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CONVENTION ON THE CONSERVATION OF EUROPEAN WILDLIFE
AND NATURAL HABITATS

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Swiss Wolf Concept

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Document prepared by

BUWAL Bundesamt für Umwelt, Wald und Landschaft
OFEFP Office fédéral de l'environnement, des forêts et du paysage
UFAFP Ufficio federale dell'ambiente, delle foreste e del paesaggio
UFAGC Uffizi federal d'ambient, guaud e cuntrada

Swiss Wolf Concept

1. Reason for the concept

1.1 Legal terms of reference and legal status

Article 10 paragraph 6 of the Decree of 29 February 1988 on hunting and the protection of wild mammals and birds (OChP; RS 922.01) sets out the following terms of reference: The Federal Office of the environment, forests and landscape (FOEFL) shall establish concepts applicable to specially protected animal species, such as the wolf. These concepts shall set out principles governing the protection, shooting or capture of animals, the prevention and reporting of damage and the payment of indemnities for prevention measures.

On 2 June 2003 the National Council forwarded to the Federal Council a paper from the CEATEN (Swiss Wolf Concept; 02.3393) asking that the Swiss Wolf Concept be revised so that traditional livestock farming remained possible in mountain regions without intolerable restrictions. The paper also asked that the Federal Council use the margin for manoeuvre granted by the Convention of 19 September 1979 on the conservation of European wildlife and natural habitats (Bern Convention; RS 0.455) in the interests of the communities in the regions concerned. The concept is an implementation aid prepared by the FOEFL. Aimed primarily at implementing authorities, it specifies certain loosely defined legal notions, permitting the uniform application of legislation. It guarantees equality before the law and also the certainty of the law, while emphasising the need to identify solutions adapted to special cases. If the authorities concerned take it into account, they can be certain that their decisions will comply with federal law. Other solutions are not ruled out; but case-law requires their compliance with the applicable law to be proven.

1.2 Initial situation

- In recent years there has been a regular influx of wolves from Italy and France into Switzerland where they have occasionally caused substantial damage to livestock.
- The present Swiss Wolf Concept is based on past experience in the prevention and management of damage and wolf control.

2. Objectifs

- The Swiss Wolf Concept sets out to take due account of all the provisions of Article 1 (purpose) of the Federal Law of 20 June 1986 on hunting and the protection of wild mammals and birds (LChP; RS 922.0).
- It seeks to create general conditions for minimising the problems that might arise between human activities and needs (farming, hunting, leisure pursuits, tourism etc) and the presence of the wolf.
- The presence of the wolf must not constitute an intolerable restriction on livestock farming.

3. Implementation

3.1 Organisation

- The FOEFL shall ensure that the national associations directly concerned are represented. For this purpose it shall set up a working group on large carnivores, on which other federal offices, the cantons and the national associations with an interest are represented.
- The working group shall:
 - draw up and update the concepts as per Article 10 paragraph 6 of the LChP law;
 - study questions of general interest relating to large predators.

- The FOEFL shall be responsible for:
 - monitoring wolves at national level, in collaboration with the cantons;
 - inventorying the damage caused by wolves to livestock, in collaboration with the cantons;
 - implementing specific scientific projects, in collaboration with the cantons, focusing on the distribution of the wolf, its behaviour and population dynamics, as well as projects studying the impact of the wolf on the populations preyed upon;
 - developing damage prevention measures, providing advice in this field and coordinating these measures, in collaboration with the farming sector, and also evaluating the economic consequences; maintaining contact between experts at international level to coordinate the control of common populations of wolves (particularly with France and Italy).
- The FOEFL shall guide and supervise the application of the Swiss Wolf Concept by the cantons.
- The cantons shall be responsible for:
 - immediately notifying the FOEFL and the institution competent for wolf monitoring (currently the KORA¹) in the event of damage caused by a wolf (presumed or proven);
 - keeping the FOEFL informed of the situation of the wolf on an annual basis;
 - involving local and regional authorities in this process, together with the cantonal representatives of the different interest groups (transparency);
 - taking due account of the impact of the wolf in game and forestry planning and also in the conservation of species diversity.
- When the wolf appears in a region (cf 3.2), an inter-cantonal committee shall be set up. It shall comprise one representative from each of the cantons concerned and one representative from the FOEFL.
- The inter-cantonal committee shall coordinate:
 - the monitoring of wolves;
 - the application of measures to protect herds/flocks;
 - the granting of shooting authorisations;
 - public information;
 - information provided to neighbouring regions or countries.

3.2 Regions for control purposes

In order to control large predators (bear, lynx and wolf), Switzerland shall be divided into regions comprising one or several cantons or parts of cantons (cf map):

Région	Name of région	Cantons (or parts of canton)
I	Jura AG	BE (Jura), BL, BS, GE, JU, NE, SO, VD (Jura)
II	North-east Switzerland	AI, AR, SG, TG, ZH, SH
III	West central Switzerland	BE est, LU, NW, OW, UR ouest
IV	East central Switzerland	GL, SG sud de la région de Sargans, SZ, UR est, ZG, ZH
V	Eastern Alps	GR
VI	North-western Alps	BE Alpes, FR, VD Alpes
VII	Valais	VS
VIII	Southern Alps (Ticino)	TI

¹ Coordinated research projects for the conservation and control of carnivores in Switzerland; www.kora.ch

4. Provisions governing implementation

4.1 Protection and spread of the wolf

- Under the Convention on the Conservation of European Wildlife and Natural Habitats (Bern, 1979), the wolf is listed among the strictly protected fauna species in Appendix II. Under the Federal Law on hunting and the protection of wild mammals and bird, the wolf is a protected native species (Article 7 paragraph 1, LChP law). However, action affecting the wolf population is possible under certain conditions (Article 9 of the Bern Convention; Article 12 paragraph 2 of the LChP law).
- The colonisation of Switzerland or certain regions of Switzerland by wolves shall be a natural process, and there shall be no wolves released in or transferred to Switzerland. If it can be proven that wolves have been released illegally, they may be captured or shot.

4.2 Measures to protect livestock

- The Confederation and the cantons must create conditions for the prevention of livestock damage caused by wolves (Article 12 paragraph 1, LChP law, Article 10 paragraph 4, OChP decree).
- In the regions where wolves are present, measures to prevent damage shall be taken by the owners of small and large livestock. Those measures shall be taken within the framework of regional projects and supported by the FOEFL in application of Article 10 paragraph 4 of the OChP decree.
- The FOEFL shall manage a centre responsible for coordinating protection measures; the central is neutral and currently operates under the auspices of the SRVA².
- The coordination centre shall have the following tasks:
 - coordinating protection measures, in collaboration with the cantons and the FOEFL;
 - advising the individuals directly concerned, in collaboration with the cantons;
 - coordinating the material and financial support for application of protection measures;
 - gathering experience of protection measures and disseminating it in suitable form.
- The Confederation shall work together with the cantons and the individuals directly concerned and encourage them to introduce protection measures even in regions where wolves have not yet appeared but where they are likely to appear sooner or later.
- South American camelidae and cervidae kept in enclosures should be protected from wolves. The Confederation may support this kind of measure.

4.3 Damage caused by wolves: reporting and compensation

- In the event of damage caused to livestock by a canidae every effort must be made to recover organic matter (excrement, saliva, hair, vomit etc) left by the animal that may have caused the damage. This matter must be sent immediately to the institution responsible for monitoring wolves at national level (currently the KORA).
- The FOEFL shall periodically organise basic and further training courses for the implementing authorities of cantons (Article 14 LChP law).
- In cases where doubts subsist the canton authorities may ask the specialists of the Animal pathology institute of Bern University to carry out an expert appraisal.
- The damage caused by wolves shall be compensated for by the Confederation and the cantons in accordance with Article 10, paragraphs 1 to 3 of the OChP decree.
- Compensation shall be subject to the presentation of the killed animal.

² Farming Popularisation Department of French-speaking Switzerland

- Cantons may take a conciliatory attitude and pay full or partial compensation, under Article 10, paragraphs 1 to 3 of the OChP decree, for livestock injured as a result of a fall or missing following a wolf attack.
- It is recommended that the cantons obtain tables of estimates published by Swiss livestock associations in order to set the amount of compensation.
- In regions colonised by the wolf, cantons may take a conciliatory attitude and, in cases of doubt, pay partial compensation under Article 10, paragraphs 1 to 3 of the OChP decree (eg for attacks by undetermined canidae). The amount of such compensation shall be set by the canton.
- Compensation should be paid for the first case of damage to South American camelidae and cervidae kept in enclosures. In the event of further damage compensation should be paid only if appropriate protection measures have been taken.

4.4 Identified wolves causing damage

4.4.1 Identified wolves causing damage to livestock

- Cantons may grant an authorisation to shoot identified wolves causing substantial damage to livestock (Article 12, paragraph 2, LChP law). They must consult the inter-cantonal committee beforehand in all cases.
- The livestock animals meeting the criteria justifying shooting shall be those whose carcass may be presented and which may be identified as wolf prey.
- The inter-cantonal committee shall decide whether other damage resulting from a wolf attack (prey status uncertain, animals having fallen, been injured or caught in a fence etc) may meet the criteria justifying shooting.
- Livestock killed in an area where no reasonable protection measures have been taken, despite this being possible, technically and financially, and despite previous damage, and also unprotected South American camelidae and cervidae kept in enclosures shall not meet the criteria justifying shooting.
- For the shooting of the wolf, the competent canton department shall give instructions to a supervisory body or an individual authorised to hunt.
- The shooting must take place within the area where the damage has been caused (cf 4.4.2).
- The duration of the shooting authorisation shall be limited to 60 days. It may be extended (by a maximum of 30 days dating from the last instance of damage) if further damage is caused.
- Cantons shall continue monitoring operations within the area where the damage was caused, in collaboration with the FOEFL, for the full duration of the shooting authorisation.

4.4.2 Criteria justifying shooting of an identified wolf causing damage

- The FOEFL lays down the following guiding principles for the granting of a shooting authorisation:
 - The damage must have taken place within an appropriate area (eg a valley).
 - At least 35 livestock animals have been eaten by wolves over a period of four consecutive months, or at least 25 livestock animals over a period of one month.
 - If damage is caused over a period of one year, this figure shall be lowered to at least 15 livestock animals during the following calendar years:
 - on condition that all technically and financially feasible protection measures have been taken and are maintained;
 - on condition that no technically and financially feasible protection measure can be taken, in which case the wolf may be shot only within the area that cannot be protected.
- The cantons concerned may adapt the criteria to a certain extent (number of animals eaten, period) to local and regional conditions, in agreement with the inter-cantonal committee.

- Pending such time as the criteria for granting an authorisation to shoot an identified wolf causing damage to large livestock have been established, the relevant decisions shall be taken by the cantons, in agreement with the FOEFL.

4.5 Wolves that are sick, injured or found dead

- Wolves that are manifestly injured or sick may be shot in accordance with Article 8 of the LChP law.
- All dead wolves (dead from natural causes, shot or killed illegally) must be immediately sent, in their entirety, to the Animal pathology institute of Bern University for analysis. The cantons shall decide what is later to be done with the carcasses.

4.6 Public relations

The FOEFL and the cantons shall provide regular and objective information to the public at national, regional and local level concerning the wolf and its status in Switzerland, as well as problems arising and possible solutions.

5. Final provisions

The concept shall be reviewed periodically and modified in the light of new knowledge and experience.