Nordic Council of Ministers

TRANSBOUNDARY COLLABORATION MODELS

suggestions for enhancing large carnivore management and wildlife crime

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This publication is also available online in a web-accessible version at:
https://pub.norden.org/nord2025-006

Introduction

The project "*Transfrontier collaboration in wildlife management, with a special focus on wildlife crime*" was a collaboration between the LIFE BOREALWOLF project, The Swedish Environmental protection Agency, County Board of Värmland (Sweden) and Police Academy in Oslo (Norway). The one year (2024) project was financed by The Nordic Council of Ministers aiming at 1) Introducing transfrontier collaboration models and networks for the Fennoscandian large carnivore governance, management and law enforcement authorities, 2) producing a plan for future steps to enhance collaboration on national and regional levels, and 3) enhancing transfrontier collaboration on existing structures and processes.

The project achieved the following:

1. National cross-border networks established – A large carnivore governance network has already been established in Fennoscandia for some years, but the project succeeded in enhancing the networking of managers and practitioners in the field through engaging them in the survey and in several meetings and the revision process of the documents produced by the project. Representatives of the national enforcement authorities were introduced during this project and were given the opportunity to reflect on both the present national activities and interest as well as possible Nordic networking and collaboration initiatives in the future. The project also brought together field personnel and experts through various activities and document revision processes.
2. Regional cross-border networks and collaboration groups established – Due to lack of resources, the project did not manage to organise meetings in all regional cross-border areas but raised the need for a regional approach in the cross-border collaboration consistently in all discussions. The meeting on the Norwegian – Swedish border brought up many good examples of how such a network could be organised in the future.
3. Action plan for future activities – The ambitious output stated in the application was not reached as the authorities in charge of the large carnivore management expressed the lack of the mandate in the project group to present an action plan for implementing the developed structural models. However, the project group did present suggestions for two alternative ways forward; 1) continue the process through a civil service assignment within the authorities in charge, or 2) test the model in a pilot project in some regional cross-border areas. These scenarios were also added to the final documents produced by the project.

Final Report and Accounts

Nordic Working group on biodiversity (NBM)

Resources

→ Suurpetohallinto Ruotsissa, Norjassa ja Suomessa
→ Rovdjursförvaltning i Sverige, Norge och Finland
→ Rovdyrforvaltning i Sverige, Norge og Finland

Transfrontier Collaboration in Fennoscandian Large Carnivore Management

Intention

This paper is produced within the project *Transfrontier Collaboration in wildlife management with a special focus on wildlife crime,* with additional support from national and regional officials in each country.

The existing large carnivore management in Fennoscandia could be further enhanced through building on the existing common structures for transnational networking and collaboration. This would further support the extensive collective capacity in Nordic management systems to be utilised for promoting and fostering increased collaboration in wildlife management and governance efforts across the borders. The intention of this paper is to investigate the preconditions, challenges and possibilities for developing the existing structures.

Further, this paper presents a structural model for a transnational coordinating platform that would provide a long-term basis for future networking and collaboration between scientists, experts and practitioners. This paper also suggests themes that could be discussed on a Fennoscandian level. The themes have been collated from a survey sent to national and regional officials working with large carnivore management, to enforcement officials, and NGO's.

An additional paper focuses specifically on Fennoscandian conditions and networking possibilities in preventing wildlife crime.

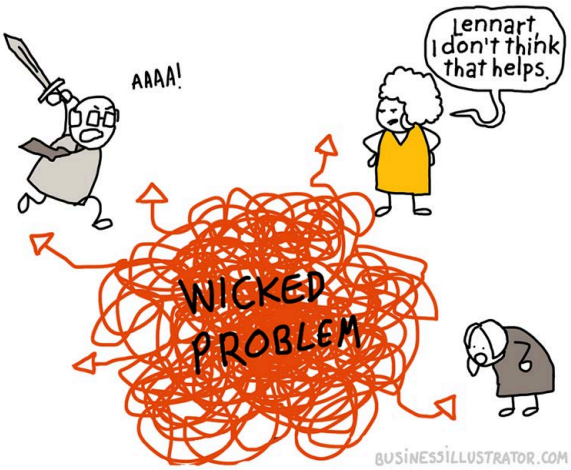
Common preconditions

A story of conservation success but also conflicts

The large carnivore populations in the Fennoscandian area have recovered during the last decades. While the benefits of conserving wildlife populations are clearly visible and enjoyed by most residents, the increasing number of large carnivores has also resulted in human-wildlife conflicts in rural areas, partly exacerbated by the polarisation between rural and urban parts of society, trust issues with different values and perspectives on wildlife management. The large carnivore issue is also used as a political tool for the rural-urban conflict debate.

Wicked problem

The management of large carnivores can be seen as a so called "wicked problem". Characteristics of these unsolvable society issues are a high level of complexity due to uncertain circumstances and many conflicts of values involved. Handling the large carnivore conflict successfully requires knowledge and understanding about the complexity of the problems and the solutions.



Committed to preserve

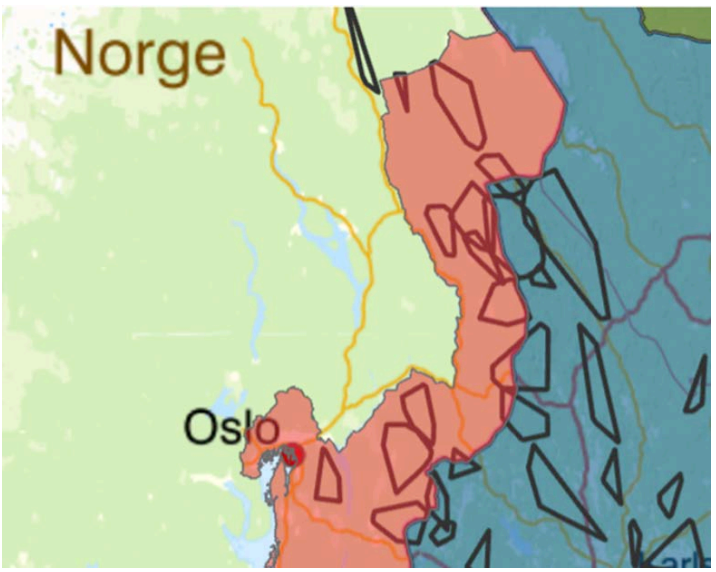
In order to protect species and environments in a sustainable way, the Nordic countries have committed to preserving the large carnivores in the long-term. Through international agreements, legal frameworks and national laws and decisions, the populations have increased in number and distribution. Sweden, Norway and Finland have signed a framework paper for transboundary cooperation on management and conservation of wolves and wolverines in Fennoscandia. The implementation of the population management is based on national policies and strategies in each country.

Legal frames

All Fennoscandian countries have signed the Convention on Biodiversity, The Bern Convention, Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora, the Malawi Principles and The Aarhus Convention. Since Sweden and Finland are members of the EU they also have to adhere to the Habitats Directive, while Norway can manage their wildlife according to the frameworks of the international agreements. Norway has committed to safeguarding the interests of the Sami people through the ratification of the ILO Convention. Within these frames each country has developed their own policy and regulations on large carnivore management.

Wildlife knows no borders

No physical barriers close the borders between our countries. Wildlife moves freely across our national frontiers, sometimes seen as a resource on one side and causing damages on the other. The home ranges of large carnivores often cross administrative borders and span more than one administrative unit.



The map shows an example of wolf territories located right at the Swedish-Norwegian border.
Source: Rovbase

Ecological frames

Fennoscandian countries have the area's natural resources in common, including wildlife. The countries share geographical gradient differences regarding temperature, season length and habitat types, as well as the challenges that come with sharing the landscape with wildlife and human activities such as livestock breeding, reindeer herding, forestry, hunting and other forms of recreation. The management of all four large carnivores should strive to secure the connectivity within the populations and allow sufficient gene flow.

Complex issue demands extensive resources

Wildlife populations that can cause concerns, damages and fear require extensive management efforts. The landscape is shared by humans and large carnivores, sometimes in a way that results in increased demands on management actions. Growing large carnivore populations is ecologically beneficial, but does at the same time claim increasing costs.

3,6	Swedish national state support to the County Boards of Administration for large carnivore monitoring 2024.
12,1	Compensation paid for large carnivore related to damages on sheep (2022) and reindeer (2022-23) in Norway.
0,5	Annual cost for wolf pack monitoring in Finland.

Cost examples (million €) from large carnivore management in each country.

Economic frames

Global and European commitments aiming for a strict conservation of large carnivores has led to growing populations. All fennoscandian countries have shown a political will to finance the costs as a result of the growing populations. This has resulted in an increasing demand of economic resources for management actions such as mitigation and compensating for the negative impacts on human livelihoods and activities. There are costs at all levels of the management system, also indirectly through mental and physical constraints to pursue livelihoods and ways of life in the rural areas.

Towards coexistence

The majority of Nordic citizens view large carnivores as a valuable part of nature, increasing the biodiversity. However, the presence of large carnivores can also raise concerns and fears. Mostly it is associated with losses of livestock, semidomestic reindeer and hunting dogs. Reaching and sustaining viable large carnivore populations is a challenge if people feel they cannot coexist with them. Strongly differing views on how to manage the populations have led to a polarising political debate. This is apparent in societal discourse, not least on social media platforms.

One frequent discussion concerns criticising the authorities in charge of the management. The lack of trust towards the authorities poses substantial challenges for the management, and has in its extreme form led to the occurring of poaching of large carnivores. These expressions is a threat to biodiversity, the rule of law and to the democratic institutions.

Socio-political frames

The Fennoscandian countries share many societal preconditions, such as history, culture, values and society structure. The common high valuation of nature is deeply rooted, both for its intrinsic value and as a resource for sustainable use. Fennoscandia is built on transparent democratic societies. This provides a basis for striving for the common good, but also requires a fair and equitable approach to large carnivore management. Policy and management of large carnivores are frequently put on the political agenda in all three countries.

Enhanced collaboration, despite differences

The Fennoscandian countries differ in the structures and policies of the large carnivore management systems, despite similar historical and cultural backgrounds and challenges. The differences are apparent both in the way that management authorities are organised, as well as by the administrative level where management decisions are made (see annexes). In Sweden and Norway, the management is partly decentralised, while in Finland it is more centralised.

Despite differences in governance and management systems, the countries are dependent on each other to sustain thriving large carnivore populations and to work towards a fair and equitable coexistence. Through enhancing the existing transnational networking and collaboration structure, the extensive capacity in the national management systems would be further developed. It would also support and engage the authorities and stakeholders involved to find a common path towards managing the conflict and coexistence.

Additional approaches needed

There is a long tradition of using a wide selection of wildlife management tools in Fennoscandia. The challenges with increasing large carnivore populations require more attention in the management systems to enhance the coexistence. Enhanced collaboration and dialogue between citizens, stakeholders, scientists and authorities is one example.

Established networks and collaboration

There is a long history of transnational networking and collaboration regarding large carnivores. Today, governance issues are discussed annually in directorate meetings (coordinated by the Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry of Finland, Norwegian Environment Agency and Swedish Environmental Protection Agency). On an expert level, a joint population monitoring group is coordinating and developing the common monitoring methods and processes, the database and data sharing.

To further develop and strengthen the cooperative management of the shared large carnivore populations, joint framework papers for transboundary cooperation on wolves and wolverines have been adopted. Although the documents are not legally binding (links on page 18), they describe the long history of collaboration between governments and authorities, and outlines ongoing and future collaboration to secure viable large carnivore populations in Fennoscandia.

Scientific networks, national wildlife conferences and Nordic scientific platforms are other examples of established networks and platforms. To some extent, personnel exchange between countries have occurred.

Hence, there is a history of dialogue and collaboration between the countries that could be further enhanced to meet the increasing need for cooperation in cross-border large carnivore management.

Transnational structural Model for Networking and Collaboration

There is a long history of transnational networking and collaboration regarding large carnivores. Today, governance issues are discussed annually in directorate meetings (coordinated by the Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry of Finland, Norwegian Environment Agency and Swedish Environmental Protection Agency). On an expert level, a joint population monitoring group is coordinating and developing the common monitoring methods and processes, the database and data sharing.

To further develop and strengthen the cooperative management of the shared large carnivore populations, joint framework papers for transboundary cooperation on wolves and wolverines have been adopted. Although the documents are not legally binding (References further down in the document), they describe the long history of collaboration between governments and authorities, and outlines ongoing and future collaboration to secure viable large carnivore populations in Fennoscandia.

Scientific networks, national wildlife conferences and Nordic scientific platforms are other examples of established networks and platforms. To some extent, personnel exchange between countries have occurred.

The model proposes to further expand a possibility to form expert groups upon demand, in addition to the existing monitoring group. Suggested themes that could be covered are presented (further down in the document) . These groups could easily be modified or dissolved as necessary. Operative actions, such as projects and task forces, could be initiated by any level in the model.

Cross-border Regional Networking and Collaboration

The structural model also aims at supporting regional authorities to address common issues, challenges and opportunities on an operational level.

At the regional level, the model is also focusing on the expert level by presenting a joint group of regional focal points that would provide coordination and facilitation services on a regional level. It would be connected to both regional and national decision makers through the relevant focal points. Similar expert groups as in the national model could be formed upon demand to address issues of common interests (examples of themes on page 12). These groups can easily be modified or closed when needed. Operative actions, such as projects and task forces, could be initiated by any level in the model. The presented flexible structural model allows for varying structures between countries and regions.

The structural models are suggestions brought forward by this project. They are not representing the views of the official large carnivore management administration.

Directorate meetings

- Discussions on political and governance level
- Joint frameworks
- Delegation of development or implementation of joint interests

↑ ↓

National focal points

- 1-2 persons per nation
- Reports to Directorate meeting
- Coordinatiing, facilitatiing and communicating on themes and initiatives
- The first point of contact between the platform and the national networks of authorities and experts.
- May initiate national **expert groups and operative action** on demand

↑ ↓

Regional focal points

- 1-2 persons per region
- Reports to the national focal point
- Coordinatiing, facilitatiing and communicating on joint regional themes and initiatives
- The first point of contact between the platform and the regional networks of authorities and experts.
- May initiate regional **expert groups and operative action** on demand

Suggested themes and subjects of common interest

The following examples of themes for networking and collaboration could be of mutual interest in the future at the Fennoscandian level. The themes have been identified with other transnational collaboration models as inspiration.

Governance

Prerequisites for harmonising frameworks, structures and processes

Common knowledge base

Common reference values for the Fennoscandian populations

Rules and regulations

Common rules and regulations for collaboration

Communication and dialogue

Common guidelines on how to communicate in LC management

Management

Implementation of framework papers

Stakeholder involvement

Sharing materials and tools for communication, dialogue and stakeholder involvement

Monitoring

Harmonisation of reporting and documentation

Conflict resolution

Joint training packages in conflict resolution in the Nordics

Research and development

Cost-benefit analysis of wildlife management

Wildlife crime

Established coordination and facilitation of cross border collaboration

Suggestions for next steps

Based on discussions with decision makers in all three countries at the transnational meetings, the project suggest that the structural model could be further developed through:

1. a civil service assignment within the official large carnivore management administration in the three countries.
2. testing its functionality in a pilot project in some regional cross-border areas.

Annexes

- Overview of national management structures and functions
- Structural models for transnational networking and collaboration platforms
- Further information on national large carnivore management and transnational collaboration in wildlife management
- About the project

Overview of enforcement structures and functions

FINLAND - MANAGEMENT

Operative activities

Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry
- Bills, regulations and guidance on hunting and wildlife policy
- National management plan
- Decisions on hunting quotas

Wildlife Agency
- Management implementation and coordination
- Damage prevention and support
- Decisions on hunting and derogations
- Information, communication and training
- Guidance on management, damage prevention and compensation

Wildlife management Associations
- Local management, coordination and training
- Coordination of large carnivore observation persons
- Coordination of Large Wildlife Assistance teams
- Local information and communication

Supporting activities

Metsähallitus
- Surveillance and patrolling
- Coordination of surveillance with other enforcement authorities

National Food Agency
- Damage compensation
- Wildlife disease monitoring
- Autopsies
- Guidance

Police
- Intelligence
- Patrolling
- Investigation of wildlife crime
- Lethal control

Natural Resource institute
- Population monitoring
- Research on large carnivores

Stakeholder involvement

The Sámi Parliament
- Advisory capacity

National large carnivore council
- Stakeholder representatives
- Advisory capacity

Wolf territory groups
- Local stakeholders
- Information sharing and initiatives

Regional large carnivore councils
- Stakeholder representatives
- Advisory capacity

NORWAY - MANAGEMENT

Operative activities

Ministry of Climate and Environment
- Bills, regulations and guidance on wildlife policy

Environment Agency
- National management regulations
- Guidance on management, damage prevention and monitoring
- Delegation of hunting decisions to regional administration
- Information and communication at national level

Large carnivore management committees
- Regional politicians
- Regional management plans
- Decisions on regional hunting quotas

Nature Inspectorate
- National and regional operative management
- Sampling for population monitoring
- Damage inspection
- Lethal control
- Guidance and information

Regional County Governor's office
- Regional management and hunting decisions
- Decision on mitigation and compensation
- Guidance on damage prevention

Municipalities
- Protective hunting

Supporting activities

Police
- intelligence
- Patrolling
- Investigation of Wildlife crime

Ministry of Agriculture and Food
- Bills, regulations and guidance on Hunting

Rovdata
- Population monitoring
- Research on large carnivores

National Verterinary Intitute
- Autopsies
- Wildlife disease monitoring
- Guidance

Stakeholder involvement

National LC council
- Stakeholder representatives
- Advisory capacity

The Sámi Parliament
- Advisory capacity

Benchmarking structural models for transnational networking and collaboration

Structural models for transnational networking and collaboration have many advantages. The functions of continuity, process management and learning are more efficient if they are organised at a transnational level, available to all national and regional authorities. Another advantage is that we can build on already existing collaboration and management structures. The project has gathered inspiration from various parts of the world.

The Barents Euro-Arctic Council is the official body for inter-governmental co-operation in the Barents Region. The objective of Barents collaboration is sustainable development in all fields of cooperation.

Homepage - Barents Euro-Arctic Council (barents-council.org)

Nordkalottrådet is a political network and a Nordic collaboration body under the Nordic Council of Ministers. It develops common policies and co-ordinates the operational activities.

https://nordkalottradet.org/

Gränsetjänsten / Border Service is in charge of the cross-borders operational activities between Finland, Norway and Sweden. It is governed by the Nordkalottenrådet.

https://nordkalottradet.org/

Trans Frontier Conservation Area (TFCA) aims at collaboratively governing and managing shared natural and cultural resources across national borders for improved biodiversity conservation and socio-economic development.

https://tfcaportal.org/

Grensevilt project developed a structural model for a solid base for enhanced transnational, inclusive, conflict-reducing multispecies wildlife management. The regional operational model was adapted to the Swedish - Norwegian border.

Commission for Environmental Cooperation (CEC) is an intergovernmental organisation supporting transnational cooperation, covering environmental, economic and social linkages between Canada, Mexico and the United States.

http://www.cec.org/

Further information on national large carnivore management and transnational collaboration in wildlife management

Examples of Agreements and frameworks on transnational collaboration wildlife management.

Frameworks for transboundary cooperation on management and conservation of large carnivores in Fennoscandia:

- Wolves: https://www.naturvardsverket.se/4acc17/globalassets/amnen/jakt-och-vilt/dokument/framework-ortransboundary-cooperation-on-management-andconservation-of-wolves-in-fennoscandi.pdf
- Wolverine: https://www.naturvardsverket.se/4acc18/globalassets/amnen/jakt-och-vilt/dokument/framework-fortransboundary-cooperation-on-management-andconservation-of-wolverines-in-fennoscandia.pdf
- Memorandum of Understanding regarding the establishment and continuance of a public web-based database (Skandobs) for geographic information on large carnivore observations in Norway and Sweden (Norwegian Institute for Nature Research and Swedish Environmental Protection Agency). 25 March 2012. Inte publicerad
- Memorandum of Understanding regarding the establishment and continuance of a monitoring system for large carnivores in Sweden and Norway (Norwegian Environment Agency and Swedish Environmental Protection Agency). 25 March 2015. Inte publicerad

CEC: Agreement on Environmental Cooperation:
http://www.cec.org/about/agreement-onenvironmental-cooperation/

Examples of templates on working papers for transnational collaboration in wildlife management.

CEC:

Strategic Plan 2021-2025 (cec.org)

Operational Plan 2023 (cec.org)

Terms of Operation Working Groups (cec.org)

Further information on national large carnivore governance and management

FINLAND

- **Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry:** https://mmm.fi/en/wildlife-and-game
- **Wildlife Agency:** https://riista.fi/en/gameadministration/finnish-wildlife-agency/
- **Information on large carnivores:** https://www.largecarnivores.fi/frontpage.html
- **Population monitoring:** https://www.luke.fi/fi/luonnonvaratieto/tiedetta-ja-tietoa/suurpedot

NORWAY

- **Environment Agency:** https://www.environmentagency.no/
- **County Governor** www.statsforvalterne.no
- **Ministry of Climate and Environment** www.kld.dep.no
- **Rovdata -** www.rovdata.no
- **Rovbase -** www.rovbase.no
- **Miljøvedtaksregisteret** www.miljovedtak.no
- **Lovdata -** www.lovdata.no

SWEDEN

- **Environment Agency:** https://www.naturvardsverket.se/en/
- **Information on large carnivores:** https://www.de5stora.com/
- **County administrative boards:** https://www.lansstyrelsen.se/english.html
- **rovbase.se:** https://rovbase.se/
- **Viltskadecenter:** https://www.slu.se/centrumbildningar-ochprojekt/viltskadecenter/

About the Project

The project *Transfrontier Collaboration in wildlife management with a special focus on wildlife crime* is a collaboration between the Swedish Environmental Protection Agency, The County Board of Värmland (Sweden), Natural Resources Institute Finland LUKE and Police Academy in Oslo (Norway). The project is closely working with national and regional authorities and agencies in all three countries throughout the project.

The one year project is financed by the Nordic working group for Biodiversity (NBM) under the Nordic Council of Ministers and aims to:

- Introduce transfrontier collaboration models and networks for the Fennoscandian large carnivore governance, management and law enforcement authorities
- Produce a plan for future steps to enhance collaboration on national and regional levels
- Enhance transfrontier collaboration on existing structures and processes

This document has been compiled by the project group of *Transfrontier Collaboration in wildlife management with a special focus on wildlife crime*. Project beneficiaries take full responsibility for the materials included in this document. Nordic Council of Ministers is not responsible for materials or any use that may be made of the information the document contains.

Transfrontier Collaboration in Fennoscandia to combat wildlife crime

Intention

This paper is produced within the project *Transfrontier Collaboration in wildlife management with a special focus on wildlife crime,* with additional support from national and regional officials in each country. *In this paper, wildlife crime covers activities related to poaching.*

The existing wildlife crime prevention and enforcement in Fennoscandia could be further enhanced through building on the existing common structure for transnational networking and collaboration. This would further support the extensive collective capacity in national enforcement authorities to be utilised for promoting and fostering joint efforts across the borders. The intention of this paper is to investigate the preconditions, challenges and possibilities for developing the existing structure.

Further, this paper presents a structural model for a transnational coordinating platform that would provide a long-term basis for future networking and collaboration between experts and field personnel. In addition, it shows a suggestion for a structural model for a cross-border regional networking and collaboration. This paper also suggests themes that could be brought up for discussion on a Fennoscandian level. The themes have been collated from a survey sent to national and regional officials working with large carnivore management, and to enforcement officials.

An additional paper focuses specifically on Fennoscandian conditions and networking possibilities in enhancing transnational and cross-border large carnivore governance and management.

Wildlife crime in the Fennoscandia region

Wildlife crime can be pursued based on different motives. Lack of trust in the authorities in charge of large carnivore policy and management is one of them, which has in its extreme form led to serious problems with wildlife crime. This poses threats to biodiversity, the rule of law and to the democratic institutions. Wildlife moves freely across national borders. The countries share elongated borders, that are difficult to effectively surveil and patrol. This creates an enabling environment for trans-boundary crimes including large carnivore poaching.

Wildlife crime in the Nordics differs from other types of crime in the region, as these crimes are difficult to detect. The perpetrators of illegal killings seem to be partly surrounded by a culture of silent acceptance and, to some extent, a support of the underlying motives and driving forces behind the offences. This creates conflicts with law enforcement agencies and community members who object to wildlife crime.

Wildlife crime activities in the Fennoscandian countries occurs continuously. The estimated number of undetected cases of wildlife crime is significant. Few of the suspected cases are investigated and even fewer lead to criminal convictions. Hence, most wildlife crime still go undetected and unpunished.

The Fennoscandian countries share many legal, ecological, economic and sociopolitical conditions. The growing populations of large carnivores is a conservation success. However, it has also resulted in increasing damages, worries and differing views and values on large carnivores and their management, and eventually even lack of trust in the authorities.

Legal framework for cross border law enforcement collaboration

International frameworks for enforcement collaboration on wildlife crime and wildlife conservation builds on agreements, conventions and laws: **CITES, Bern Convention, EU's birds habitats directives.**

Collaboration between law enforcement agencies within EU is designed to prevent, detect and investigate serious criminal offences and organised crime across country borders. This collaboration involves Ministries of Justice and Internal Affairs, courts, prosecutor authorities, customs, police authorities, border guards and surveillance authorities.

Relevant EU conventions and agreements for enforcement collaboration

Treaty on the Functioning of the EU (TFEU)

- Convention Implementing the Schengen Agreement (CISA)
- Prüm Convention

These agreements contain rules on operational police cooperation, such as Police patrolling, investigation, intelligence sharing, effective notification and use of biometric data (DNA files etc.)

Stepping up the Nordic police collaboration

An example of an agreement on police collaboration in the Nordic countries, is the *Administrative cooperation agreement between the police authorities in the Nordic countries*. This agreement was signed in 2018. It aims to facilitate cross-border police cooperation and simplify procedures in the Nordic countries.

What about Norway?

Since Norway is not a member of the EU, it does not have to adhere to the strict EU legal frameworks, but does follow the obligations and policies of other international agreements.

Stronger together, despite challenges

Evaluation reports suggest that cross-border law enforcement cooperation in the Fennoscandian region is critical to successfully combat wildlife crime and trafficking. Although the Nordic countries have signed and ratified international and regional agreements, and absorbed them into the national legislation, there is still room for improvement on the operational level. However, there is a strong common interest in increasing the efforts to smoothen cross-border activities.

The joint Nordic law enforcement efforts handling the risk of increasing wildlife crime has so far mainly been operated through internal processes in each country despite facing the same challenges. While some joint measures have been introduced, law enforcement is often weak and cross-border cooperation targeting wildlife crime is insufficient on an operative level.

What do we lack?

- Joint cross-border governance mechanisms and clear mandates on law enforcement collaboration
- Clear sectoral boundaries between enforcement authorities
- Joint partner state policy framework
- Joint investigative and analytical capacity, in particular intelligence analysis
- A perspective on the problem at a Fennoscandian level

Challenges to overcome

- Limited resources. Agencies struggle with an overwhelming workload which does not correspond to available resources.
- Limited or unclear mandates
- Cultural differences between authorities and countries, leading to misunderstandings
- Legislation system conflicts
- Trust issues between law enforcement-officials, which is detrimental to any initiative on transboundary collaboration.

Established networks and collaboration

Transnational networking and communication between enforcement agencies have a long history, but a structured cross-border interaction in combating wildlife crime has not been established in Fennoscandia. The cross-border networking and collaboration is mainly based on personal and ad hoc initiatives, which makes it vulnerable to changes. Cross-border networking and collaboration have so far been established only to some extent and for certain levels and themes.

Hence, there is a potential for further enhancing the present dialogue and collaboration between the countries to meet the increasing need for cooperation in cross-border crime prevention and law enforcement. The functions of continuity, process management and learning are more efficient if they are organised at a Nordic level, available to all authorities.

Transnational Model for National Collaboration and Management

An initial step forward would be forming a Fennoscandian structural model that facilitates continuity. The national model aims at supporting national experts and authorities to address common issues, challenges and opportunities of common concern. The model is designed to be slim, adaptive and adjustable to support the coordination, administration and communication of the cross-border collaboration in the long-term.

This model proposes establishing a strategical level with **annual directorate meetings** consisting of representatives from the national enforcement authorities, such as the police directorates or boards. The expert level would consist of a joint group of **national focal points** (one per country) that would provide coordination, facilitation and communication services. The focal points would also act as the first point of contact between the platform and the national networks of authorities and experts. The model proposes a possibility to form **expert groups** on demand. Suggested themes that could be covered are presented on page 9 in this paper. These groups could easily be modified or closed when needed. **Operative actions**, such as projects and task forces, could be initiated by any level in the model.

Cross-border Regional Networking and Collaboration

The structural model also aims at supporting regional authorities to address common issues, challenges and opportunities on an operational level.

At the regional level, the model is also focusing on the expert level by presenting a joint group of regional focal points (one per region) that would provide coordination and facilitation services on a regional level. It would be connected to both regional and national decision makers through the relevant focal points. Regional expert groups could be formed upon demand to address issues of common interests (examples of themes on next page). These groups can easily be modified or closed when needed. Operative actions, such as projects and task forces, could be initiated by any level in the model. The presented flexible structural model allows for varying structures between countries and regions.

Directorate meetings

- Discussions on political and governance level
- Joint frameworks
- Delegation of development or implementation of joint interests

↑ ↓

National focal points

- 1-2 persons per nation
- Reports to Directorate meeting
- Coordinatiing, facilitatiing and communicating on themes and initiatives
- The first point of contact between the platform and the national networks of authorities and experts.
- May initiate national **expert groups and operative action** on demand

↑ ↓

Regional focal points

- 1-2 persons per region
- Reports to the national focal point
- Coordinatiing, facilitatiing and communicating on joint regional themes and initiatives
- The first point of contact between the platform and the regional networks of authorities and experts.
- May initiate regional **expert groups and operative action** on demand

Suggested themes for networking and collaboration

The following examples of themes for networking and collaboration could be of mutual interest in the future on a Fennoscandian level. Examples of suggestions that build upon surveys and meetings within the project on themes of common interest.

Governance
Evaluation of prerequisites for harmonisation

Capacity building and mentorship
Joint operations

Staff exchange

Joint operations

Rules and regulations
Permanent permission to cross the border

Communication and dialogue
Proactive engagement with community

Relation building

Monitoring and evaluation
Structured cooperation to ensure continuity

Relation building

Conflict resolution
Mixed patrols

Joint information campaigns

Research and development

Monitoring tool for cross border collaboration

Joint standard operating procedure (SOP)

Intelligence and information sharing

Joint information sharing

Tools for conflict resolution

Harmonisation of information sharing for operative and intelligence work

Suggestions for next steps

Based on discussions with decision makers in all three countries at the transnational meetings, the project suggest that the structural model could be further developed through:

1. a civil service assignment within the official large carnivore management administration in the three countries.
2. testing its functionality in a pilot project in some regional cross-border areas.

Annexes

- Overview of national management structures and functions
- Structural models for transnational networking and collaboration platforms
- Further information on national Law enforcement on wildlife crime and transnational collaboration models in wildlife management
- About the project

Overview of enforcement structures and functions

FINLAND - Wildlife Crime

Operative activities

Police Board
- Guidance and delegation on wildlife crime policy

Police
- National and regional intelligence, surveillance and investigation of wildlife crime
- Information and communication
- Preventive measures

Metsähallitus
- Surveillance and patrolling
- Support in intelligence, and investigation of wildlife crime
- Coordination of surveillance with other enforcement authorities
- Preventive measures
- Information and communication

Border Guards
- Surveillance and patrolling along borders
- Border control
- Support in intelligence

Customs
- Support in intelligence
- Border control

Supporting activities

Wildlife Agency
- Coordination of voluntary patrollers
- Implementation of national large carnivore management

Prosecution Authority
- Investigation and prosecution of wildlife crime

National veterinary institute
- Autopsies

Natural Resource institute
- Population monitoring
- Research on large carnivores

NORWAY – Wildlife Crime

Operative activities

Police Board
- Guidance and delegation on wildlife crime policy

Police
- National and regional intelligence, surveillance and investigation of wildlife crime
- Information and communication
- Preventive measures

- **National Authority for Investigation and Prosecution of Economic and Environmental Crime**
- Coordinating intelligence, surveillance and investigation of wildlife crime

Nature Inspectorate
- Surveillance and patrolling
- Support in intelligence, and investigation of wildlife crime
- Guidance and information

Supporting activities

Customs
- Support in intelligence
- Border control

National Veterinary Institute
Autopsies

Prosecution Authority
- Investigation and prosecution of wildlife crime

ROVDATA
- Population monitoring
- Research on large carnivores

Benchmarking structural models for transnational networking and collaboration

Structural models for transnational and regional networking and collaboration have many advantages. The functions of continuity, process management and learning are more efficient if they are organized at a transnational level, available to all national and regional authorities. Another advantage is that they can build on already existing collaboration and management structures. The project has gathered inspiration from various parts of the world.

The Barents Euro-Arctic Council is the official body for inter-governmental co-operation in the Barents Region. The objective of Barents collaboration is sustainable development in all fields of cooperation.

Homepage - Barents Euro-Arctic Council (barents-council.org)

Nordkalottrådet is a political network and a Nordic collaboration body under the Nordic Council of Ministers. It develops common policies and co-ordinates the operational activities.

https://nordkalottradet.org/

Gränsetjänsten / Border Service is in charge of the operative cross-borders activities between Finland, Norway and Sweden. It is governed by the Nordkalottenrådet.

https://nordkalottradet.org/

Trans Frontier Conservation Area (TFCA) aims at collaboratively governing and managing shared natural and cultural resources across national borders for improved biodiversity conservation and socio-economic development.

https://tfcaportal.org/

Grensevilt project developed a structural model for a solid base for enhanced transnational, inclusive, conflict-reducing multispecies wildlife management. The regional operational model was adapted to the Swedish - Norwegian border.

Commission for Environmental Cooperation (CEC) is an intergovernmental organization supporting transnational cooperation, covering environmental, economic and social linkages between Canada, Mexico and the United States.

http://www.cec.org/

Further information on national Law enforcement on wildlife crime and transnational collaboration models in wildlife management

Information on Wildlife crime and enforcement authorities.

FINLAND

Ministry of the Interior: https://intermin.fi/en/frontpage

Police: https://poliisi.fi/en/about-the-police

The Finnish border guard: https://raja.fi/en/frontpage

The Finnish Customs: https://tulli.fi/en/frontpage

Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry: https://mmm.fi/en/wildlife-and-game

Metsähallitus, Game and fisheries services:
https://www.eraluvat.fi/en/wilderness-supervision/game-and-fisheries-wardens

NORWAY

Police: https://www.okokrim.no/

Environment Agency: https://www.environmentagency.no/

County Governor - www.statsforvalterne.no

Ministry of Climate and Environment - www.kld.dep.no

Rovdata - www.rovdata.no

Rovbase - www.rovbase.no

Miljøvedtaksregisteret - www.miljovedtak.no

Lovdata - www.lovdata.no

SWEDEN:

The Swedish police: https://polisen.se/en/

County administrative boards: https://www.lansstyrelsen.se/english.html

Environment Agency: https://www.naturvardsverket.se/en/

Information on large carnivores: https://www.de5stora.com/

rovbase.se: https://rovbase.se

Wildlife damage center: https://www.slu.se/centrumbildningar-ochprojekt/viltskadecenter/

Examples of Agreement on transnational collaboration between law enforcement authorities

The Schengen Agreement and convention: EC: Agreement on Environmental Cooperation: http://www.cec.org/about/agreement-on-environmental-cooperation/

Nordic agreement on cross-border police collaboration: www.norden.org/sv/news/forstarkt-nordiskt-polissamarbete

Reports on illegal hunting and wildlife crime:

- Brå report. 2007. Illegal jakt på stora rovdjur.
- Suutarinen J, and Kojola I. 2017. Poaching regulates the legally hunted wolf population in Finland.
- Häggström H. 2022. Wildlife crime and trans-frontier law enforcement cooperation- a case study on Northern Europe. Försvarshögskolan. Inte publicerad.
- ETS No.104 Convention on the Conservation of European Wildlife and Natural Habitats:
- Skogen K, and Krange O. 2020. The Political Dimensions of Illegal Wolf Hunting: Anti-Elitism, Lack of Trust in Institutions and Acceptance of Illegal Wolf Killing among Norwegian Hunters.
- Boucht J. 2024. Cross-border Use of Police Powers within the EU – A Finnish, Norwegian and Swedish Perspective

Examples of templates for strategic and operational plans and Terms of Operation for expert groups for transnational collaboration in wildlife management.

CEC:

CEC's Strategic Plan 2021-2025: Strategic Plan 2021-2025 (cec.org)

Operational Plan 2023: Operational Plan 2023 (cec.org)

Terms of operation of expert groups: Terms of Operation Working Groups (cec.org)

About the Project

The project *Transfrontier Collaboration in wildlife management with a special focus on wildlife crime* is a collaboration between The Swedish Environmental protection Agency, County Board of Värmland (Sweden), Natural Resources Institute Finland LUKE and Police Academy in Oslo (Norway). This paper has been produced in close collaboration with Henrik Häggström, Swedish Defence university. The project is closely working with national and regional authorities and agencies in all three countries throughout the project.

The one year project is financed by the Nordic working group for Biodiversity (NBM) under the Nordic Council of Ministers and aims to:

- Introduce transfrontier collaboration models and networks for the Fennoscandian large carnivore governance, management and law enforcement authorities
- Produce a plan for future steps to enhance collaboration on national and regional levels
- Enhance transfrontier collaboration on existing structures and processes

This document has been compiled by the project group of *Transfrontier Collaboration in wildlife management with a special focus on wildlife crime* and in close collaboration with Swedish Defence University. Project beneficiaries take full responsibility for the materials included in this document. Nordic Council of Ministers is not responsible for materials or any use that may be made of the information the document contains.

About this publication

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Nordic co-operation

Nordic co-operation is one of the world's most extensive forms of regional collaboration, involving Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Norway, Sweden, and the Faroe Islands, Greenland and Åland.

Nordic co-operation has firm traditions in politics, economics and culture and plays an important role in European and international forums. The Nordic community strives for a strong Nordic Region in a strong Europe.

Nordic co-operation promotes regional interests and values in a global world. The values shared by the Nordic countries help make the region one of the most innovative and competitive in the world.

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