

The Wolf in Sweden



Status Report 2025–2026

EU directive, scientific facts and political decisions
A presentation for European nature protection organisations

The Foundation: Sweden's View on Wildlife and the Wolf

- Swedish has very anthropocentric view on the wildlife– wild animals are not seen as individuals with an intrinsic value.
- Sweden has approximately 230,000 hunters (2,3%) The hunting lobby dominates the narrative on wildlife management and are supported by the government with + 6M€ yearly
- Alternative solutions – protection, ecotourism, strictly protected Nature reserves – are systematically opposed by the hunting lobby.
- The positive cascade effects of predators on ecosystems are never included in management decisions.
- Politicians optimises short-term symbolic politics, not long-term ecological health.

The Foundation: Sweden's View on Wildlife and the Wolf

- Many influential politicians are hunters
- Many non-urban areas of Sweden have a history of hating the wolf
- Farmers have a very strong lobby group and get compensation without protective fences.



Ulf Kristersson, Prime Minister



Ebba Busch,
Minister Ind. &
environment



Peter Kullgren,
Minister
agriculture

The Ecological Role of Wolves

What Wolves give to nature

- ✓ Naturally regulates prey populations
- ✓ Keeps prey healthy – weak individuals are removed
- ✓ Reduces road accidents through behavioural change
- ✓ Creates biodiversity (trophic cascade)
- ✓ Cheap and effective 'wildlife management'

What Swedish management counts

- ✗ Number of livestock killed (cost) – very low
- ✗ Concern among local population (political cost)
- ✗ Hunting dog safety
- ✗ Lost revenue from hunting leases
- ✗ Competition for hunters' prey

Monopoly never produces the best outcome — hunting has a monopoly on 'managing' wildlife in Sweden.

The Wolf in Sweden – Key Figures

355

Total amount of wolves in Sweden
(October 2025 i.e not the lowest)

170

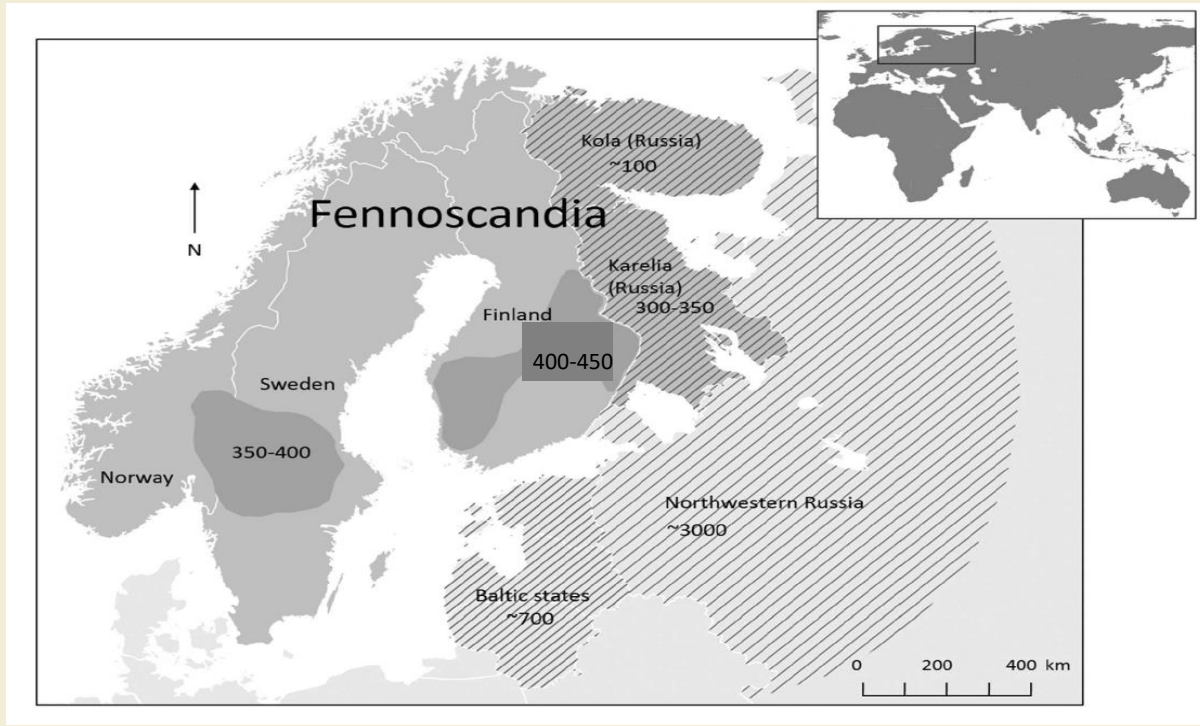
new reference value (FRP)
decided by the government

300

previous reference value (FRP)

**The wolf came back to
Sweden 1982/83**

The Nordic wolf population



Genetic Crisis – What the Science Shows

Ne (effective population size) = the number of wolves that actually contribute genetically to the next generation. *Ne is always much lower than the census count of wolves (Nc).*

Thresholds *Short-term: $Ne \geq 100$ | Long-term: $Ne \geq 500$*

EU guidelines *$Ne \geq 500$*

Norway/Sweden and Finland *$< Ne 500$*

The Migration Barrier – the Reindeer Herding Area

33%

of Finland covered by the reindeer herding area

50%

of Sweden covered by the reindeer herding area

7

Immigrants to Scandinavia since 1983

**Wolves are not allowed in the
Swedish reindeer area**

European Commission Critique – November 2025

Sweden lowered the reference value from 300 → 170 wolves in summer 2025 and reported this in its Article 17 report.

No scientific basis

The value of 170 was set by the politicians

FRP ≠ MVP

SEPA report made by Miller & Dussex indicated 170 - 270 individuals as the MVP (Minimum Viable Population), not FRP.

Call to revise immediately

The Commission urges Sweden in a letter to submit a revised Article 17 report.

- No answer from Sweden yet
- Risk of EU open an official complaint against Sweden

Administrative Court of Luleå – January 2026

ALL licence hunting decisions for 48 wolves overturned

County boards of Dalarna, Södermanland, Västmanland, Västra Götaland and Örebro — hunt start date 2 January 2026

- 1 The county boards did not meet their burden of proof according to the Court
- 2 It is unclear what legal weight can be given to the new reference value of 170 wolves – considering the requirements of the Habitats Directive. The new management plans was not in place.
- 3 The planned hunt was assessed as likely to jeopardise the maintenance of favourable conservation status (FCS). Down to 270 wolves
- 4 The court took into account the European Commission's criticism of the new reference value.

Swedish plan, a risk for wolves and other species in EU

Sweden lowered the reference value from 300 → 170 wolves and reported this in its Article 17 report.

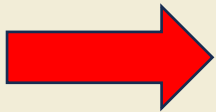
No scientific basis

A value set by the politicians

“A manipulated” figure of 170

Sweden is trying to set a low reference value by investing 10M€ per year in special population management

- Counting and DNA measuring all wolves
- Hunting selected wolves
- Moving wolves from the north



If Sweden gets away with this, is the article 17 reporting needed?

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A changed view where wild animals are given the opportunity to fulfil its natural roles in the ecosystem – for the sake of the nature and humanity alike.

— *Vilda Djurens Skydd, our vision*

Thank you – questions

www.vildadjurenskydd.se | Magnus Orrebrant, co-founder and chair

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