

Appeal: Protect Sweden's Old-Growth Forests

Introduction

The loss of natural habitats is the single main cause for the global loss of biodiversity, a living nature. In order to preserve a living forest landscape in Sweden, all remaining natural and old-growth forests with high conservation values need to be protected. More than 1,800 forest-living plant and animal species are listed on the Swedish red-list as near-threatened and endangered species, and a large proportion of these species are linked to these forests.

According to the Swedish Environmental Protection Agency only a few percent of high conservation value forests remain below the mountain region (sub-alpine forests) in Sweden. It is time to stop all old-growth forest logging plans. Moreover, suitable forest habitats need to be restored to reach sufficient area and quality in accordance with the recommendations of current nature conservation science.

The depletion of the forest ecosystem does not only force away a variety of forest species – it also has a negative impact on human beings. A living forest ecosystem is fundamental to essential processes such as regulation of air quality, climate regulation, water regulation, water purification, pollination, and mitigation of natural disasters.

A sustainable Swedish forestry, which takes the safeguarding of biodiversity seriously, cannot be achieved in a situation where 95 percent of the productive forests are exploited, and where only a few percent of the forest land are set aside for nature conservation. The Swedish Government and the Swedish Forest Industries Federation advocate further forestry intensification, with methods such as stump extraction, increased use of non-native tree species, restoration of ditches, and fertilization, which threaten the biodiversity even more. Sweden is committed, internationally and nationally, to stop the loss of biodiversity and it is our duty, to future generations, to abide by these obligations. The current negative trend must be reversed immediately and the Swedish Parliament and Government must take their responsibility.

To the Swedish Parliament and Government:

Appeal: Protect Sweden's Old-Growth Forests

Requirements and measures:

- Adopt a new area objective for the period 2010-2020, which is in line with leading nature conservation science, where 20 percent of Sweden's productive forest land is protected.
- Increase the budget allocated to forest protection for the period 2010-2020 to the level needed for long-term conservation of forest biodiversity.
- Favor a greater variety of forest management methods in the 80 percent of the productive forest land, which is still being managed.
- Mitigate climate change and promote increased carbon storage in forest soil by safeguarding the remaining older forests and modify the forest management methods in managed forests.
- Safeguard the montane forest. The boundary of the sub-montane forest should not be restricted.
- Better general consideration in forestry.
- Initiate support for landscape planning.

Sign the Appeal [here](#)

(Note! Scientists in any of the fields of forest, climate, environment, biology or ecology, and organizations that wish to sign the Appeal can do this by contacting Protect the Forest: viktor.safve@skyddaskogen.se)

Motives:

1. Adopt a new area objective for the period 2010-2020, which is in line with leading nature conservation science, where 20 percent of Sweden's productive forest land is protected.

Motives: Today, only 3.3 percent of the productive forest area in Sweden is formally protected (of which only half lies below the montane forests). A few more percent is voluntarily protected for nature conservation purposes. Science shows that when the areas of natural habitats fall below 20 percent, the survival of many sensitive species is negatively affected. It is therefore reasonable to have an objective stating that 20 percent of the productive forest land shall be protected to preserve the biodiversity. The Environmental Advisory Council's report 1997:97, 98 showed support for the long-term protection of 9-16 percent of the Swedish forest land below the montane region, provided that the environmental consideration in the managed parts of the forest landscape was good. Subsequent studies indicate that the Environmental Advisory Board underestimated the need of protected forest to meet the diversity objective. Therefore, it appears that 20 percent is a reasonable requirement in relation to the portal paragraph of the Swedish Forestry Act, which states that the production objective and the environmental objective should be of equal importance. The sector that affects the forest ecosystem the most, should, of course, be expected to take sectorial responsibility, based on recent scientific findings. The state should take its responsibility to formally protect 10 percent of the productive forest land and financially compensate private landowners. Forest owners should voluntarily set aside 10 percent of their productive forest land for conservation. The big forest companies should take an extra large responsibility towards the environmental objective in the forest. The voluntarily protected areas must be areas with the highest conservation values, and be public, mapped, and their contribution to achieve the environmental policy must be analyzed.

2. Increase the budget allocated to forest protection for the period 2010-2020 to the level needed for long-term conservation of forest biodiversity.

Motives: The current level of funding allocated to forest protection does not give the Swedish Environmental Protection Agency, County Administrative Board and the Swedish Forest Agency the necessary resources to compensate all private landowners and accomplish the mission to meet the environmental objective of the forest. Since the protection rate is so low today, many valuable forest areas are logged before they are protected. The authorities are forced to allow logging in high conservation value forest areas due to insufficient economic resources. In addition, the Swedish Forest Agency does not, in some districts, have the resources to visit more than 5 to 10 percent of the planned loggings in the field. The budget allocated to forest protection must be increased with what is required to maintain the biodiversity in forest. This is a long term investment, which can only be made now when the natural forests still remain. It will be much more expensive, more difficult and take much longer time to restore depleted forests and industrial plantations. If the Government increases the budget to protect forests with around 5 billion SEK per year over the period 2010-2020, Sweden would be able to achieve the environmental objective to safeguard its biodiversity. This corresponds to about 1/10 of what the Swedish people buy during Christmas time every year (the Swedish Retail Institute predicts 61.3 billion SEK 2009) or what annually is invested in traffic (over 40 billion SEK according to the Swedish Government's budget proposition for 2010). Today, the budget allocated to forest land protection is about 600 million SEK, which is a very low level in this context. As a complement to increased funding, the stately managed production forests could be used more extensively as exchange lands to private owners who want it.

3. Favor a greater variety of forest management methods in the 80 percent of the productive forest land, which is still being managed.

Motives: The management of the forest ecosystem should be addressed towards a long-term sustainable timber production, where alternative forestry methods and continuous-cover forestry are favored. This is to encourage faster re-uptake of greenhouse gases, hunting, recreation, tourism, berry and mushroom picking, reindeer herding, and minimize the risks with monocultures. With the current uniform management practices, important ecosystem services are in risk of being seriously damaged. There is today an ecosystem change going on from mixed forests and naturally regenerated forests to monocultures of coniferous plantations and intensively managed uniform production forests. Further transformation should be avoided. Monocultures imply increased risk of various insect outbreaks and fungal diseases. The changes in forest management should include, inter alia, an increased intermixture of natural regeneration and continuous nature consideration during clearing and thinning. A greater diversity of management practices would create a larger diversity of forests and reduce the risks with a too stereotype forest management.

4. Mitigate climate change and promote increased carbon storage in forest soil by safeguarding the remaining older forests and modify the forest management methods in managed forests.

Motives: Old-growth forests contain large stores of carbon, and new research shows that they continue to store carbon in the long-term. The older the forest is, the more carbon has been stored in the forest during its lifetime. When the old-growth forest is logged, a certain amount of the carbon, which has been stored in the soil for centuries, is released. With the short rotation periods of today, it is likely that the carbon stocks in soil will not be restored before the next logging, i.e. the carbon stocks in the soil are continuously depleted. Forestry, which continuously preserves the tree cover, reduces the carbon losses to the atmosphere. It should therefore be investigated how such methods can be introduced.

5. Safeguard the montane forest. The boundary of the sub-montane forest should not be restricted.

Motives: Sweden has a responsibility to safeguard the largest intact natural forest areas of northwestern Europe. We presume that the proposal in the recently finalized report "Forest boundary report" (Gränsskogsutredningen), ordered by the Government, which concluded that the boundary of the sub-montane forest should not be redefined, will be implemented. The boundary will thereby persist as a significant marker for the importance of this area for nature conservation. Also, the preservation of these large natural forests is of great importance, mitigating climate change.

6. Better general consideration in forestry.

Motives: The current environmental consideration when different forest management measures are taken, are too often of low quality and too small-scale. The proportion of deciduous trees, old trees and dead wood need to increase significantly in the managed landscape. Today, the consideration to water environments is in many cases inadequate and must be regulated and improved considerably. Forestry is the cause of about 25 percent of the mercury concentrations in freshwater fish. According to the Swedish Forest Agency, 20 percent of the final fellings carried out by forest companies in 2007 violated the minimum requirements of the Swedish Forestry Act regarding general consideration. Concerning the small-scale forestry, the number amounted to 28 percent. Appoint an investigation to develop a proposal for sanction possibilities when the Forestry Act is violated. Today, the sanction possibilities are non-existent in practice when environmental consideration requirements are violated.

7. Initiate support for landscape planning.

Motives: Research has shown that the occurrence of species is highly dependent on how much suitable environment there is in a broader area and how it is distributed. When measures are planned in areas with many forest owners, little or no consideration is taken to the adjacent managed lands. In each landscape section, sufficiently large areas of biologically valuable natural forest habitats should be protected and restored to safeguard the species that depend on them. To make nature conservation more efficient and protected areas more useful, we suggest that the authorities be commissioned and receive resources to plan, in cooperation with landowners, making nature conservation effective. Then, also pastures with trees, which often house endangered species, should be included in the planning. Financial support to forest owners is required to accomplish effective planning to conserve biodiversity.

The initiator of the Appeal is the organization Protect the Forest
www.protecttheforest.se

These scientists have sent the appeal:

Sven G. Nilsson, Professor of Ecology, Lund University.

Bengt Gunnar Jonsson, Professor of Plant Ecology, Mid Sweden University, Sundsvall.

Stig-Olof Holm, Ph.D., Ecology, Assistant Professor, Umeå University.

Jerry Skoglund, Ph.D., Forest Biology, former Assistant Professor at Swedish University of Agricultural Sciences.

Lars-Ove Wikars, Ph.D. Entomology, former at Swedish University of Agricultural Sciences.

Janolof Hermansson, Lichenologist, member of the expert committee for red-listed lichens.

Bengt Ehnström, Entomologist, former at Swedish Species Information Centre, Swedish University of Agricultural Sciences.

Björn Nordén, Associate Professor (Docent), Mycologist, Scientist, University of Gothenburg.

Thomas Appelqvist, Ph.D., Assistant Professor, Department of Plant and Environmental Sciences, University of Gothenburg.

Lena Larsson, Ph.D. Populations genetics, Stockholm University.

Linda Laikre, Scientist, Populations genetics, Assistant Professor, Stockholm University.

Margareta Ihse, Professor Emeritus, Ecological Geography, Stockholm University.

Heidi Paltto, Ph.D. Plant Ecology, Scientist at Department of Ecology, Swedish University of Agricultural Sciences, Uppsala.

Torbjörn Josefsson, Ph.D., Ecology, Swedish University of Agricultural Sciences.

Nicklas Jansson, Ph.D., Wood-living beetles on oak, Linköping University.

Artur Larsson, Forest manager, Swedish Species Information Centre, Swedish University of Agricultural Sciences, Uppsala.

Torbjörn Ebenhard, Ph.D., Ecology, Swedish Biodiversity Centre, Swedish University of Agricultural Sciences and Uppsala university.

Tomas Hallingbäck, Research Engineer, expert on bryophytes, Swedish Species Information Centre, Swedish University of Agricultural Sciences, Uppsala.

Anders Dahlberg, Mycologist, Swedish Species Information Centre and Department of Forest Mycology and Pathology, Swedish University of Agricultural Sciences, Uppsala.

Per Wramner, Professor of Applied Environmental Science, Södertörn University.

Iikka Hanski, Research Professor, Department of Biological and Environmental Sciences, University of Helsinki, Finland.

Per Milberg, Professor of Plant Ecology, Linköping University.

Otso Ovaskainen, Professor, Department of Biosciences, University of Helsinki, Finland.

Christer Löfstedt, Professor, Ecology, Head of the Department of Ecology, Lund University.

Karl-Olof Bergman, Ph.D., Ecology, Assistant Professor, Division of Ecology, Linköping University.

Mari Jönsson, Ph.D., Biology, Swedish University of Agricultural Sciences, Uppsala.

Jenni Hottola, Ph.D., Metapopulation Research Group, Department of Biological and Environmental Sciences, University of Helsinki, Finland.

Frank Götmark, Professor, Animal Ecology and Conservation Biology, University of Gothenburg.

Timo Kuuluvainen, Associate Professor (Docent), Department of Forest Ecology, University of Helsinki, Finland.

Mats Dynesius, Ph.D., Ecological Botany, Assistant Professor, Department of Ecology and Environmental Science, Umeå University.

Lars Ericson, Professor of Ecological Botany, Department of Ecology and Environmental Science, Umeå University.

Roland Jansson, Associate professor, Department of Ecology and Environmental Science, Umeå University.

Åslög Dahl, Ph.D., Botany, University of Gothenburg.

Therese Johansson, Ph.D., Ecology, Swedish University of Agricultural Sciences, Umeå.

Roland Bengtsson, Phycologist, member of the expert committee for algae, Swedish Species Information Centre.

Mats Grahn, Associate Professor (Docent), Molecular Ecology, School of Life Sciences, Södertörn University.

Johan Lind, Associate Professor (Docent), Ethology, Stockholm University.

Jan Kunnas, P.hD., History & Civilization, European University Institute, Florence, Italy.

Klas Jaederfeldt, formerly responsible for the fungi collection at the Swedish Museum of Natural History, former member of Swedish Species Information Centre's fungi committee (nowadays retired).

Thomas Læssøe, Mycologist, esp. wood degrading fungi, Associate professor (lektor), Department of Biology, University of Copenhagen, Danmark.

Mats Lindeskog, Ph.D., Department of Physical Geography and Ecosystems Analysis, Lund University.

Henning Rodhe, Professor, Chemical Meteorology, Stockholm University.

Catharina Olsson, Ph.D., Zoophysiology, Assistant Professor, University of Gothenburg.

Sven Jakobsson, Ph.D., Ethology, Tovetorp research station, Stockholm University.

Maud Tyboni, Research engineer, Landscape analysis, Swedish University of Agricultural Sciences, Umeå.

Kjell Carlsson, Lecturer, Biology, Linköping University.

Jörg Brunet, Associate Professor (Docent), Ecology, Swedish University of Agricultural Sciences, Alnarp.

Anni Arponen, Post doc, Metapopulation Research Group, Department of Biological and Environmental Sciences, University of Helsinki, Finland.

Gunnar Jacks, Gunnar Jacks, Professor Emeritus, Hydrochemistry, Department of Land & Water Resources Engineering, Royal Institute of Technology (KTH), Stockholm.

Ulf Gärdenfors, Professor, Conservation Biology.

Jacob von Oelreich, Research Engineer, Environmental Strategies Research - FMS, Royal Institute of Technology (KTH), Stockholm.

Jan Elveland, Assistant Professor, Associate Professor (Docent), Plant Ecology, Department of Ecology and Environmental Science, Umeå University.

Torbjörn Tyler, Associate Professor (Docent), Curator, Botanical Museum, Lund University.

Fredrik Widemo, Associate Professor (Docent), Animal Ecology, Uppsala University.

Karl Johan Bonnedahl, Ph.D., Scientist, Economy with focus on sustainability and ethics, Umeå University.

Johnny Schimmel, Doctor of Forestry in Vegetation Ecology, Swedish University of Agricultural Sciences, Umeå.

Kristoffer Hylander, Associate Professor (Docent), Ecology, Botaniska institutionen, Stockholm University.

Gunnar Weimarck, Professor Emeritus, Botany, Gothenburg.

Patrik Lindenfors, Associate Professor (Docent), Animal Ecology, Stockholm University.

Lars J. Jonsson, Lecturer, Biology and Chemistry, Scientist (spiders), Kristianstad University College.

Stefan Andersson, Professor, Systematic Botany, Department of Ecology, Lund University.

Theo Verwijst, Professor, Department of Crop Production Ecology, Swedish University of Agricultural Sciences.

Carl-Gustaf Bornehag, Professor, Public Health Science, Karlstad University.

Ingvar Backéus, Associate Professor (Docent), Ecological Botany, Swedish Biodiversity Centre (CBM), Uppsala University and Swedish University of Agricultural Sciences.

Graciela M. Rusch, Ecologist, Senior research fellow, Norwegian Institute for Nature Research, Trondheim, Norway.

Håkan Hytteborn, Professor Emeritus, Ecological Botany, Department of Biology, Norwegian University of Science and Technology, Norway, and, Guest Professor, Plant Ecology, Department of Ecology and Evolution, Uppsala University.

Johan Jansson, Ph.D., Proenvironmental consumer behavior, Umeå School of Business, Umeå University.

Karl Soop, Physicist, Engineer, Associate Researcher, Department of Cryptogamic Botany, Swedish Museum of Natural History, Stockholm.

Jan Lagerlöf, Associate and Assistant Professor, Department of Ecology, Swedish University of Agricultural Sciences, Uppsala.

Bertil Brånin, Ph.D., Assistant Professor, Environmental Health, Umeå University.

Lars-Åke Janzon, Ph.D., Zoology, Biologist at Swedish Museum of Natural History, Stockholm.

Francesco Spada, Scientist, Plant Geography, Dipartimento di Biologia Vegetale, La Sapienza University, Rome, Italy, and Department of Ecology and Evolution, Uppsala University.

Henri Engström, Ph.D., Population Biology, Department of Ecology and Evolution, Uppsala University.

Ulrika Jansson, Ph.D., Ecology, Umeå University.

Tove Malmqvist, Ph.D., Scientist, Environmental Strategies Research - FMS, Royal Institute of Technology (KTH), Stockholm.

Anders Granström, Associate Professor (Docent), Forest Vegetation Ecology, Swedish University of Agricultural Sciences, Umeå.

Cecilia Kullberg, Associate Professor (Docent), Ethology, Stockholm University.

Hans Persson, Professor, Department of Ecology, Swedish University of Agricultural Sciences, Uppsala.

Nic Kruys, Ph.D., Ecology, Nature conservation consultant, Uppsala.

Göran Milbrink, Professor, Department of Animal Ecology, Uppsala University.

Thorsten Klint, Ph.D., Zoology/Ethology, Stockholm University.

Håkan Pleijel, Professor, Plant and Environmental Sciences, University of Gothenburg.

Paul F. Torrence, Ph.D., Emeritus Professor Chemistry and Biochemistry, Northern Arizona University, Flagstaff, Arizona, USA.

Folke Günther, M.Sc., Systems Ecology, former Assistant Professor Human Ecology, Lund University, nowadays Ecosystem consultant.

Leif Andersson, Nature conservation biologist, Pro Natura.

Per-Anders Esseen, Professor, Ecological Botany, Department of Ecology and Environmental Science, Umeå University.

Stig Jacobsson, Ph.D., Scientist, Mycology, Department of Plant and Environmental Sciences, University of Gothenburg.

Anna Dahlström, Researcher, Agrarian history, Swedish Biodiversity Centre (CBM), Swedish University of Agricultural Sciences, Uppsala.

Kristjan Niitepöld, Ph.D., Metapopulation Research Group, Department of Biosciences, University of Helsinki, Finland.

Tormod Vaaland Burkey, Ph.D., Ecology/Conservation Biology, Norway.

Martin Tjernberg, Ph.D., Swedish Species Information Centre, Swedish University of Agricultural Sciences, Uppsala.

Jostein Lorås, Associate Professor History, research on cultural signs on trees, Nesna University College, Norway.

Mari Källersjö, Professor Plant Systematics, Gothenburg Botanical Garden and University of Gothenburg.

Erik Öckinger, Ph.D., Ecology, Swedish University of Agricultural Sciences, Uppsala.

Sara Henningsson, Ph.D., Ecology, Lund University.

Glenn Svensson, Ph.D., Ecology, Department of Ecology, Lund University.

Hans Källander, Ph.D., Animal Ecology, formerly at Lund University.

Bengt Nihlgård, Professor Emeritus, Plant Ecology, in particular Forest Ecology with focus on Biogeochemistry, Department of Plant Ecology and Systematics, Lund University.

Sven-Axel Bengtson, Professor Zoology, Museum Director, Museum of Zoology, Lund University.

Svengunnar Ryman, Mycologist, Curator at Museum of Evolution, Uppsala University.

Bodil Enoksson, Ph.D., Animal Ecology, former researcher on Forest environment, nowadays working at Biology Library, Lund University.

Ulf Arup, Associate Professor (Docent), Plant Systematics, Lunds University, and member of the expert committee for red-listed lichens.

Anders Nordin, Ph.D., Curator at Museum of Evolution, Lichens, Uppsala University.

Mattias Edman, Ph.D., Ecology, Scientist, Mid Sweden University, Sundsvall.

Johan Ehrlén, Professor, Plant Ecology, Department of Botany, Stockholm University.

Ola Svensson, Ph.D., Behavioral Ecology and Evolutionary Biology, University of Gothenburg.

Leif Ryvarden, Professor, Mycology, University of Oslo, Norway.

Julio Ferrer Mariné, Ph.D., Entomologist, Senior curator, Swedish Museum of Natural History, Stockholm.

Sophia Engel, Ph.D., Biology, researcher, Environmental Physiology, Department of Ecology, Lund University.

Roland Moberg, Associate Professor (Docent), Botany Section, Museum of Evolution, Uppsala University.

Mats Eriksson, Ph.D., Zoology, Head of Department, Museum of Evolution, Uppsala University.

Mats Gustafsson, Ph.D., Systematic Botany, Assistant Professor, Department of Biological Sciences, Aarhus University, Denmark.

Jens-Christian Svenning, Professor, Biology, Department of Biological Sciences, Aarhus University, Denmark.

Eje Rosén, Associate Professor (Docent), Ecological Botany, Uppsala University.

Maria Hansson, Ph.D., Ecology, Assistant senior lecturer, Department of Environmental Science, Lund University.

Mats Hjertson, Ph.D., Curator, vascular plants, Museum of Evolution, Uppsala University.

Risto Sulkava, Ph.D., Ecology, University of Joensuu, Finland.

Bo W. Svensson, Professor Emeritus, Entomology, Uppsala University.

Ulf Swenson, Associate Professor (Docent), Systematic Botany, Swedish Museum of Natural History, Stockholm.

Olof Hedgren, Ph.D., Entomology, former at Swedish University of Agricultural Sciences.

Björn Helander, Ph.D., Senior Scientist, Department of Contaminant Research Swedish Museum of Natural History, Stockholm.

Niclas Jonzén, Associate Professor, Department of Theoretical Ecology, Lund University.

Peter Eliasson, Doctor of Forestry, Ecology, Department of Ecology, Swedish University of Agricultural Sciences.

Lars Hedenäs, Associate Professor (Docent), Bryophytes, Department of Cryptogamic Botany, Swedish Museum of Natural History, Stockholm.

Michael Krikorev, Mycologist, Swedish Species Information Centre, Swedish University of Agricultural Sciences, Uppsala.

Sven Boström, Ph.D., Systematic Zoology, Senior curator, Swedish Museum of Natural History, Stockholm.

Mikael Hedrén, Associate Professor (Docent), Assistant Professor, Plant Ecology and Systematics, Department of Ecology, Lund University.

Peter Lindberg, Ph.D., Ecologist, Scientist, Department of Zoology, University of Gothenburg.

David van der Spoel, Ph.D., Professor, Biology, Department of Cell and Molecular Biology, Uppsala University.

Robert Ekblom, Ph.D., Bird genetics and Ecology, Uppsala University, and Department of Animal and Plant Sciences, University of Sheffield, U.K.

Torsten Vor, Dr., Department of Silviculture and Forest Ecology, University of Göttingen, Germany.

Stefan Wirsenius, Assistant Professor, Physical Resource Theory, Department of Energy and Environment, Chalmers University of Technology, Gothenburg.

Fiona Schmiegelow, Associate Professor, Northern Conservation Science, Department Renewable Resources, University of Alberta, Canada

Ralph Cartar, Associate Professor, Bumble bee ecology, including in managed forest landscapes, Department of Biological Sciences, University of Calgary, Canada.

Bruce G. Baldwin, W. L. Jepson Professor & Curator, Jepson Herbarium & Dept. of Integrative Biology, University of California, USA.

Jörgen Rudolphi, Ph.D., Ecology, Department of Ecology, Swedish University of Agricultural Sciences, Uppsala.

J. Bruce Wallace, Professor of Entomology, Department of Entomology, University of Georgia, USA.

Sören Svensson, Associate Professor (Docent), Department of Ecology, Lund University.

Lutz Fährer, Ph.D., Forest Science, Forestry Department, City of Luebeck, Germany.

Hartmut Roweck, Professor, Ecology Centre, Department of Landscape Ecology, University of Kiel, Germany.

Mats Hagner, Professor emeritus, Forest regeneration, Department of Forest Economics, Swedish University of Agricultural Sciences, Umeå.