

# Swedish Regional Platform for Coexistence Between People and Large Carnivores

## Final Project Report



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## Summary

The European Commission's project "[Regional Platforms on People and Large Carnivores](#)" was implemented in Sweden in a way that differed somewhat from other participating countries. Due to the fact that both national and regional platforms already exist in Sweden the aim of the Swedish project was initially to test an alternative form of constructive dialogue to improve the quality of the conversations within existing platforms rather than establishing new platforms. The aim rests on the assumption that improved dialogue will ultimately contribute to the reduction of conflict.

Starting on the national level, dialogue with representatives of key national stakeholder organisations led to further dialogue with governors and officials representing counties and the Swedish Environmental Protection Agency leadership. The concrete results of these dialogues, which focused on the interpretation and implementation of protective hunting legislation, were undertakings from SEPA and the counties to ensure that suggestions regarding the formulation of guidelines for protective hunting and developing the knowledge and competency of officials concerned with protective hunting decisions. The dialogue identified and clarified key aspects related to protective hunting legislation and decisions which contributed to a parallel process regarding the revision of the national management plan for large carnivores.

In addition, the clear consensus amongst all participants was that local inhabitants should be heard and included in some way in decisions on all levels. No structured platforms for local dialogue exist today in Sweden. Deviating from the initial aim, it was decided to explore the feasibility of local dialogues in two areas and with slightly different approaches. A local forum in Värmland focused on the issue of protection of livestock and included representatives from a larger area within the county whilst another in the Mullsjö area on the border of Jönköping and Västra Götaland Counties focused on a single, newly established, wolf territory.

The results of the local dialogues showed that neutrally facilitated dialogue produces positive results in terms of creating mutual understanding and collaboration. Ways of continuing these forums and exploring the use of local forums to involve local inhabitants around a variety of conflictual rural issues is being explored.

The most important lessons learned from this project are:

- Projects such as these lead to valuable learning but it is difficult to sustain the positive shifts that occur once the project is over
- Focusing on limited areas within a larger polarised field can serve to indicate the viability of a constructive form of dialogue, but the impetus needs to be sustained in order to make an impact nationally
- It is essential to understand that complex conflicts cannot be solved by unilateral decisions and top-down solutions
- There is a need for neutral platforms that allow for open dialogue rather than discussion and debate. Competency needs to be developed to establish such platforms.

- Besides creating structures for interaction, the quality of communication on these and other existing platforms needs to be improved and maintained in order to reduce the level of polarisation and conflict
- It is important to notice the small shifts that indicate greater openness and clarity that lead to improved relationships and increase trust between parties and not only focus on formal agreements and concrete actions taken.
- Getting people to participate in platforms or forums on a local level takes time and commitment. Maintaining their interest in continuing is a challenge and depends on the value produced at meetings.

## Background to the Project in Sweden

### Large Carnivores in Sweden

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The Conflict surrounding large carnivores in Sweden has deep roots and is highly complex. It is connected to several other conflicts that affect parts of the rural population. It involves a small but powerful group of people who value hunting as a leisure activity (and, in more limited cases, also as a livelihood) as both individual landowners and forestry corporations. It has, in recent years, become a political issue. In the most recent election (2022), the issue of wolves formed part of the election campaigns conducted by several political parties.

Attempts to resolve or alleviate the conflict have not been particularly successful. Recent years have seen an increased polarisation and the deterioration of the quality of communication amongst members of the public, politicians, corporate representatives and between these parties and authorities.

*As in many other European countries the rural communities feel marginalized. As opposed to many other countries hunters in Sweden constitute a particularly strong lobby group. Hunting organisations actively campaign for the reduction of the wolf population which they experience as limiting their right and freedom to hunt.*

### The Project

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The Swedish project forms part of a larger project “[Regional Platforms on People and Large Carnivores](#)” with the aim of establishing regional platforms to focus on ongoing conflicts resulting from the presence of large carnivores. It is managed by [Istituto di Ecologia Applicata \(IEA\)](#).

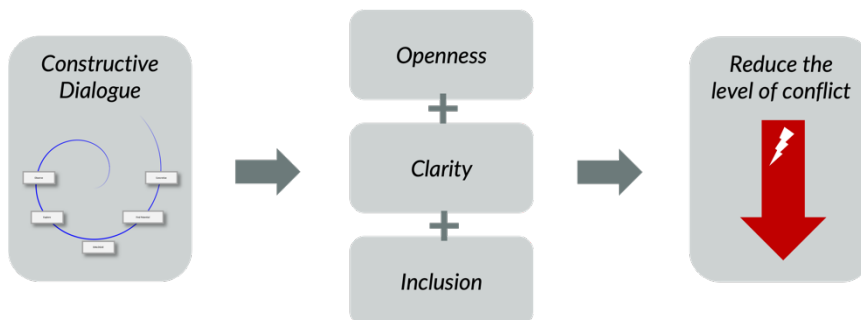
In addition to Sweden, several other European countries have been involved in establishing platforms or forums where matters related to large carnivores are discussed. The overall project aims to explore ways of reducing the conflicts that arise due to large carnivores increasing in numbers.

Because platforms already exist on a national and regional level in Sweden, the project focus differed somewhat from the other European projects.

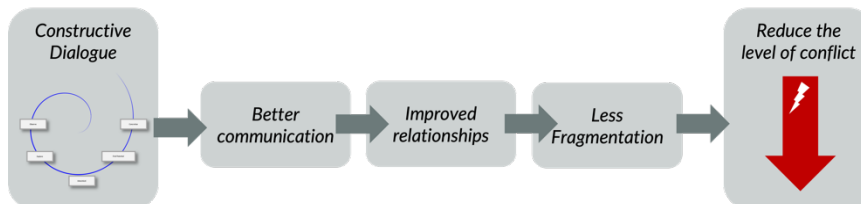
*In Sweden, the County Boards (Wildlife Management Delegations) and the National Council for Large Carnivores meet regularly to discuss matters related to large carnivores. There are however no formal local forums comprising multiple local stakeholders in Sweden.*

## Our Underlying Working Hypothesis – a Theory of Change

The primary assumption we make in the Swedish project is that constructive dialogue will reduce conflict and improve the management of Large Carnivores. Constructive dialogue is a specific term that implies creating a space that encourages openness and clarity so that participants themselves can find ways to deal with conflictual situations. Constructive Dialogue reduces the risk of marginalising certain perspectives and thereby counteracts the escalation of conflict.



In addition, we work with the hypothesis that Constructive Dialogue will lead to improved relationships between stakeholders, which will alleviate tensions and encourage the collaboration needed to ensure the effective management of large carnivores.



A third assumption is that decision-makers often decide on complex problems (of which Large Carnivore conflicts are prime examples) without sufficient information. In particular, specific perspectives are excluded or unconsciously ignored. Complex societal conflicts require the inclusion of all relevant perspectives to prevent the escalation of tension and find possible ways forward. Constructive Dialogue on all levels provides a more nuanced and complete view of the problems that policy- and decision-makers seek to remedy with their decisions.

*Conflict theory supports the view that openness and clarity provide the basis for parties themselves to find solutions to conflicts that are more sustainable than external “solutions”. It also suggests that the marginalisation of important perspectives causes conflict to arise and escalate. (see Appendix 1)*

*Again, conflict theory suggests that fragmentation and polarisation are a cause of conflict escalation. This implies that parties to a conflict become fixed in their particular view and regard other views as mistaken, wrong or dangerous. When relationships are established, this creates an opening for parties to understand and respect others’ points of view, which in turn leads to a reduction of tension and, in some cases, the resolution of conflict. (see Appendix 1)*

*The view that complex conflicts require the inclusion and participation of all relevant perspectives is explained more thoroughly in Appendix 1 below*

## Aim and objectives

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The Project in Sweden aimed to explore ways of dealing more effectively with conflicts around large carnivores through dialogue. The initial objective was to test an alternative form of dialogue to improve the quality of the conversations within existing platforms rather than establishing new platforms.

As the project is limited in scope and resources, the only possible way to test the use of Constructive Dialogue was to identify or create forums where a different form of interaction could be suggested to participants and then tried. The results of such “prototypes” would serve as examples for future, larger-scale interventions and hopefully inspire sustainable long-term changes.

## How the specific objectives originated and evolved

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Initial discussions with the Swedish Environmental Protection Agency (SEPA) around the execution of the project resulted in the following:

- As several local platforms already exist on a county level and as there is a national platform that includes stakeholder representatives from the major stakeholder organisations, there was no need to establish any new groupings. The dialogue would take account of the existing groups and specifically focus on the project's aim to consider potential solutions for conflicts related to large carnivores.
- SEPA would be closely involved with the project as it was about to review and consolidate the national management plans for large carnivores. SEPA would collaborate with this project to avoid duplication and explore possible synergies between the EU-initiated project and the management plan revision process.
- The project would initially focus on the national stakeholders. It would require an analysis of the nature of the problem before proceeding to arrange specific meetings for dialogue between the stakeholders on the (Swedish) regional and local levels.
- Account needed to be taken of the restrictions imposed by the Covid-19 pandemic, and any planned dialogue would have to be adjusted accordingly. There was no prospect of any physical meeting occurring during this period.

*In hindsight, this is a rather ambitious and possibly naïve expectation. It relies on the willingness of authorities or organisations with sufficient resources to fund a “scaling-up” of the use of Constructive Dialogue on a national, regional and local level.*

*IEA approached the Swedish EPA after having conducted several interviews with stakeholders in Sweden. The discussion with SEPA occurred after the suggestion that an independent consultant be used to manage the project and Dialogues was approached by IEA.*

Our starting point was to attempt to test a less formal and more inclusive dialogue approach with national stakeholders and then move to one or more of the regional platforms (County Boards within each of 21 Counties).

Participants in the National Dialogue however clearly pointed out the absence of structured dialogue on a local level and the absence of local forums as a factor contributing to the conflicts surrounding large carnivores in Sweden. This led to a revision of the original plan to focus on County Boards in the second phase of the project.

The objective for the project as a whole remained intact, but specific goals changed for the second phase of the project. It was decided to test the feasibility of local forums or platforms in two regions.

### The Stakeholder and Perspective Analysis

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This first phase of the project comprised an inventory of stakeholders and diverse perspectives on the problems around the co-existence of people and large carnivores. Such an inventory process had several aims and purposes:

- The aim of establishing a list (or rather a map) of the various stakeholders has the purpose of knowing who is involved in the conflict, either directly or indirectly, and how they are involved.
- The aim of mapping the issues comprised in the larger conflict surrounding large carnivores has the purpose of gaining a deeper and more complete understanding of the causes and effects of the symptoms that are apparent when speaking to affected parties and stakeholders and in scanning media articles and social media posts.
- The aim of conducting interviews with stakeholders has the purpose of hearing their perspective on the problem (or problems) and also to establish trust in the process itself. Without this trust, dialogue may not be possible or will produce only superficial results.

During the period September to December 2020, over thirty interviews were conducted and research papers, media articles and social media posts were scanned. It became very clear that the conflict consisted of many smaller conflicts which were all connected to and influenced each other. Large carnivore conflicts are affected by other societal conflicts and in turn affects them. The conflict concerning wolves in particular, engages large numbers of people and evokes strong emotions.

*Despite our focus on local forums, we met twice with the County Board in Varmland where the focus was on improving the quality of their interactions during meetings.*

*This County Board has worked extensively on – and has succeeded in – reducing tensions between members during meetings.*

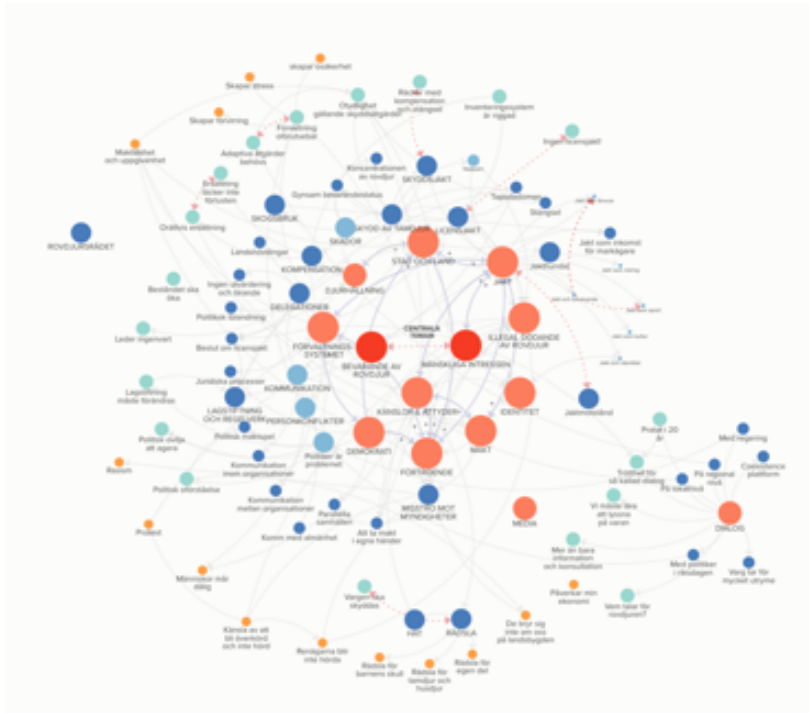
*Several of its members were part of the first local forum in Värmland.*

*Our view is that it is not sufficient to simply identify involved actors and that one needs to understand which perspectives (viewpoints) are present in a conflict. Several actors may share the same perspective while members of the same organisation or group may have different views.*

*For example, some members of a conservation society may oppose the culling of wolves, while other members see it as necessary and support it.*



The result of the perspective and stakeholder inventory phase was a rough listing and sorting of the issues and the polarities or conflicts within these issues. The full version of the report and the analysis can be accessed (in Swedish) at <http://predator.dialogues.se>.



*This is an initial actor and perspective map that shows the complexity of the conflict.*

Though the overview seems overwhelming and although it is open to critique for being too detailed or not detailed enough, it does help to gain an understanding of the complexity of the problem as a whole. The fact that the problem is so complex and that everything somehow seems to be connected to everything else, makes it all the more important to exercise great caution when seeking solutions. The temptation (and I daresay the general inclination) to suggest simple solutions needs to be avoided at all costs. The challenge at this point was to gain a deeper understanding of the whole interconnected system in order to make decisions as to where intervention in the form of dialogue would be of any value.

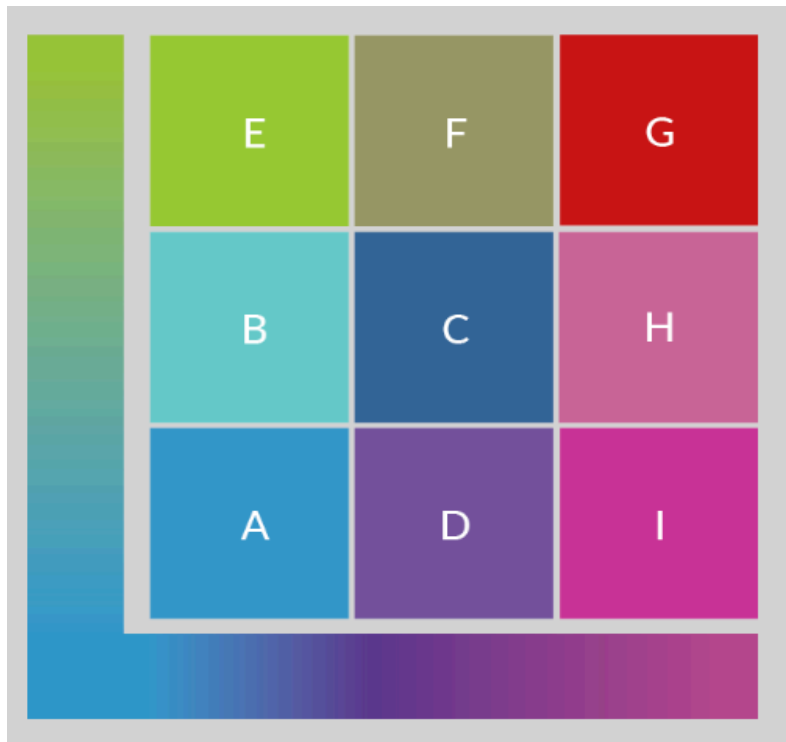
The analysis of the perspectives referred to above was very rudimentary and simply led to the conclusion that this problem is both very complex, that it has escalated to a considerable degree and is still escalating. This is more than simply a hasty conclusion or opinion. In order to reach this conclusion, we

*An actor and perspective map is a way of visualizing the actors and the different ways in which they perceive an issue. Stakeholders and other parties have more or less power and are connected to one or more perspectives. The relationships between them are of particular interest to those designing and facilitating a dialogue process.*

- Signs of a complex conflict:*
- many stakeholders who are interdependent
  - a long history
  - it is dynamic and unpredictable
  - it has many parts
  - it is affected by and affects other conflicts

made use of an analysis tool that originates from our work with conflict in Colombia and has been tested and adapted for use in Sweden. In answering forty questions one is able to plot the level of complexity and the level of conflict escalation on vertical horizontal axes respectively. The outcome on a matrix gives an indication of the composite nature of the conflict and the analysis tool suggests certain courses of action to take and actions to avoid.

This analysis tool has since been simplified and adapted and



*The matrix (aka the dialogue triage) is a tool that we developed in Colombia and have adapted for use in environmental conflicts. It has two axes: the vertical axis indicates the level of complexity while the horizontal shows the level of conflict escalation. By answering a series of questions about the conflict one gets an indication of the nature of the conflict and certain indications of how to act.*

included in a toolbox for the Large Carnivore Platform. You can read more about this tool in Appendix A and see an example by the following link <https://trriage.dialogues.se/eng/>

# The Dialogue on a National Level

## Introduction

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The debate around large carnivores, and wolves, in particular, was already polarised when we suggested to the national stakeholder representatives that we try an alternative format for dialogue. At the time of writing this report, the level of polarisation has increased even more.

The hypothesis we (perhaps naively) used as a point of departure was that a well-facilitated dialogue would inspire participants to change how they relate to conflictual issues. The assumption is that dialogue – as opposed to monologue – leads to an increase in mutual respect and understanding, increased clarity and openness to the potential for improvement. This, in turn, creates the space needed for involved stakeholders to manage deep-seated divergent views. This implies being able to respectfully interact with each other despite their differences to de-escalate conflicts.

## Agreeing to Engage in Dialogue

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In conversation with the Swedish Environmental Protection Agency (SEPA) we agreed to start the national dialogue by approaching the National Large Carnivore Council. It is convened by SEPA and consists of representatives from the key national stakeholder organisations and a representative for the County authorities.

## The first meeting

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This first meeting was held early on in the process. The purpose was to introduce the project and raise the question of dialogue as a way to identify and resolve conflicts. The general response at this first meeting was one of scepticism towards dialogue. The representatives were clear that they had been speaking for twenty years and more “dialogue” was not what was needed. While some considered dialogue to be important, the majority of representatives indicated that the problems would only be alleviated by the authorities creating clarity with respect to legislation and the way in which it is applied. They were, however, open to being interviewed.

From observing the meetings it became clear that meetings consisted primarily of discussion or debate. Speakers took

*A brief note: We often hear the term “resolution of conflict”. However, it is widely accepted that complex conflicts (wicked problems) are seldom resolved and can only be managed more successfully or less. “Success” implies improving the situation and de-escalating the conflict rather than causing it to escalate in a more destructive direction.*

*On the council are representatives from two hunting associations, three conservation societies, the agricultural association, an association representing animal husbandry and the centre for wildlife damages linked to the agricultural university and the counties.*

*While discussion and debate are useful to create clarity, they differ markedly from dialogue, which in its most basic form can be described as the art of thinking together. Dialogue requires greater openness and a willingness to explore both the problem and possible ways to manage it more deeply.*

turns to voice their views – often in opposition to or in support of other views.

### *The second meeting and preparatory meetings*

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The purpose of the second meeting was to present the results of the interviews, the perspective-gathering phase and the analysis of these. We would then decide whether dialogue would be of interest to the group. My concern was that I would meet the same scepticism during this meeting as before. For this reason, and following the advice of two experienced international mediators, I spoke with a small group of council members in order to ask their advice as to how I needed to proceed. This initial conversation started off on a similarly sceptical note but shifted towards exploring possible areas where dialogue might be meaningful.

At the second meeting (and following the advice of the small group I had spoken to), I suggested that the council consider the possibility of dialogue to address the difficulties that arise from the way in which legislation for protecting large carnivores is interpreted and applied in Sweden. The response from the group was positive, but it was suggested that the topic be limited to protective hunting. The purpose of the dialogue would be to gain clarity as to how such legislation is interpreted and implemented and to suggest ways in which the problems that arise could be remedied.

An important point raised at this meeting was that dialogue on protective hunting legislation and the way in which it was applied was meaningless unless legislators, courts and other organisations involved in decision-making were involved in some way. It was suggested that conclusions reached by the council together with SEPA and county representatives would carry more weight with both the government, courts and legislators. I undertook to contact parliamentary party representatives and the two government departments concerned with large carnivore legislation and policy. (At which somebody commented: “good luck with that”)

The group wished to consider the proposal and agreed to respond after the Christmas break in early January 2021.

### *Feedback from the group in January 2021*

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*In Sweden “protective hunting” (skydds jakt) is a term that is used in both the statutes and ordinances. The provisions for protecting large carnivores (and other several other protected species) contained in the European Habitats Directive are incorporated in Swedish Hunting Act and Hunting Ordinance.*

The group agreed to a proposal that we engage in a dialogue with the purpose of exploring the problems surrounding the interpretation and application of protective hunting legislation.

I had contacted legislators and government department representatives and received positive responses from all but one political party – who did not respond. I had several conversations with party representatives who wished to know more about the process and what a meeting with the LPC might entail.

We agreed to start the dialogue process in April 2021.

### A Four-stage Dialogue Approach

We used an approach to dialogue on protective hunting that suggests moving through four different phases. This “process logic” has evolved in our work with complex social conflicts in Sweden and abroad. It suggests that instead of making observations and jumping straight into suggesting solutions to a problem, one leads a group into a phase of exploration and then allows them to search together for potential for improvements before suggesting or agreeing to concrete action.

### The National-level Dialogue on the Theme of Protective Hunting

Participants in the dialogue were sent a summary of the relevant legislation (Habitats Directive and Swedish law), guidelines and court decisions. These were gleaned from prior conversations with the group of researchers connected to both the management plan process and this project, with legal experts and with those involved in making decisions entailing the derogation from the strict protection afforded to large carnivores by national and EU legislation.

### The third and fourth meetings (21<sup>st</sup> and 23<sup>rd</sup> of April 2021)

The first part of the dialogue was broken up into two meetings because participants were not available on one single date.

We started the dialogue by participants sharing with the group how they perceive and experience the problem of the interpretation and implementation of legislation regarding protective hunting in Sweden.

*The representatives for the political parties in Parliament responded differently. Some were positive and others said that they were open to dialogue with the representatives of the council.*

*This approach to a dialogic way of thinking and interacting is inspired by several practitioners and academics and has evolved into an approach that is now used more widely in dealing with both environmental and urban conflicts. (see Appendix 1 for more information)*

*A group of researchers agreed to advise on both the revision of the management plan and the dialogue process.*

**The following observations emerged from the first of the four phases of the dialogue:**

- There is a lack of clarity regarding how the law relating to protective hunting is interpreted and applied.
- Different decisions are made by officials in different counties, and these are motivated in different ways.
- The variation in decisions and motivations for these decisions cause the public to lose faith in the ability of officials to manage large carnivores.
- There appears to be no clarity among either the officials or the public as to whether Swedish law, court decisions and guidelines or the European directives, court decisions and guidelines apply. In principle, there should be no difference between these but in practice, there are several differences.
- There appears to be no clearly stated aim and goals for the use of protective hunting as part of the management of large carnivores.
- Different views exist regarding three central provisions of the derogations provided for in both EU and Swedish law:
  - The meaning of “preventing serious damage”
  - The meaning of “provided there is no satisfactory alternative”
  - The meaning of the provision that “derogation [should not be] detrimental to the maintenance of the populations of the species concerned at a favourable conservation status in their natural range”

*The Swedish practice is that an aggrieved party can apply to the county for the killing of a protected species. The request is considered and a decision is made by an official who motivates the decision referring to the facts and the law. Appeals to these decisions are lodged with one court that has been assigned the responsibility of dealing with such decisions and is situated in Luleå.*

**The second phase of the dialogue focused on understanding the causes and effects of the problems identified in phase 1.**

The following emerged during this discussion:

**The role and status of the Habitats Directive, Swedish Law and Guidelines**

- When making decisions to allow or deny protective hunting, some officials refer to the Habitats Directive, European Court decisions and guidelines while others only to Swedish law, decisions and guidelines. This creates confusion.
- Stakeholder organisations have agreed that they use appeals only in order to ensure that the law is adhered to and not as a form of protest to slow down or stop a process they feel is not moral. There are however a number of smaller organisations that do use appeals as a way of protesting. Both elicit criticism and both are allowed within the European and Swedish legal

framework. Using appeals as a way to protest is however not something council members approve of or subscribe to.

- The Swedish Environmental Protection Agency has the responsibility of issuing guidelines regarding decisions made to hunt/kill problem carnivores in certain cases. It is uncertain whether SEPA has the authority to issue guidelines to the counties as they both have the same level of authority (in the state hierarchy).

### **The Lack of Clarity regarding Legislation amongst the General Public**

- The general public does not understand how legislation is interpreted and applied. This lack of clarity leads to the opinion that decisions are unpredictable and that laws are applied differently in different cases. This results in a lack of trust in the management process regarding large carnivores.
- Swedish law regarding protective hunting is confusing and inaccessible. It needs to be modernised.
- Laws are often interpreted by so-called experts amongst the public in a way that suits their cause. How is it possible to explain the law more clearly and not be perceived as interpreting it?

### **Interpretation of the provision “preventing serious damage” (Article 16.1 (b) Habitats Directive and Swedish Hunting Ordinance §23a point 3)**

This was a long discussion involving a number of related aspects, for the sake of brevity. Here are some of the views expressed:

- The provision is unclear and creates confusion. This reduces the acceptance for the management of large carnivores.
- This is a question that involves what society reasonably can be expected to tolerate. If the level of tolerance is too high, acceptance for large carnivores diminishes.
- Should levels of tolerance be decided by local stakeholders or by authorities and courts?
- National guidelines regarding the interpretation of this provision need to be revised. But how will these take into account the different conditions in different areas? Are the County Boards sufficiently capable of deciding such guidelines for different regions/counties?
- The legal framework for protecting large predators builds on a balance between social needs and the need

to protect endangered species. This is a political matter to be decided by elected politicians.

**Interpretation of the provision “Provided that there is no satisfactory alternative”** (Article 16.1 Habitats Directive and Swedish Hunting Ordinance §23a )

- Guidelines regarding this provision are unclear
- Local stakeholders have not been involved in formulating current guidelines
- Economic compensation for protective measures is not sufficient

**Interpretation of the provision “derogation [should not be] detrimental to the maintenance of the populations of the species concerned at a favourable conservation status in their natural range”** (Article 16.1 Habitats Directive and Swedish Hunting Ordinance §23a)

- The debate as to whether the Swedish wolf population has or has not reached favourable conservation status is never-ending
- There is disagreement as to whether conservation status fundamentally is a scientific or a political issue.
- There is no clear plan to ensure genetic variety within the Swedish wolf population

*The fifth meeting (18 May 2021)*

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In this phase of the dialogue, we focused primarily on identifying the **potential for improvements** and the formulation of concrete questions and proposals to be taken to the next level of the dialogue when the Council representatives would meet SEPA and County representatives.

### **Reflections from the group**

A number of participants stressed the importance of a clear picture of how laws regarding protective hunting are applied and of a clear aim for protective hunting.

A view was expressed that it is impossible to agree on protective hunting measures in this group because of the deep ideological differences and that courts need to decide on the limits and interpretation. The speaker suggested that there was plenty of room in the interpretation of the Habitats

*Since this meeting the Swedish Parliament voted on reducing the number of wolves to 170 (from the current 480) and the government has indicated that it will see to it that the wolf population is reduced to at least that number or more.*



Directive and Swedish legislation to use protective hunting more extensively. Another view suggested that politicians in Parliament and the government need to solve the problem.

### **Regarding the aim and goals of protective hunting and the importance of clear guidelines**

- This group should stress the importance of clear aims and goals with protective hunting when meeting with SEPA. Such clarity is essential if the revision of guidelines will result in increased clarity.
- The aims of protective hunting are both of a biological and psychological nature: biological diversity and acceptance of large carnivores.
- The following aims were suggested:
  - *to reduce the number of attacks regionally or nationally*
  - *to increase confidence in management; reduce stress on livestock owners*
  - *to increase acceptance of predators*
- Specific goals need to be clearly measurable, but this is not possible unless the aims are accepted. The government needs to take responsibility for setting goals. In the end it is a political decision.
- A goal needs to be that those large carnivore individuals that cause damage need to be removed.
- If the guidelines are not accepted or prove to be effective, we will face an increase of poaching/illegal killing of large carnivores. Acceptance of the management of these species is crucial.

### **The importance of local participation**

- If farmers and hunters know that protective hunting is effective in protecting their livestock, they will have greater acceptance for the management of large carnivores. There may however be other ways of protecting livestock and hunting dogs that are more effective and these need to be clarified.
- Local stakeholders need to be involved in the process of formulating goals for protective hunting.

### **Clarity regarding the Law and its interpretation**

- Clarity on the interpretation of laws needs to come from an independent body. SEPA does not have the credibility to ensure that such an interpretation will be accepted.
- The level of trust in the management process is so low that the government needs to be encouraged to review the entire system of managing large carnivores.

- There was no agreement on whether a clarifying document on the interpretation of laws and guidelines from this body (the council) would be helpful or not.

### Appeals to decisions on protective hunting

- No agreement could be reached about a possible proposal regarding appeals to decisions by stakeholder organisations.
- It is however agreed that the law at present states that: *Decisions on hunting for protection can be appealed by the owners. If the decision is made to allow protective hunting, it can (according to the Aarhus Convention and the Environment Ordinance) be appealed by environmental organisations, and if it is not allowed, the individual or the organisation representing him/her can also appeal.*

### Fencing

The view was expressed that fencing to protect livestock is important and needs to be prioritised. However, there appears to be a resistance to the use of protective fencing from both neighbouring farmers and certain stakeholder organisations. This ought to be the topic for a future dialogue.

### A proposal as the basis for the meeting with SEPA and the Counties

The following should be proposed to higher levels of decision-makers:

- Despite differing views, it is important to agree that there should be a uniform, common and legally secure procedure for making decisions on hunting for protection. Important that it is done equally and that the counties follow what SEPA decides (in the management plan). **The management plan** should be able to set targets (but it needs to be discussed whether it will be the same for all management areas).
- **Government** must ensure that legislation on protection hunting is implemented. The law is clear enough. However, even if protection hunting becomes clearer, public confidence is unlikely to increase. The whole system needs to be made clearer.
- **A Swedish model** could be tried. It should be possible to decide on a Swedish model within the framework of what the European Union expects. However, it is important that officials at different levels do not constantly avoid making certain decisions for fear of making mistakes in the eyes of the European Union.

- **SEPA** should guide Counties in their interpretation of the law through guidelines that build on clear aims and goals and are formulated with input from local stakeholders. The **Wildlife Damage Centre** (Viltskadecenter) should in turn advise SEPA on biological aspects and alternatives to protect livestock and hunting dogs.
- The government should be asked to be clearer about the policy direction - for example, that livestock farming should not be made significantly more difficult. What does it actually mean? At present, the term only creates confusion. If we could specify what it means, we could be clearer about when different measures (breed, protection hunting or other) should be used. We should not get locked into one measure or too narrow a target. If there are other ways to help the affected industries, this would be a more efficient use of resources. The same applies to other points in the law or the bill, such as that predators should be found in their natural ranges. What does such a policy decision seek to achieve? If these are not specified, then the county councils are following the precautionary principle, there will be fewer decisions on protection hunting than there could have been.
- We should measure the effects of protection hunting against whether we have viable carnivore populations or not. It would be possible to test a more liberal use of protection hunting when it comes to hunting dogs in a defined area and see if the favourable conservation status is affected or not.
- **Counties** should be encouraged to increase the competency of those officials who make protective hunting decisions. In some cases, the decision-makers are knowledgeable of the law and in other cases not. The idea of a competence centre was raised and would be suggested.

### *The sixth meeting (27 September 2021)*

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On the 27 September, the group of national stakeholder organisation representatives met with the director general, two leadership representatives and several experts from the Swedish EPA and with two county governors and a third official representing the three management regions in Sweden together with experts from the counties.

They presented the results of their dialogue on the interpretation and application of protective hunting legislation and in each case, the group came to a degree of consensus about what should be done. The meeting was conducted in a

positive and respectful spirit and could be considered as constructive overall. Mutual understanding for each other's situation certainly occurred. Even though parties have very different views on larger issues there was general agreement on the main needs raised by the national stakeholder group.

In terms of the results, much of the emphasis was placed on the current actions of the Swedish EPA and the need for concrete action on their part. The results - briefly - were:

- In respect of clearer goals, setting specific national goals for tolerance of damages to livestock or hunting dogs as is the case with reindeer, was generally not felt to be realistic. Both farming representatives and hunters indicated that any damage caused by large carnivores significantly affects their members. The representative for the Wildlife Damage Centre, emphasised however, that clearer goals regarding protective hunting as a remedy were needed to formulate the guidelines his centre were responsible for. This point was carried over into further discussion on guidelines.
- In respect of producing clearer guidelines, the EPA explained that it was working on the revision of the management plans for large carnivores, and they believed that clear guidelines would be contained in the new plans. They also explained that the writing of specific guidelines had been delayed, but that the views from the meeting would be included in the process when it started up during the autumn season this year.
- Regarding ensuring competence amongst the county officials responsible for decisions on protective hunting, the county representatives told the group about ongoing collaboration between counties and even between the management regions. More experienced officials helped and supported those with less experience. The idea of a new competence centre was not supported, and the EPA undertook to strengthen their co-ordination of supportive networks to ensure that competence was shared
- Regarding the question of the group meeting government departments and national political party representatives, it was felt by the group that we needed to wait, to ensure that the EPA's undertakings were followed up and that the coming elections made any contact with both government and party representatives difficult. The third phase needed to wait.

### Other meetings during this period

In addition to the national dialogue, several other meetings took place. The list of meetings and conversations besides those with the large predator council is long and is contained in Appendix 2. I do however want to mention a few important meetings – some of which occurred as joint initiatives or at the invitation of SEPA in the process of the revision of the national management plan.

*It is worth noting that the dialogue is not a linear or mechanical process, but that it needs to be viewed as the sum of the ongoing conversations, whether arranged or incidental, where awareness is increased.*

- Early meetings with SEPA leadership laid the foundation for the work in this project. The conversations centred on the value of dialogue and about the scope for change. Without the expressed support of the SEPA leadership, the dialogue and its results would risk being considered as “good ideas that would be considered”. The process would be relegated to a consultation where stakeholders express their views and others decide whether these should be accepted or not. However, the assurance was given that SEPA itself would be open to being part of the dialogue and that it would constantly feed into the management plan revision process.
- Meetings with the group of national and international researchers gave rise to several individual meetings and both contributed to the process in a significant way.
- Meetings with stakeholder groupings in the context of the management plan revision process have been invaluable in deepening the “fact finding” dimension of the project and for creating a more substantial understanding of the problem.
- There were also several other meetings, some of which others initiated and which we were invited to attend, that helped specifically to identify the areas in which dialogue could be meaningful and led to. For example, two seminars on illegal hunting and a meeting on protective hunting hosted by the National Association of Farmers were particularly valuable.

### Follow-up

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In following up with those responsible for the revision of the management plan for large carnivores, the view was expressed that coordinating the parallel dialogue processes helped to avoid repetition and that they complemented each other in a positive way. The exchanges between the two project leaders also added to both processes.

The guidelines for protective hunting are still in the process of being revised. Input from the national dialogue has been communicated to those responsible for the revision process.

The regional leadership for the management regions undertook to work towards greater sharing of knowledge and information regarding protective hunting procedures. This has happened in networks where the counties meet and discuss matters related to wildlife management.

The issue of the protection of livestock was specifically raised with the two counties involved in the Mullsjö round table meetings and discussed with farmers. The county of Västra Götaland undertook to further investigate the use dogs bred for protecting livestock. The issue remains a contentious one however and many farmers openly resist erecting fences to protect their livestock.

The expressed need to involve local inhabitants and convey their experiences to decision-makers on higher levels has resulted in follow up meetings with County Boards in Västra Götaland and Jönköping Counties. A meeting will be held on the 19<sup>th</sup> January 2023 in Karlstad where all platform levels will be represented. The discussion on local forums will in Värmland will continue and funding will be sought for the continuance of the Mullsjö platform.

## Dialogues on a Local Level

### Introduction

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As part of the preparation for the focus on regional and local dialogue, we considered where we best could invest our resources and time. In conversations with both local actors (during the abovementioned field trip) and with members of the National Large Carnivore Council, the need for dialogue with local actors was emphasised again and again. We did however also note that regional platforms – the County Boards – experienced tension during meetings. We tested the idea of involving local stakeholders focusing on a single, contentious issue. The thought was that it would allow several similar local platforms to exchange ideas and experiences with each other, and that there was a need even there.

Although we participated in meetings with the County Board in Värmland and focused on the improvement of the quality of dialogue, this was not our primary focus. In consultation with members of the County Boards and county officials, we decided to test the feasibility of arranging local forums with the view of establishing permanent forums more broadly later.

The following ideas were discussed of which we attempted the first two due to limited resources and time:

*Regional platforms (County Boards) already exist in Sweden, whereas local forums or platforms do not.*

*To date the possibility of establishing more permanent local forums has only been explored conceptually in Värmland County. The WWF has been approached to support this idea, but project funding has not been secured.*

1. Forums focusing on issues that involve and engage certain stakeholders in part of a region
2. Forums focusing on a local area where large carnivores have settled and cause concern
3. Mobile units that would deal with conflicts that arise

## Preparation for the Dialogue

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In preparation for both forums we met with livestock owners, hunters, authorities and members of a wide range of stakeholder organisations. Most of these meetings were face-to-face and involved visiting people where they lived or worked.

We spoke of the proposed conversations as “round table meetings” where people representing different perspectives would talk about issues that were important to them in an open and free dialogue. The aim of these round table meetings was to examine if tension could be reduced by strengthening relationships, gaining clarity and fostering mutual understanding.

## The Dialogue in Värmland

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The dialogue in Borgvik, Värmland, focused on the protection of livestock in the southern part of the county. Although the county has had wolves and bears for many years, the resistance towards co-existence is strong amongst certain groups. In some cases, there is resistance towards taking protective measures.

The meeting in Borgvik was preceded by a number of individual conversations that aimed at clarifying the agenda for the meeting and securing participation.

The meeting was attended by the governor (who also chairs the County Board), officials from the county, farmers, representatives for tourism, the livestock breeding association and conservation societies.

The dialogue during the meeting was constructive and led to many insightful exchanges between people who do not normally meet one another. Misunderstandings were clarified and issues related to the authorities were highlighted and communicated.

*We started by testing the idea of involving local stakeholders focusing on a single, contentious issue. The thought was that it would allow several similar local platforms to exchange ideas and experiences with each other.*

**The following problems were identified or emerged from the conversation:**

- Decisions taken “from above” and without the involvement of local actors lead to mistrust and contempt for authorities and politicians.
- Large carnivore issues risk becoming so infected that people no longer want to cooperate with the county. Those who want to cooperate with the county do not dare or do not want to be seen to do so.
- There is a need for understanding and respecting each other's roles. Dialogue is a step towards creating understanding, but may come too late to curb the mistrust that exists in the county.
- Anxiety regarding wolves and other large carnivores is a major problem. Worry cannot be addressed with facts and knowledge (although it can help in some cases). Those who are concerned need to be listened to. This is not possible with just two people from the county council active in the field. The question is: what is an adequate presence? What does presence mean? Better communication is desired and can help bring about improvement.

**Social media and the role of the media**

- Social media contribute to the escalation of conflicts. Greater openness, transparency, information, knowledge transfer and rapid response to problems can make a big difference (locally and nationally) to avoid fringe elements in organisations gaining too much prominence and power.
- Media organisations bear a major responsibility for spreading inaccuracies and for contributing to the tensions when incidents occur, or decisions are made. The media should be included in the broader dialogue on local and national levels
- What can be done to reduce hate speech and threats against all actors? Who should take responsibility?
- There is ambiguity regarding compensation for predator-repelling fencing which leads to increased distrust of authorities in general.



- Knowledge about large carnivores and also about sheep and fencing is inadequate. (How and by whom should knowledge be disseminated? Will it be received by those who are informed?)

**The following suggestions emerged from the discussion:**

- To organise a conversation on social media and the media in which representatives of organisations locally and nationally take responsibility for their actions and the actions of their members (the possibility of such conversations should be explored at both local/county and national levels with representatives of interest groups)
- The county will take up and deal with the following issues:
  - The question of adequate staffing within the county.
  - Clarifying the reason for county officials visiting certain rural areas in advance to prevent uncertainty and rumours.
  - How can local issues be taken up systematically and involve local actors who are not members of larger societies or associations?

*These proposals were subsequently addressed by Värmland county.*

*In addition, the question of trust towards authorities, in issues related to rural problems that arise, was taken further and was the subject of a dialogue meeting with politicians, representatives for major stakeholder organisations and the county.*

The Dialogue in Mullsjö focusing on the Brängen wolf territory and effects on local society

The round table meetings in the town of Mullsjö concerned a newly established wolf territory that created concern amongst residents, farmers and hunters in the area. The territory lies on the border between two counties: Jönköping and Western Gothland.

A first meeting of the platform

The first “roundtable meeting” (as we chose to call the initial gathering of the platform as there is some resistance to the word platform) occurred in late February, 2022. It followed extensive preparation involving physical visits to:

- Farmers in the territory
- Hunters who have their hunting grounds in the territory
- Ordinary citizens who live in the territory
- Societies – both those concerned with protection and in opposition to wolves
- Two county administrations: Västra Götaland County and Jönköping County<sup>1</sup>.

The first meeting was held in Mullsjö and attended by 15 people representing different perspectives:

- 5 Officials and field-personell from the two counties
- 3 hunting representatives
- 3 members of the public
- 4 farmers and members of the Livestock breeding association

The meeting was also attended by a film crew from Swedish Television and a reporter from the regional radio station (more on the media below).

The areas of concern that were identified at this meeting were:

1. Protection of livestock and the unwillingness to use protective fencing
2. The limitations imposed by wolves on hunters and hunting in the area
3. Insufficient information and poor communication
4. Uncertainty regarding how derogation decisions were made
5. The fear and concern of local citizens regarding the wolves

It was agreed that these issues would be taken up at a next meeting in May.

### *Follow-up meetings*

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The first meeting was followed by meetings with separate groups to discuss the topics that were identified by the first roundtable meeting and to identify actors who could

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<sup>1</sup> The territory lies on the border between two counties. They share responsibility for the protection of the wolves in the area.

participate in the working groups. This follow-up meeting process involved meetings with:

- Farmers in the territory
- A farmer with livestock protecting dogs
- Hunters – including a regional representative for the hunting association
- Ordinary citizens who live in the territory
- The Predator Society (Rovdjursförening) – both local and national representatives
- Several other protective societies
- Two members of the Directorate for the European Commission responsible for large carnivore issues (in order to clarify questions regarding the EU's position on specific questions)

The result of these meetings were to identify key issues for discussion by the working groups and for future discussions at the next roundtable meeting (which are mentioned in the sections below).

The meetings were not in one place and at the same time, yet they should be regarded as one conversation carried out between different stakeholders through the facilitator.

### *The second meeting with the working group on hunting*

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This working group met in May 2022 and focused on:

- Hunting,
- Clarity regarding hunting-related decisions by authorities
- Communication

The hunters expressed their strong concern and frustration that they were no longer to hunt in the area because they could not use their hunting dogs. According to them the essence of hunting is the interplay between humans and hunting dogs. They also expressed concern over the fact that there was now less wildlife for them to hunt in this territory. For them there were only two alternatives: either the politicians fix the situation (meaning getting rid of the wolves) or they take matters into their own hands (which does not need to be explained). Hunting without dogs appeared not to be an option.

Regarding improving communication and cooperation, hunters expressed their mistrust of the county representatives. Cooperation with authorities has ceased. They felt that authorities had disrespected them by informing the public about illegal hunting and inviting people to provide information about its occurrence anonymously. The county felt that its

information about large carnivores was adequate but admitted that it was difficult to find the information one needed. Members of the Predator Association (Rovdjursförening) witnessed that they had fairly good communication with hunters and property owners but had witnessed the shift towards an extreme animosity towards the county representatives. This was confirmed by county field personnel. Despite the negative sentiment, there seemed to be some openness towards improving the exchange of information.

In a discussion on protective hunting of large predators we attempted to obtain clarity as to how the county officials make decisions to allow derogation. As hunters no longer hunt with dogs in the area, this appeared not to be an issue for them any longer. This question was, however, more relevant to livestock owners (see below).

Present at this working group meeting were:

3 hunting representatives

8 county officials including field personnel (of which some are hunters themselves)

3 members of protective organisations

#### *The third meeting with the working group on livestock protection:*

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This working group meet also met in May and the conversation focused on:

- Information regarding protecting livestock against lynxes and wolves  
*Information is available but not easily accessible. The fact that the host of this information affects those who read it is a problem. A neutral information platform could be explored but the question is who would take responsibility for it. Such a platform could be tested, and the issue will be taken to the next roundtable meeting.*
- Communication  
*Despite efforts to inform and communicate with farmers, very few have shown interest in using subsidies for erecting predator-proof fences. The counties agreed to inform any interested person that the Predator Association is prepared to help with both the erection of fences and clearing during the summer months. It was also agreed that the facilitator would reach out to farmers and establish ways of creating an openness to test fencing or guard dogs.*
- Fencing and alternatives to fencing  
*Information about livestock-guarding dogs was discussed and it was agreed that it would be possible to arrange a meeting between the local dog-owner and others to inform*

about this possibility.  
It was also agreed upon that a proposal to fence a larger area collectively (by establishing an economic association) would be further explored.

- Assistance and subsidies to owners of animals other than sheep

*The official policy is that subsidies for owners of horses and cattle did not justify official assistance in providing predator-proof fencing. Some exceptions can and have been made, but these are often on a very limited scale.*

- Clarity regarding laws, guidelines and interpretation of laws related to protection of livestock  
County officials explained how they make decisions regarding protective hunting:
  - *While the requirements for derogating from strict protection are followed, decisions are made based on the facts present in each situation.*
  - *Protection with predator-proof fencing or use of guard dogs is not a requirement for deciding to kill an offending lynx or wolf. The legislation on protective hunting must be applied together with animal protection legislation. There is no duty to protect one's livestock against predators. Keeping them inside an area is sufficient to satisfy the provision that there is no other viable alternative to killing an offending wolf or lynx. One cannot expect farmers to incur the costs associated with erecting predator-proof fencing or providing guard dogs. (Shepherding is not an alternative in Sweden as it is too costly.)*
  - *One of the considerations that weighs most strongly in favour of derogating from strict protection is whether the offending predator is a so-called "problem" and indicates problematic behaviour. Evidence of prior attacks within a given period is the strongest indicator for such problematic behaviour.*

*In respect of killing in defence of one's property (§28 in the Swedish hunting proclamation) does not require examining the requirements for derogation as stipulated in the Habitats directive and in Swedish legislation.*

- *The mere fact that animals are attacked or about to be attacked is sufficient evidence that no other suitable alternative is possible.*
- *Fencing is only regarded as inadequate if animals are free to roam.*

- *The decision to prosecute an offender is made based on their story of how the killing occurred.*

A note: I mentioned at the meeting that I understood that the EC had more stringent requirements than those applied in Sweden. The response was that the EC's guidelines did not take account of the local conditions and were therefore not useful. There appeared to be some resentment towards EU for "meddling" with local decisions. Decisions by Swedish courts guided practice in Sweden. A county official also expressed irritation about the fact that protective societies appeal decisions to kill large carnivores and it would be much better if that the right to appeal was revoked.

#### *The fourth meeting with the combined group*

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The fourth meeting came at a time when two significant events had occurred.

- The first was that a local resident and politician applied for the removal of a young wolf that had ventured near the town of Mullsjö and had been seen at a distance by a number of people.
- The second was a decision by the Swedish Parliament to reduce the reference value for favourable conservation status for wolves to 170 from the current 300.

It was clear that participants, over and above other agenda points, wanted to talk about these two events.

We started with the question of protective hunting. There were many questions to the authorities regarding both law and practice. They could, of course, not comment on the particular decision they needed to make regarding the request for the removal of the young wolf. The discussion evolved into a significant exchange about the accurate inventory of the wolves in the territory. Specifically, the importance of and need for the participation of both hunters and conservationists in the inventory process was discussed and agreed upon.

The second issue was clearly not something a local forum could influence, but the need to consider the possible meaning and consequences of this parliamentary decision was something that participants wanted to air and talk about.

The agenda point on improving information and communication led to a sharing of information about the different ways in which parties communicated with each other,

how information was shared, and which areas of communication could be improved. The suggestion of a digital platform for local communication did not get much support and it was felt that such a platform would require significant time and effort and would not necessarily be used very much. Also, it needed to be maintained by a neutral party to be credible and there appeared to be no funding for such a party at that time.

Regarding the continuation of the forum in Mullsjö, it was felt that it had been useful, and most participants wished for it to continue. It was however important that it be coordinated and facilitated by a neutral party and not one of the stakeholders. Funding for such continuation had been sought but not granted. The absence of farmers at the last meeting was an issue that needed to be addressed. There was an understanding for the fact that the meeting occurred at a time when farmers were at their busiest.

A possible meeting with representatives for the EU's large carnivore platform was briefly discussed and it was suggested that the group would be given the opportunity to contribute with thoughts that could be conveyed at such a meeting.

A farmer who could not be present posed several questions about protective fencing and compensation for damages which were communicated to the county representatives who attended the meeting.

### The Results of the Local Meetings

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The primary results of the round table meetings up to that point were:

- Several issues were taken up by the respective county officials to be reviewed and acted upon.
- Increased openness between stakeholders resulted in several conversations that led to greater clarity and mutual understanding of each other's roles and experiences
- A shift from an attitude of mistrust to a greater willingness to cooperate with authorities in the management process
- Increased collaboration between parties that had hitherto not had any significant contact with each other
- The sharing of information regarding issues that concerned local actors
- The willingness and ambition to keep meeting in this form

The results of the conversations were conveyed to the County Board of Västra Götaland County and will also be shared at the next Jönköping County Board meeting in November.

The wish for the continuance of the forum and possible ways to make neutral facilitation possible are being explored with authorities, participants and funders.

A meeting will be held to consider the presentation of the round table meetings at a meeting with EU representatives in January 2023.

## Project Results and Unforeseen Consequences

We chose, in this project, to recognise the fact that Large Carnivore Management, and accompanying conflicts, are complex. Our approach was to explore the hypothesis that improving the quality of both relationship and interaction leads to reduced tension.

The concrete results of the project have been noted above and will not be repeated here.

What has been striking here is the unforeseen or indirect results of this project. There have been several of these:

- **The interaction between the dialogues and the revision of the management plan** could be described as an indirect, yet not unforeseen result. It was possible to exchange information and insights between two processes seeking to include the same stakeholder groups, yet in the case of local actors, different individuals with different experiences of the reality of living with large carnivores.
- The inclusion of the possibility of dialogue as a way of dealing with large carnivore conflict production in a **national television series** was unforeseen. The project did not result in the series, but rather could contribute an important dimension to it.
- In addition, several **radio, television and newspaper/magazine interviews** regarding the dialogue process were published and aired.
- **Training courses** in collaboration, dialogue and conflict resolution for the Environmental Protection Agency, Forestry Service and Counties include several of the lessons learned during the project. Many of those

*An important lesson we learned here was that dialogue in managing complex social conflicts can have unexpected results – both positive and negative.*

*This is an extension of the view that any intervention into a “Wicked Problem”, will have an effect on it which is either positive or negative. We have seen this confirmed in similar processes involving complex conflicts.*



attending are directly involved in the management of large carnivores.

- **A Centre for Natural Resource Dialogue (CNRD)** was established as a way of creating a neutral platform for dialogue large carnivore and other environmental conflicts. We are in the process of registering it as a company and aim to create a panel of neutral facilitators and trainee facilitators. It is hoped that this platform will act as a “go-to-place” when neutral facilitation and mediation is needed. Several researchers, students and consultants have indicated their interest in being part of the CNRD project.

## Conclusions and Learning

### *Projects have advantages and limitations*

Working in project form implies that there is a beginning and an end. The hope is that the project will lead to sustainable change. The disadvantage is that the energy that sustains the changes that occur dissipates and the situation reverts to its original conflictual state. This project aimed at testing an idea - a hypothesis - and inspiring future changes that might lead to a reduction in conflict. The local part of the project did indeed lead to important learning while it is less certain whether the national dialogue resulted in a significant impact. Possibilities for either finding a volunteer coordinator and facilitator or securing funding are being explored.

### *Escalating polarisation and the need for constructive dialogue*

The broader field within which the ongoing national, regional and local dialogue is set remains extremely polarised and is likely to become more so. The national dialogue clearly identified “the absence of clarity” as one of the prime causes of this polarisation. Participants on all levels also identified the need to hear and include local voices in decisions regarding both policy and management.

Creating clarity and inclusion quite correctly indicates a way forward towards peaceful co-existence between large carnivores and people. They do however need to be explored to clarify what is meant. This can only be done in an inclusive process ensuring that all levels are on board. This is a mammoth task that needs to include state agencies, politicians, and stakeholders on national, regional and local levels.

*My concern is that unless I personally volunteer to coordinate the local platform in Mullsjö, it will not continue to meet. The reason for this is that none of the parties are neutral and therefore trusted by the others. Unless there is some funding available, the positive results risk dissipating.*

*The meeting between representatives from the EU and Swedish stakeholders in January 2023 offers the possibility of starting to secure support for such a process.*

The management plan in its revised form suggests the need for collaborative measures. At the same time, decision-makers on a national and regional level largely subscribe to the idea that a numerical majority (in parliament or on the County boards) decides. In a polarised situation, this does not resolve the problem of polarisation.

### *Understanding complexity and conflict*

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Issues as complex as those surrounding large carnivores in general, and wolves in particular, cannot be dealt with by simple, top-down solutions.

### *Neutral platforms*

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In this polarised conflict, the parties that are involved each have their own perspective. There is little trust between them and there are strong preconceptions about each other. Any attempt by one party to create a forum or platform risks being viewed as manipulation. For example, meetings arranged by county officials are often regarded with suspicion and those attending see them as an opportunity to protest – not only against the county but all authorities that they view to be unfair, biased or incompetent.

Creating a safe space for an open and constructive dialogue requires objective or neutral facilitation. There is a shortage of qualified neutral facilitators and those that are to be found are professionals who are paid for their time. It is, however, possible for a group of people to build trust and improve the quality of their meetings.

### *The importance of a dialogic culture*

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During this project, we have seen examples of groups changing the way they interact with each other. It may require a neutral facilitator at first, but in time the group becomes more and more competent in conversing in a way that does not create tension or frustration. We speak in this regard of a self-facilitating group. It does, however, take time for a group to reach this level.

The ability to improve the quality of communication was noticeable in both the national and local dialogues. In Värmland, where the regional County Board actively works to improve communication at its meetings, we were able to contribute by observing and offering a workshop on dialogue and communication.

### *Notice small shifts*

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*The Värmland county board has been working consciously on improving the quality of their meetings and improving their dialogue skills. Participants are supported by county staff and meetings are well facilitated by the governor.*

There is a tendency to expect significant results in the form of agreements, proposals or joint action. While these are important, small changes in the way people interact with each other should not be discounted. Signs of a shift towards openness and clarity are significant signposts on the way towards reducing tension and conflict. In a formal report, such as this one, it is not possible to list these “micro-shifts”. It needs to be noted, however, that many such shifts did occur and led to improved relationships and mutual understanding.

*This was particularly clear during the round table meetings in Mullsjö where parties became more open and mutual understanding (and respect) have resulted in increased collaboration.*

### *Structure and process*

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Structures are needed and in the case of Sweden, these do exist in the form of the National Large Carnivore Council and the County Boards. Similar forums are however not in place on a local level.

Structure in itself is not, however, sufficient to guarantee constructive dialogue. Formal meetings can often be characterised as a series of monologues and in some cases, the image of “trench warfare” is used to describe meetings.

In addition to the structure, the conversation climate needs to be such that it counteracts tension. It requires both skilful facilitation and the willingness of participants to attain a healthy climate where dialogue, or at least a respectful exchange of thoughts and ideas, is possible. In a polarised environment, the willingness of participants to improve the quality of their interaction may require time and even intervention from somebody who is trusted.

### *Sustaining interest and participation*

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In a conflictual environment, there is often resistance to the idea of dialogue. On the one hand, there is “dialogue fatigue” which is the result of failed attempts at resolving issues through dialogue. On the other hand, “dialogue” has been used to describe meetings where one party informs another or might ask for viewpoints. The result is widespread scepticism towards dialogue and its effectiveness in reducing conflict.

The first challenge for any convenor of a forum or platform is to get people to participate. The second is to sustain interest and keep participants involved. It depends very much on whether the facilitator is able to establish trust – both in himself/herself and in the process.

In this project, significant time was spent trying to create the trust referred to above. This involved identifying and visiting

potential participants. In some cases, it sufficed with a conversation or an email.

## Follow-up and Possible Future Steps

### *Sustainable local forums to deal with rural conflicts*

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We have initiated and have an ongoing discussion with Värmland County about the viability of local forums as a way of dealing with an increasing number of natural resource conflicts in rural areas, inter alia conflicts surrounding large carnivores.

The motivation for establishing such forums or platforms is that the same local communities often face a number of challenges simultaneously. These obviously affect one another and the authorities are often regarded as the “prime adversary”.

The growing mistrust in authorities (including the EU) presents a problem for democracy and increasingly places stress on the officials tasked with managing natural resources such as large carnivores, wildlife in general, protected areas, forests, rivers and more.

The experience gained from this project is a valuable part of this ongoing conversation which will hopefully result in concrete prototypes.

### *Building competency for neutral facilitation and mediation*

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The need for both neutral platforms or forums and for neutral facilitators and mediators has been mentioned in this report. It is no easy task of finding people with the competency to manage different situations that arise in respect of large carnivore conflicts or support officials dealing with these. The problem is not so much access to competent consultants as it is the competence in dealing with conflict situations that are as complex as that surrounding large carnivores.

At the time of writing, we are actively exploring the feasibility of offering training to mediators and facilitators that will enable them to deal with these and other environmental conflicts. The idea of creating a panel of accredited mediators/facilitators/negotiators both in Sweden and in Europe as a whole is being explored and explained in the next section.

### *Establishing a neutral facilitation resource*

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Managing training and maintaining a panel of accredited professionals requires coordination and an organisation that will take responsibility. The added need for a neutral platform

for conflictual conversations has led to the establishment of the Centre for Natural Resource Dialogue.

The Centre started off as a modest network. We are in the process of registering it as a company to enable us to contract experts, and consultants and to organise events such as training courses, seminars and conferences. A number of researchers and research institutions have expressed interest in being part of such an initiative as have consultants working or seeking to work in this field.

It should be mentioned here that a result of the larger project involving platforms for large carnivore dialogue initiated by the LCP has led to the Environmental Mediation Training Initiative – an Erasmus+ project involving several participants in the European regional platform projects. Its aim is to exchange experiences and improve the training programs that are being offered in different countries.

## Appendix 1: Conflict, Complexity and a Dialogic Approach

### *The causes of conflict*

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Conflict can be said to arise and escalate when part of a social system or constellation is excluded or marginalised. The sense of being prevented from participating, and not being heard or taken seriously creates frustration. If this sense of marginalisation continues, the tension increases and the conflict escalates. This view originates from Arnold Mindell and has been developed further by Myrna Lewis.

The physicist, David Bohm, viewed fragmentation as the cause of conflict. Fragmentation occurs when people become attached to their viewpoint or perspective, to the extent that they see it as “the truth”. This results in the view that other viewpoints are wrong or inferior. In its extreme form, those holding opposing views are seen as enemies and evil.

Transformative Mediation (Joseph Folger and Baruch Bush) does not explain the cause of conflict but rather tries to explain how conflicts escalate and can be de-escalated. It views conflict as a crisis in human interaction and proposes that as openness and clarity decrease, conflict escalates. This leads to the conclusion that conflicts can be managed by increasing both openness and clarity (Transformative Mediation calls these aspects recognition and empowerment).

### *Complexity*

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Complex conflicts or problems are distinct from technical problems. Technical (simple or complicated) problems can be analysed and resolved with the help of expert knowledge and linear reasoning. For example, biologists can ascertain the bearing capacity of a biotope and motivate for the reduction of a specific wildlife population.

Complex problems, on the other hand, contain many interrelated variables that are constantly changing. If these problems or conflicts involve people, there are usually emotions involved and a longer or shorter historical perspective that influences the problem. It is their dynamic and unpredictable nature that makes these problems difficult to manage and requires a different approach from the rational linear methodology followed when dealing with technical problems.

Our view is that complex societal problems require the inclusion of as many perspectives as possible. We use the term perspectives rather than participants or stakeholders because it includes viewpoints or positions as well as different dimensions such as thoughts, ideas, emotions, values and world views.

It is also our view that complex societal issues often give rise to tension or conflict. It is therefore imperative that those managing such issues have the resources and skills to create inclusive processes and deal with tensions that arise.

### *A Dialogic Approach*

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In our work with complex societal problems, we encounter some resistance to the use of dialogue. This stems, sadly, from the fact that the word has been used to describe processes that are nothing more than a monologue (conveying information) or a gathering of viewpoints and tend to exclude important perspectives.

A dialogic approach includes both one's attitude and one's way of interacting with others. Simply put, it involves resisting the immediate impulse to react or make decisions based on what one observes from one's limited perspective and exploring a problem together with those who are involved in or affected by it. The purpose of exploring the underlying causes and effects of a problem is to gain a more complete view and then move into the mode of together searching for potential ways to improve or transform a situation. We use the terms Explorative Dialogue and Generative Dialogue to distinguish between these two phases of a dialogic process.

Our dialogic logic involves four distinct phases:

- **Observation**  
*This phase involves gathering and, in some cases, mapping different perspectives or points of view. It also involves an inventory of stakeholders. It may also include the observation of tension between different stakeholders and perspectives.*
- **Exploration**  
*This phase involves deepening one's understanding of a problem by considering the causes and effects of what has been observed in the first phase. Underlying emotions, values and world views, the causes of conflicts, historical events and other conflicts that influence an issue are all examples of what might become clearer in this phase. It is*



important to include stakeholders in this phase and allow them to contribute with their perspectives.

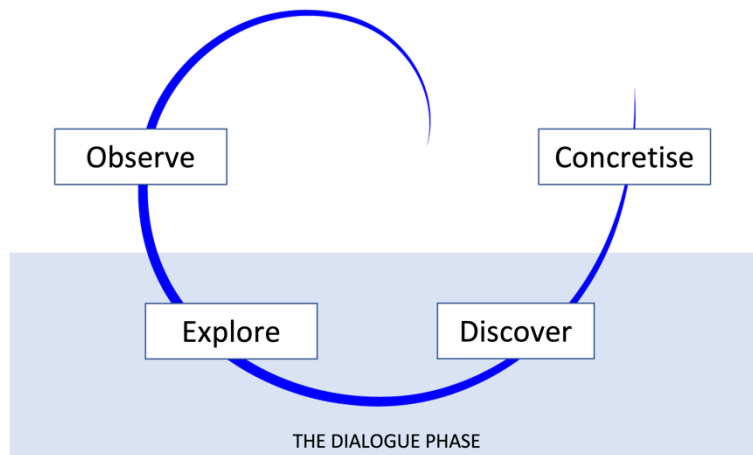
- **Generation**

*This phase is characterised by the search for potential and synergy. Given a deeper understanding of the problem, what potential exists for improving the situation? Again this is best done in dialogue with those who are affected by or involved in the matter being considered.*

- **Concretisation**

*In this final phase, the potential for transformation needs to be translated into concrete action, decisions, agreements, proposals and planning.*

Here is a diagram we often use to illustrate the four phases of a dialogic approach.



## Appendix 2: A list of meetings, participants, aims and outcomes

This is a list of the formal meetings during the first phase of the project. Informal and preparatory meetings are omitted as some of these were confidential

Date	Meeting	Aims	Participants	Outcomes
28/8	SEPA leadership	To set the framework and context for the dialogue process and to secure collaboration with SEPA in respect of the revision of the management plan revision process	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Gunnilla Skottnicka</li> <li>• Sara Hommen</li> <li>• Claes Svedlindh</li> <li>• Andreas Zetterberg</li> <li>• Jens Andersson</li> </ul>	Support and collaboration ensured
2/10	Research group	To present the dialogue process and to gain insights from the researchers from the work that they have conducted or were aware of. To ask for advice.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ann Eklund</li> <li>• Annelie Sjölander-Lindqvist</li> <li>• Birgitta Åhman</li> <li>• Camilla Sandström</li> <li>• Erica von Essen</li> <li>• Fredrik Videmo</li> <li>• Håkan Sand</li> <li>• Henrik Andren</li> <li>• Jens Frank</li> <li>• Maria Johansson</li> <li>• Thomas Jordan</li> <li>• Anders Lundvall</li> <li>• Andreas Zetterberg</li> <li>• Baharan Kazemi</li> <li>• Jens Andersson</li> </ul>	Valuable input and advice. Contact established with individual researchers and subsequent meetings with them.
7/10	LCC meeting #1	To explore the willingness of national stakeholder representatives to participate in and identify possible areas for meaningful dialogue	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• WWF</li> <li>• SJF</li> <li>• JRF</li> <li>• SSR</li> <li>• VSS</li> <li>• SNF</li> <li>• FRF</li> <li>• LRF</li> <li>• Forestry rep.</li> <li>• RF</li> <li>• LS</li> <li>• NV</li> </ul>	Agreement to give dialogue a chance. Willingness to participate and identification of an important focus area
2/11	First meeting on the Management plan with representatives from the Counties	To understand issues regarding the large carnivore management system from the point of view of the County Representatives. To inform about the project and invite participation.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lena Berg</li> <li>• Martin Broberg</li> <li>• David Börjesson</li> <li>• Marielle Cambroner</li> <li>• Maria Falkevik</li> <li>• Mona HansErs</li> <li>• Hwnrik Hansson</li> <li>• Nora Höög</li> <li>• David Hök</li> <li>• Kari Langöen</li> <li>• Jenni Lindgren</li> <li>• Sebastian Olofsson</li> <li>• Eleonor Salén</li> <li>• Michael Schneider</li> <li>• Sara Hommen</li> </ul>	A very fruitful meeting that produced a list of contentious issues that the counties are struggling to deal with.

2/12	County Board Värmland	To present the dialogue project and to be part of their conversation on rules of engagement and dialogue climate during meetings	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 20 members of the wildlife delegation under the chairmanship of the Governor Georg Andrén</li> </ul>	Informed on project and provided feedback on observations regarding dialogue climate
7/12	SEPA leadership	To examine the feasibility of any proposal to be presented to lawmakers and government and to ascertain the openness to being part of this dialogue process.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Gunnilla Skottnicka</li> <li>• Sara Hommen</li> <li>• Claes Svedlindh</li> <li>• Andreas Zetterberg</li> <li>• Magnus Eklund</li> <li>• Dan Eriksson</li> </ul>	Openness established for being part of the dialogue process as well as identifying possible pitfalls
11/12	LCC meeting #2	To present the results of the inventory process and to decide on the next step: identifying a topic where dialogue would be meaningful.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• WWF</li> <li>• SJF</li> <li>• JRF</li> <li>• SSR</li> <li>• VSS</li> <li>• SNF</li> <li>• FRF</li> <li>• LRF</li> <li>• Forestry rep.</li> <li>• RF</li> <li>• LS</li> <li>• NV</li> </ul>	Agreement to proceed. Surfacing of doubts that need to be taken into account in designing the dialogue
15/12	Research Group meeting #2	To present the main findings of the perspective inventory and to obtain input from the group	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ann Eklund</li> <li>• Annelie Sjölander-Lindqvist</li> <li>• Birgitta Åhman</li> <li>• Camilla Sandström</li> <li>• Erica von Essen</li> <li>• Fredrik Videmo</li> <li>• Håkan Sand</li> <li>• Henrik Andren</li> <li>• Jens Frank</li> <li>• Maria Johansson</li> <li>• Thomas Jordan</li> <li>• Anders Lundvall</li> <li>• Andreas Zetterberg</li> <li>• Baharan Kazemi</li> <li>• Jens Andersson</li> </ul>	Comments about the findings and clarification about its purpose. Some cautions on designing the dialogue process from experiences elsewhere.
17/3	Meeting with Agriculture Association	Participate in online meeting regarding protective hunting, share information about the ongoing national dialogue and gain input from the group	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Participants from LRF</li> <li>• External participants</li> </ul>	
25/3	LCC meeting #3	To present the response from government and lawmakers and to specify and limit the first iteration in the dialogue process	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• WWF</li> <li>• SJF</li> <li>• JRF</li> <li>• SSR</li> <li>• VSS</li> <li>• SNF</li> <li>• FRF</li> <li>• LRF</li> <li>• Forestry rep.</li> <li>• RF</li> </ul>	A clear roadmap of the process forward – as a platform for dialogue on the theme of protective hunting

31/3	Meeting with the working group for the management plan	To contribute to the management planning process from the perspective of the dialogue process within the project	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Jens Frank (Wildlife damage center)</li> <li>• Lena Berg (Counties)</li> <li>• Lotta Hallnäs (SEPA)</li> <li>• Michael Schneider (Counties)</li> <li>• Linda Ersson (SEPA)</li> <li>• Carl-Fredrik (SEPA)</li> <li>• Jessica Backeryd (SEPA)</li> <li>• Jens Andersson (SEPA)</li> <li>• Sebastian Olofsson (Counties)</li> <li>• Sara Hommen (SEPA)</li> </ul>	Several important questions and contributions to the management planning process. Also, additional input from the group regarding the first theme for dialogue. Valuable discussion regarding key issues in the management plan revision process particularly around setting clear goals and the problem of tolerance levels.
21 & 23 April	Large Carnivore Council meeting # 4 & 5	Part one of the process of discussing legislation regarding protective hunting. Issues sent in advance as well as a summary of both EU and Swedish law related to the topic.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• WWF</li> <li>• SJF</li> <li>• JRF</li> <li>• SSR</li> <li>• VSS</li> <li>• SNF</li> <li>• FRF</li> <li>• LRF</li> <li>• Forestry rep.</li> <li>• RF</li> </ul>	
18 May	Large Carnivore Council meeting # 6	Finalisation of the conversation regarding protective hunting legislation and formulation of points to be taken to the meeting with SEPA, governors and the county representatives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• WWF</li> <li>• SJF</li> <li>• JRF</li> <li>• SSR</li> <li>• VSS</li> <li>• SNF</li> <li>• FRF</li> <li>• LRF</li> <li>• Forestry rep.</li> <li>• RF</li> </ul>	Clear points to communicate to SEPA and the counties. Agreement on several contentious issues.
27 Sept	Meeting between the LCC representatives, SEPA, Management Region leadership and County representatives		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• All previous representatives for the LCC except Forestry rep</li> <li>• SEPA Dir General</li> <li>• Governors representing management regions 1 &amp; 2</li> <li>• Representative for region 3</li> </ul>	Agreement to consider proposals in the revision of guidelines for protective hunting. Agreement to improve competency and collaboration between counties
	Management Plan meeting with Conservation Groupings	To facilitate and assist with a conflictual situation that arose within the management plan revision dialogues	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sara Hommen</li> <li>• Ewa Stärnswärd,</li> <li>• Lise-lotte Norin,</li> <li>• Margareta Sturemyr ,</li> <li>• Marie Stegard (Jaktkritiker)</li> <li>• Johanna Altenstedt, DRIS</li> </ul>	Managing the potential conflict between the groups and the management plan revision group

Key for representatives on the National Predator Council:

- WWF – World Wildlife Fund (Mats Forslund)
- SJF – Swedish Hunters' Association - *Svensk Jägareförbund* (Gunnar Glöersen)
- JRF – The National Hunters' Federation – *Jägarnas riksförbund* (Solveig Larsson)
- SSR – The National Association of Swedish Sami – *Svensk Samernas Riksförbund* (Jenny Wik Karlsson)
- VSS – The Centre for Wildlife Damage – *Viltskadecenter* (Jens Frank)
- SNF – The Swedish Nature Conservation Society – *Naturskyddsförening* (Isak Isaksson)
- FRF – The Swedish Pastoral Association - *Förbundet Svensk Fäbodkultur* (Kenneth Johansson)
- LRF – The Federation of Swedish Farmers – *Landbrukarnas Riksförbund*
- Forestry rep. – A representative for the forestry industry (Michael Larsson)
- RF – Predator Society – *Rovdjursförening* (Magnus Orrebrand)
- LS – A representative for the Counties - *Länsstyrelser*
- NV – Representatives from SEPA – *Naturvårdsverket*

### Other meetings

Several meetings with stakeholder groupings together with Sara Hommen including:

- Representatives for Reindeer herders
- The Sami parliament
- Hunters' associations
- Animal rights groupings
- Federation of Swedish Farmers

9/12 – Meeting with the National Hoofed Game Council (*Klövviltsrådet*)

15/12 – Meeting with leadership and others from SEPA

## Interviews

The following people were interviewed in the perspective inventory process. The first interview was conducted on 13 October. The interviews varied in length between 45 minutes and 2 hours.

Name	Organisation	Name	Organisation
Mats Forslund (2)	WWF	Michael Schneider	Västerbotten County
Jens Frank	Wildlife damage center	Lena Berg	Dalarna County
Solveig Larsson	National Hunters' Federation	Ruona Burman	Department of Industry
Jenny Wik Karlsson	Association of Swedish Sami	Gunilla Skotnicka	SEPA
Erika von Essen	Nina (on illegal hunting)	Stefan Forsmark	Sami Parliament
Kenneth Johansson	Pastoral Association	Caroline Dixon	Dalarna/ Dept. for Environment
Anders Wetterín	Farmers Association	Stefan Widstrand	Rewilding Sweden
Ketil Skogen	Nina	Magnus Eklund	SEPA
Gunnar Glöersen	Swedish Hunters' Association	Maria Falkevik	Västmanland County
Michael Larsson	Stora Enso (forestry industry)	Georg Andrén	Västmanland County (gov)
Camila Sandström	Researcher	Anna Danell Savela	Norbotten County
Krister Persson	Nature Conservation Society	Thomas Jordan	Researcher Gothenburg Univ
Magnus Orrebrand	Predator Society	Jannine Iuvhtie	Sami herder, indigenous rights
Isak Isaksson	Nature Conservation Society	Lars-Emil	Sami herder
Sandra Jönsson	WWF	Johanna Altenstedt	DRIS (animal rights lawyer)

This is a list of the organised meetings during the second phase of the project between August 2021 and November 2022. Some informal meetings are omitted as some of these were confidential

Date	Meeting	Aims	Participants	Outcomes
Sept - Oct 2021	Värmland County	To explore possibilities for dialogue on a local level	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Maria Falkevik</li> <li>Liz Hansson</li> <li>Georg Andrén</li> </ul>	Support and collaboration ensured – choice of prototype and theme.
Sept - Oct	Preparatory meetings	To encourage participation and gather views	All subsequent participants and others who did not attend	Insights into local experiences of LCs to inform meeting planning
26/10	Round table meeting in Borgvik, Värmland	To explore the willingness of national stakeholder representatives to participate in and identify possible areas for meaningful dialogue	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Georg Andrén (Governor Värmland County)</li> <li>Liz Hansson (Värmland County)</li> <li>Ulf Ekholm (Farmer, Sheep Breeders Ass.)</li> <li>Pia Karlsson (Farmer)</li> <li>Kikki Ahlstedt (Farmer, Turist rep on County Board)</li> <li>Roy Johansson (Farmer)</li> <li>Birte Andersson (Farmer)</li> <li>Ann Liberg (Nature Conservation and County Board)</li> <li>Jan Bergstam (Nature Conservation and County Board)</li> </ul>	Agreement to give dialogue a chance. Willingness to participate and identification of an important focus area

Date	Meeting	Aims	Participants	Outcomes
3 - 7 May 2021	Several physical meetings on a round trip to Värmland, Dalarna and Västerbotten	To explore possibilities for dialogue on a local level and gather perspectives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Roy Johansson (farmer, Värmland)</li> <li>Gunnar Glöersen (Hunting Association)</li> <li>Georg Andrén and Maria Falkevik</li> <li>8 officials Dalarna County, Falun</li> <li>Erik - sheep farmer Dalarna</li> <li>Jon Henrik Fjällgren - politician Sami Parliament (Funäs)</li> <li>Lars Emil &amp; Marcus Rensberg (Ruvhten Sameby, Funäsdalen)</li> <li>Pierre Hedlund (farmer and County Board member Dalarna)</li> </ul>	Many informative meetings provided information about local sentiments and attitudes towards authorities and large carnivore management. Swedish Television crew filmed several meetings and the journey for inclusion in a 6 part series on the Large Carnivore conflict in Sweden
4 May	Värmland County Board	Communication workshop as a follow-up to the previous meeting on communication. Theme: protective hunting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>20 members of the County Board</li> <li>Georg Andrén (chair and governor of Värmland)</li> <li>Maria Falkevik</li> </ul>	Gained input into final national dialogues on protective hunting. Improved internal dialogue climate at board meetings
Sept - Oct	Preparatory meetings	To encourage participation and gather views	All participants below and others who did not attend	Insights into local experiences of LCs to inform meeting planning
26/10	Round table meeting in Borgvik, Värmland	To explore the willingness of national stakeholder representatives to participate in and identify possible areas for meaningful dialogue	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Georg Andrén (Governor Värmland County)</li> <li>Liz Hansson (Värmland County)</li> <li>Ulf Ekholm (Farmer, Sheep Breeders Ass.)</li> <li>Pia Karlsson (Farmer)</li> <li>Kikki Ahlstedt (Farmer, Turist rep on County Board)</li> <li>Roy Johansson (Farmer)</li> <li>Birte Andersson (Farmer)</li> <li>Ann Liberg (Nature Conservation and County Board)</li> <li>Jan Bergstam (Nature Conservation and County Board)</li> <li>Kim Arronsson and 2 members of local activist group and RF</li> </ul>	Agreement to give dialogue a chance. Willingness to participate and identification of an important focus area
February 2022	Preparatory meetings with Västra Götaland and Jönköping Counties	To explore possibilities and ensure involvement in round table meeting in the wolf territory Brängen. (3 Meetings in Vänersborg and Jönköping)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Nelly Grönlund</li> <li>Mia Bisther</li> <li>Linda Andersson</li> <li>Richard Larsson</li> </ul>	Information about the work of the counties and contact with local actors

February 2022	Individual meetings with local actors, activists, societies and organisations	To explore the willingness of local actors representing different perspectives and organisations to participate in and identify possible areas for meaningful dialogue	•	
28/2	First round table meeting – Mullsjö Folk High School	A meeting to gather important issues for different groups and discuss how these can be dealt with as well as issues that fall outside of the ambit of this group and how these can be understood and related to. Clarification from the county officials on their policy and practice.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Nelly Grönberg, Richard Larsson, Mia Bisther, Bo Adolfsson, Sten Johansson(Västra Götaland County)</li> <li>• Linda Andersson, Richard Larsson, Martin Rydberg and fellow tracker Kristoffer(Jönköping County)</li> <li>• Marko Barkström (hunter)</li> <li>• Joachim Eloffsson (farmer and hunter)</li> <li>• Magnus Kjeldén (Hunting association)</li> <li>• Ann Pagmar (resident)</li> <li>• Karin Lindhage, Henrik Säwe, Magnus Jacobson and 2 more(farmers)</li> <li>• Thomas Ivung, Mikael Flood from Predator Society</li> <li>• Carl-Johan Molander Ann Sörbö – residents and farmers</li> </ul>	Identified key problem areas that need to be discussed and clarified in order to create change. Established relationship between participants Meeting was attended by Swedish National Television reporter and filming crew.
10/5	Second round table meeting - Mullsjö Folk High School	A working group focusing specifically on hunting in the wolf territory and hunters' collaboration with authorities. This meeting was preceded by meetings with a local hunting team at their shooting range and with the representatives of the Predator Society in Mullsjö	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Nelly Grönberg, Richard Larsson, Mia Bisther, Bo Adolfsson, Sten Johansson(Västra Götaland County)</li> <li>• Linda Andersson, Richard Larsson, Martin Rydberg and fellow tracker Kristoffer(Jönköping County)</li> <li>• Marko Barkström, Joachim Eloffsson, Joakim Ryfors, Fredrick Holmqvist (hunters)</li> <li>• Thomas Ivung, Håkan Friedner and Mikael Flood from Predator Society</li> </ul>	Issues of trust and collaboration raised. Clarity regarding killing in defence and protective hunting. Ways to improve communication between parties.
10/5	Third round table meeting - Mullsjö Folk High School	A working group focusing on protection of livestock and measures that can be explored. Note: several farmers were unable to come due to seasonal	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Nelly Grönberg, Richard Larsson, Mia Bisther, Bo Adolfsson, Sten Johansson(Västra Götaland County)</li> <li>• Marko Barkström, Joachim Eloffsson,</li> </ul>	A discussion on different forms of protection. Result: the County in Västra Götaland will explore the issue of hunting dogs with a local farmer who has dogs



		demands. Meetings with them provided information that was discussed at the meeting	<p>Joakim Ryfors, (hunters)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Linda Andersson, Richard Larsson, Martin Rydberg and fellow tracker Kristoffer(Jönköping County)</li> <li>Thomas Ivung, Mikael Flood and Håkan Friedner from Predator Society</li> <li>Carl-Johan Molander Ann Sörbö - residents and farmers</li> </ul>	and breeds them. Alternatives options for providing fencing. Predator Council offer to assist free of charge in the erection of fencing.
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23/5	Fourth round table meeting - Mullsjö Folk High School	A meeting focusing on clarifying the approach of the counties in respect of protective hunting legislation and communication. Other current issues were also raised and discussed by the group.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Nelly Grönberg, Richard Larsson, Mia Bisther, Bo Adolfsson, Sten Johansson(Västra Götaland County)</li> <li>Linda Andersson, Richard Larsson, Martin Rydberg and fellow tracker Kristoffer(Jönköping County)</li> <li>Marko Barkström (hunter)</li> <li>Joachim Elofsson (farmer and hunter)</li> <li>Magnus Kjellén and Jerker Andersson (Hunting association)</li> <li>Ann Pagmar (resident)</li> <li>Karin Lindhage (farmer)</li> <li>Carl-Johan Molander Ann Sörbö – residents and farmers</li> <li>Thomas Ivung, Mikael Flood and M Fugelsang from Predator Society</li> <li>Carl-Johan Molander Ann Sörbö – residents and farmers</li> </ul>	
25/8	Meeting with County Board Västra Götaland	Meeting to report on the process in Mullsjö.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Members of the County Board</li> </ul>	Discussion on the value of receiving local input.

15/11	Meeting with County Board Jönköping	Meeting to report on the process in Mullsjö	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Members of the County Board</li> </ul>	
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