



Press release

Sweden's massive lynx hunt reported to the European Commission

April 3, 2024

A complaint against Sweden for its excessive yearly licensed hunt of lynx, was filed in Brussels by the Swedish Carnivore Association, stating that “the Swedish lynx hunt violates the species protection rules in the EU’s Habitats Directive”

“We want to put an end to the destructive, licensed hunting which is done yearly to minimize our lynx population”, says Magnus Orrebrant, Chairman of the Swedish Carnivore Association.

The Lynx is listed in Annex 4 of the Habitats Directive and is among the species that shall be guaranteed strict protection against intentional killings under Article 12 of the Directive. Hunting involves deliberate killing and is therefore not permitted, except strictly only for the culling of certain problem individuals. Nevertheless, Sweden still permits an annual hunt of hundreds of lynx. In 2023, according to official statistics, 188 lynx were killed during “licensed hunting” and a further 30 during so-called “protective hunting”. A total of 218.

Lynx hunting is strongly promoted by the hunting organisations, as trophy hunting and because lynx compete with humans about certain wild prey, especially roe deer. Because of this special interest group, Sweden is not following the EU Habitats Directive rules to strictly protect the lynx. In the EU Directive there is no support for annual licensed hunts of hundreds of lynx per year, which Sweden has been doing for years.

Hunting lynx is also counterproductive for society as a whole. A natural population of lynx in Sweden would reduce the number of wildlife-related traffic accidents, reduce grazing pressure and keep deer populations genetically in a good shape. Lynx are also not a serious problem for sheep farmers, since relatively few sheep are killed by lynx in Sweden and all eventual damage is paid for by the state (120 out of Sweden’s 342,000 sheep were killed or wounded by lynx in 2022, mainly in farms without Predator-safe fencing).

“Sweden’s licensed hunting of lynx is contrary to EU law and negative for society and nature. For several years we have tried to get a hearing from the Swedish courts, but so far to no avail. Now we have to take the issue to the EU Commission,” says Magnus Orrebrant.

The Swedish Carnivore Association

A Swedish NGO that works for our carnivores to be able to fill their natural roles in the ecosystems, in long term viable populations. We want to increase the understanding for the importance of predators in nature and make it easier for humans and predators to co-exist side by side. www.rovdjur.se

Chairman Magnus Orrebrant 00 46 70-516 89 31 magnus.orrebrant@rovdjur.se