



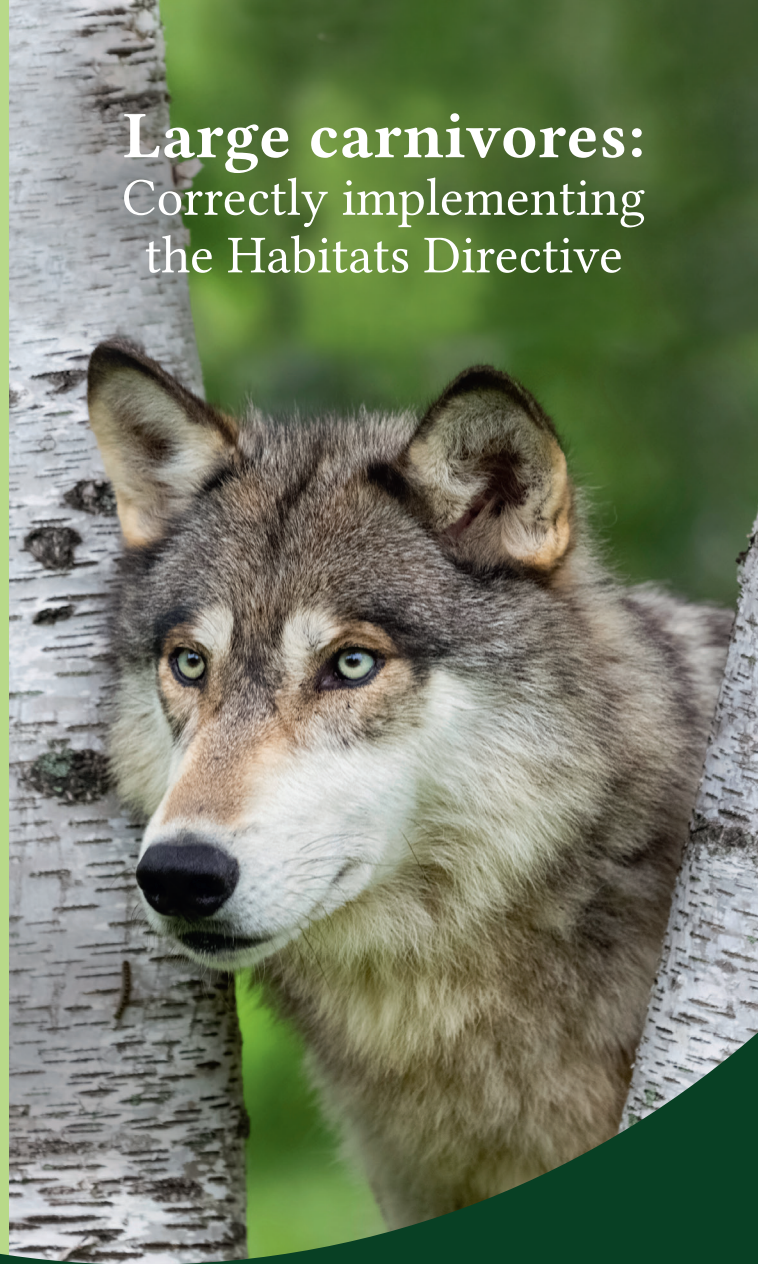
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Large carnivores: Correctly implementing the Habitats Directive



The Habitats Directive requires Member States to:

Maintain or restore their large carnivore populations at favourable status (Art. 1)

But, while taking into account “economic, social, cultural and regional requirements” (Art. 2)

Annex IV

Large carnivore populations listed here are ‘strictly protected’ but derogations (Art. 16) on certain conditions allowed e.g. to:

- Protect flora and fauna
- Prevent serious damage
- In the interests of public health and public safety
- Selective limited hunting as part of a management plan

Issues with Annex IV

Flexibility provided by the Directive is often not used

Stakeholders’ activities are often not taken into consideration (e.g. livestock farming, hunting)

It promotes single-species protection instead of focusing on wider biodiversity

Compensation measures are often lacking, inappropriate or not utilised

There can be a heavy administrative burden for Member States

Annex V

Large carnivore management and hunting allowed in a less bureaucratic way, once compatible with keeping populations at a favourable status.

Allows more flexible and cost-effective management approaches that take into consideration the stakeholders most closely impacted by large carnivores.

Examples of management in accordance with annex V:

- Lynx in Estonia where a management plan enables the management of the population without a high level of bureaucracy
- Wolf in Finland within the reindeer management area

Social science research shows that local acceptance of large carnivores can be higher when appropriate management is in place.



Article 19, Habitat Directive

Article 19 of the Habitats Directive provides for a legal obligation to **update the annexes** to reflect the best available science.

This, as part of a political decision, has not been implemented by the European Commission.

Updating the annexes for some large carnivore populations, Article 19

In November 2017, the European Parliament called on the Commission to develop an assessment procedure to enable the protection status of species in particular regions to be amended as soon as the desired conservation status is reached.

The majority of the Member States (in the Fitness Check evaluation report, 2016) expressed their support for the annexes to be updated.

Actions required by the European Commission:

It's clear that some large carnivores, which have a favourable conservation status and increasing populations could be moved from Annex IV to V of the Habitats Directive and their favourable conservation status can be assured.

In this context, the European Parliament, most Member States and FACE:

- Call on the European Commission to promote the correct application of Article 19 of the Habitats Directive which provides that the annexes shall be updated in accordance with technical and scientific progress.