjacent allotment.

Apart from that, two other plant species of conservation concern were observed. In habitat compartments 6 and 63, there were individual specimens of dame's rocket (*Hesperis matronalis*), likely to have spread from planted areas. In addition, south of compartment 1, two highly toxic hemlocks (*Conium maculatum*) were found growing alongside the footpath crossing the Longinoja watercourse.

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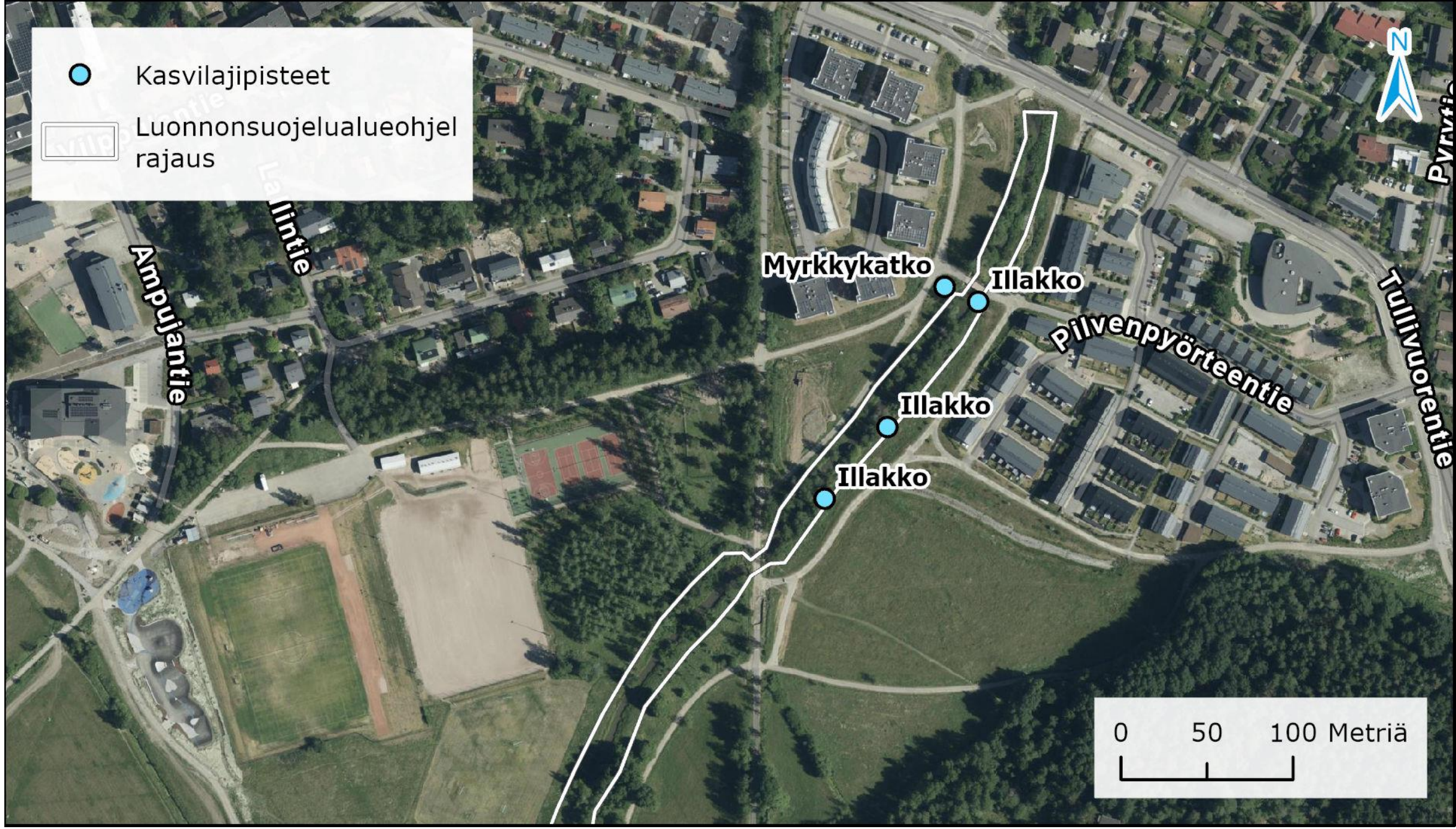

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3. Invasive alien species

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Invasive alien species in the Longinojanpuisto park

In the summer 2025 surveys, four harmful alien species according to the list of alien species of the Alien Species Decree were observed in the Longinoja Park area: giant balsam, Canadian whip, lupine and dog rose. In addition, alien species outside the species list and garden escapees were observed in the park area, including the common elder and the common herb species that is widely distributed south of the cultivated field area in the Longinoja Park area. 2.5.4

Natural mulch materials are used to combat harmful alien plant species wherever possible. For example, lake reed pulp has been found to effectively combat giant balsam, but the application of mulch has not been sufficient to combat tattare and bearberry. It should also be noted in Longinoja Park that covering materials are not necessarily the best option for the giant balsam forests growing on the Longinoja embankment, as the covering easily runs off on sloping surfaces and near flowing water.

In the Longinoja Park area, measures to control alien species must be planned for each plant species. Recommended measures include intensive mowing or digging up alien plant species. Successful control of alien species is particularly important for securing the habitat of the Longinoja nature reserve to be established.

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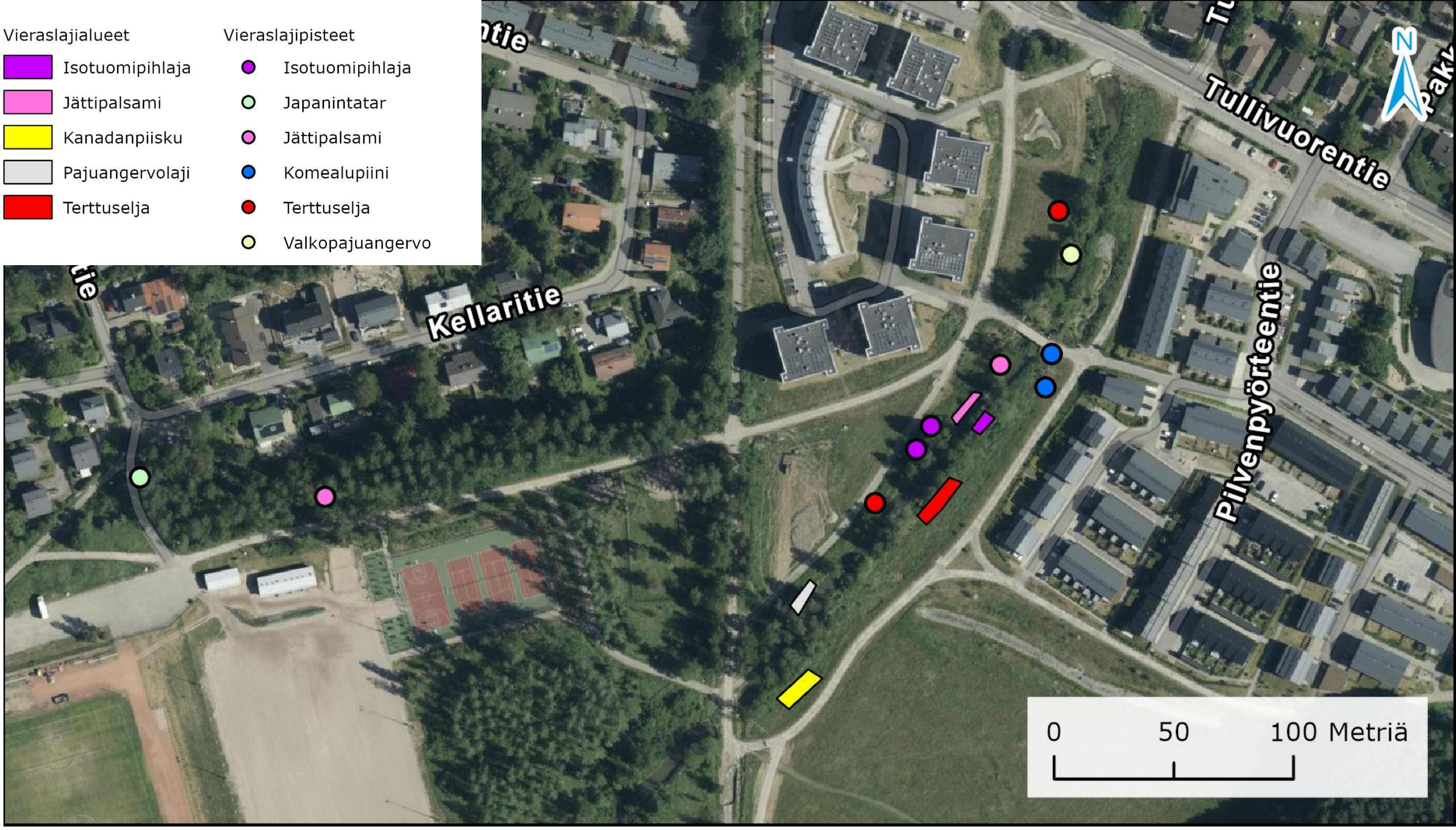
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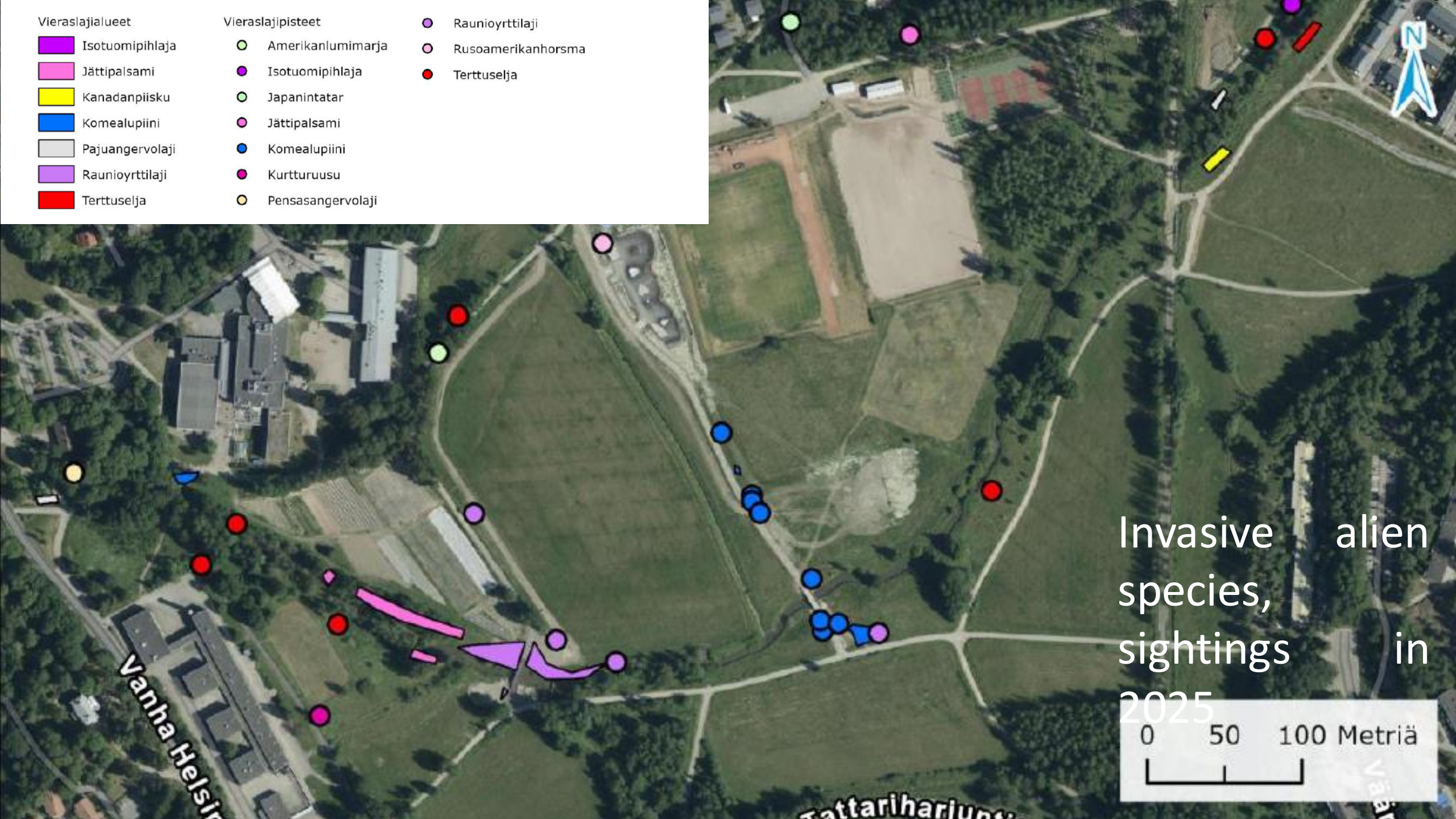
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Invasive alien species, sightings in 2025
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4. Protected animal species

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Protected animal species

The area surrounding the Longinojanpuisto park is home to several protected species.

Species strictly protected under the EU Habitats Directive

- Siberian winter damselfly
- Otter
- Flying squirrel

Protected under the Nature Conservation Act

- Skylark, near threatened, protected
- Brown trout, endangered, protected

Photograph Theo Therkev

Photograph Christels/Pixnio

Photograph Vastavalo

Photograph Andreas Thomas Hein

Photograph Samueles

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The ecological niches required by animals in the park

Photograph Theo Therkev

Skylark

Nests in open meadows and fields

Photograph Andreas Thomas Hein

Siberian winter damselfly

Reproduces in the reeds of slow-flowing waters, lives in open meadows

Photograph Samueles

Brown trout

Reproduces in the gravel beds of streams

Photograph Christels/Pixnio

Otter, large territory, fishes in streams

Photograph Vastavalo

Flying squirrel, nests in hollows made by woodpeckers, moves along branches, feeding on the buds and leaves of deciduous trees

Landscape photographs by Anu Kiiskinen

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