Vitenskapskomiteen for mat og miljø
Norwegian Scientific Committee for Food and Environment

VKM assessment: Non-detriment finding for grey wolf (*Canis lupus*)

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Scientific name: *Canis lupus,* Linnaeus, 1758

Common name: Grey wolf

Norwegian name: Gråulv, ulv

Type of permit: CITES Appendix II export (Norwegian Cites Regulation Annex 1, List B)
Country of Export: Norway
Country of import: Germany

Purpose and source: The proposal concerns the export of seven live grey wolves (six males and one female) from Namsskogan Familiepark AS, Norway, to Nationalparkverwaltung Bayerischer Wald in Germany, purpose code Z. The seven wolves are siblings from the same litter born in 2022. Both parents of this litter were bred in captivity, source code C. They were imported to Norway in 2019 from Järvzoo in Sweden (male) and Riga National Zoo, Latvia (female).

For Appendix II species (Norwegian Cites Regulation Annex 1, list B) it is required to establish that exports are not detrimental to the survival of wild populations, in compliance with CITES Article IV.

VKM has adopted the definition of detriment, cf. Conf. 16.7 (Rev. CoP17) suggested by the U.S Fish and Wildlife Service Division of Scientific Authority (https://www.fws.gov/international/pdf/archive/workshop-american-ginseng-cites-non-detriment-findings.pdf), which defines detriment as:

1. Harvest that is not sustainable.
2. Harvest that harms the status of the species in the wild.
3. Removal from the wild that results in habitat loss or destruction, or that interferes with recovery efforts for a species.

Conclusion: VKM concludes that the export of seven live wolves bred in captivity is unlikely to be detrimental to the survival of the species and local population in Norway and Sweden.

The conclusion is based on the following factors:

- The seven individuals and both their parents were bred in captivity and have had no contact with wild conspecifics. Therefore, the export is not likely to have any harmful effect on the conservation status of the species in the wild.
- Grey wolves are known to have good reproduction and survival rates in captivity.

1. Biological Information

Distribution:
The grey wolf has a Holarctic distribution although it has disappeared from much of its former range, particularly in southern parts of Asia, Europe and North America, and now mainly inhabits protected areas (Boitani et al., 2018).

In Europe, the species' distribution has increased over the past 50 years as several countries have been recolonized after historical extinction (Boitani, 2018). The European grey wolves form a metapopulation divided into nine subpopulations (Iberian, Western-Central Alps, Italian Peninsula, Dinaric-Balkan, Carpathian, Baltic, Karelian, Scandinavian and Central European, Chapron et al., 2014).

Life history:
Grey wolves are pack living animals. Females come into estrus once a year and if fertilized give birth to 4-6 pups on average. Pups stay with the group for a year or more. Pack sizes and reproduction rates vary vastly depending on food availability, as does the size of the home ranges per individual (e.g. Mech and Boitini, 2004).

Role in the ecosystem:
Grey wolves are top predators with prey ranging from large ungulates to small rodents. The diet can also include plant materials, such as berries, carrion and in extreme circumstances garbage (e.g. Mech and Boitini, 2004).

2. Population status and trend

No assessment of the total population size exists. Globally, the number of individuals is reported to be stable (Botiani et al., 2018), whereas in Europe the population trend is increasing (Boitani, 2018). The total size of the European metapopulation has been estimated to be more than 17,000 individuals (Boitani, 2018). Some subpopulations are small and inbred.

3. Conservation status

The species is listed as Least Concern globally and in Europe (assessed by IUCN in 2018). The species is listed as Critically Endangered on the Norwegian Red List (Eldegard et al, 2021).

4. Threats

Historically deliberate persecution of the grey wolf drove the species to extinction regionally and it is still illegally hunted and killed in conflict with humans over livestock in parts of its range (e.g. Liberg et al., 2011). Globally, habitat fragmentation and destruction are currently the greatest threats to the species.

5. Conservation and management measures

International legislation:
The grey wolf has been listed on CITES Appendix II since 1975 (except populations in Bhutan, India, Nepal and Pakistan that are listed on Appendix I) and under the EU Wildlife Trade Regulations Annex A since 1997 (except some subpopulations on Appendix B).

C. lupus is protected under the Bern Convention (Appendix II) and Habitats Directive (Annex II and IV), nevertheless there are national exceptions.

The North American population is monitored by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and the European by the Large Carnivore Initiative for Europe.

Conservation measures:
The legal protection of *C. lupus* started about 1970 and the species is found within multiple protected areas throughout its range.

6. Trade/use

Legal:
The legal international trade in wild sourced animals mainly involves skins and trophies exported mostly from North America and the Russian Federation (trade.cites.org).

Illegal:
Some illegal hunting for fur is known to exist (Boitani et al., 2018).

References

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