



215.6

The howl of nature

The dilemmas of wolf reintroduction in Norway



By Eirik, Severin, Lison, Emmie, Sara and Tuva

Always been the enemy throughout history

BUT

Essential for ecosystems and food chain

Let's start a discussion about the reintroduction of wolves in Norway.

Restoration

Fragmentation

Land-use and Biodiversity loss

Habitat fragmentation, biodiversity loss

- Food security challenge
- Restored landscapes
→ Never as untouched nature
- **Classic approaches:**
→ Improving disturbed landscapes to resemble natural habitats
→ Could help overall ecosystem function

Ecosystem rehabilitation

Ecosystems today:

- Unsuitable, too fragmented to support the return of wolves
- Predator hunting increase the prey populations
- Overall habitat degradation
- Studies to ensure correct conditions for continue wolves reintroduction

Positive impact of reintroduction:
→ Yellowstone park

NINA: Return of native species on a rehabilitated military site (Hjerkinn)

The Timeline

Current state

Public opinion in Norway concerning the wolf is mostly positive

- No reintroduction programme in Norway
- Population estimated at 100 individuals crossing the Swedish border
- Hunting strictly regulated

History

A new hunting law passed in 1845 initiated extensive government-led campaigns to eradicate predators in Norway

- Goal: free livestock from their greatest enemy
- Effect: decline and near extinction of many of Norway's larger predators, including the wolf

Politics and society

Local, societal and economic resistance

- Farmers fear the prowling wolf amongst the sheep
- Threat to cultural practices and individual economy
- Engaging relevant stakeholders is crucial

International dilemma

Wolves cross borders

- Their reintroduction becomes an international problem
- Programs fail if not all parties agree

Critically endangered

Main cause is humans

- Hunting
- Illegal shootings
- If reintroduction occurs, strong legal protection is required to safeguard their return

Genetic issues

Founder effect

Inbreeding depression

Small population

Spine deformities

Solutions

New blood

Inspiration from Isle Royale wolves experiment

Monogamy



References