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

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Competing interests: The authors declare no competing interests in relation to this non-detriment finding (NDF).

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Scientific name: *Canis lupus*, Linnaeus, 1758.

Common names: Common wolf, wolf, Mexican wolf, tundra wolf, timber wolf, plains wolf, grey wolf, Arctic wolf, gray wolf.

Norwegian name: Gråulv, ulv.

Type of permit: CITES Appendix II export; Norwegian CITES Regulation Annex 1, list B

Country of export: Norway (NO)

Country of import: United Kingdom (GB)

Purpose and source: The proposal concerns the export of a live male grey wolf (source code C), born in 2023, from a zoo in Norway to a zoo in the United Kingdom (purpose-of-transaction code Z).

For Appendix II species (Norwegian CITES Regulation Annex 1, list B) it is required to establish that export will not be detrimental to the survival of that species, in compliance with CITES Article III. In the Norwegian CITES regulation (Lovdata, 2018), the criteria for export from Norway are described in Chapter 2, Section 5.

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:

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: *Positive*

VKM concludes that the export of one live male grey wolf bred in captivity will not have a harmful effect on the conservation status of the species or the local population in Norway and Sweden.

The conclusion is based on the following factors:

- The individual in question, and both its 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., 2023).

In Europe, the species' distribution has increased over the past 50 years as several countries have been recolonized after historical extinction (Chapron et al., 2014; Boitani, 2025). 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; Kaczensky et al., 2024).

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 & Boitani, 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 & Boitani, 2004).

2. Population trend

No assessment of the total population size exists. Globally, the number of individuals is reported to be stable (Boitani et al., 2023), whereas in Europe the population trend is increasing (Boitani, 2025). The total size of the European metapopulation has been estimated to be more than 19,000 individuals (Boitani, 2025). Some subpopulations are small and inbred.

3. Conservation status

The species is listed as Least Concern in the IUCN Red List of Threatened Species, both globally (Boitani et al., 2023; assessment made in 2018) and in Europe (Boitani, 2025; assessment made in 2023). 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).

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).

The grey wolf 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

From 2016 to 2025, the legal international trade in wild-sourced animals (source code W) has primarily consisted of skins, teeth, specimens, claws, and skulls, with most exports originating from Canada (CITES Wildlife TradeView, 2025).

Illegal

Some illegal hunting for fur is known to exist (Boitani et al., 2023).

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