

Fragmentation of life

The richness of life is severely threatened in the Swedish forest.¹

Not only has the majority of so-called productive forest land in Sweden been clearcut at some point since 1950 – which means that most of the Swedish forest is actually tree plantations created by man and not a real forest that can sustain a rich biological diversity.²

Not only is very little forest protected: only 2.5 % of the productive forest land in the boreal region outside the mountain region and 4.7 % in the whole country.³

But the Swedish forest is also very fragmented. Most areas of real forest are small and spread apart as spots in a vast landscapes of clearcuts and plantations. This exacerbates the threat to biodiversity, since it isolates species and makes it difficult for animals, plants, mushrooms and lichen to spread.

In order to protect biodiversity, we must urgently protect the small pockets of forest with a documented high biological value (*värdekärnor*). The destruction of the Swedish forest has gone so far, however, that this is not enough.

How High Value Forest Landscapes can reconnect the forest

The concept of *High Value Forest Landscapes* (HVFLs) is intended to address this problem. A high value forest landscape is a large area that contains several small forest value cores – i.e. pockets of forest with a documented high biological value – and binds them together.

In the national strategy for forest protection, the Swedish Environmental Protection Agency write that an overall landscape perspective is needed in order to preserve and develop different forms of habitats in the forest landscape, and they note that there are “conditions

¹ See chapter 2 for further details.

² Artdatabanken. Tillståndet i skogen, Page 5:

http://www.artdatabanken.se/globalassets/ew/subw/artd/2.-var-verksamhet/publikationer/6.tillstandet-i-skogen/rapport_tillstandet_skogen.pdf

³ Page 41:

<http://www.naturvardsverket.se/upload/miljoarbete-i-samhallet/miljoarbete-i-sverige/regeringsuppdrag/2017/vardefulla-skogar-redovisning-av-regeringsuppdrag-2-170130.pdf>

to develop this strand of work within high value forest landscape.”⁴ Furthermore, the agency concludes that working with high value forest landscapes is a “cost effective way”⁵ to ensure the long-term functionality of protected areas and of the entire forest landscape.

Globally, Greenpeace is calling on companies and governments to protect the last remaining intact forest landscapes in the boreal region, the Great Northern Forest. The difference between Sweden and other countries in the Great Northern Forest is that in Russia and Canada there are still large intact forest landscapes. In Sweden, the landscape has almost gone through a complete transformation: almost no large intact pristine forests exists. Hence, we need to stop logging in areas that are large enough so that they can become intact forest landscapes.

Greenpeace is calling for a logging moratorium in high value forest landscapes. Within these, various measures of nature conservation and nature restoration need to take place.

Stop logging in High Value Forest Landscapes

The study on high value forest landscapes commissioned by the Swedish Environmental Protection Agency⁶ (see chapter 2 for further details) is not a formal proposal for the creation of nature reserves, but it is intended to serve as a “support for strategic environmental planning”⁷ and the goal of the study is to “produce knowledge [...] that can be used in the continued work to protect forests”.

If forests within the high value forest landscapes are logged before government has had a chance to evaluate the merits of protecting them, the work has been in vain. Supporting the precautionary principle, and in order for the report to serve as a support for environmental planning, a moratorium on logging within high value forest landscapes is needed while the planning takes place.

The fact that the identified high value forest landscapes contain large areas of tree plantations does not invalidate the need for a moratorium– on the contrary, it illustrates the severe problems in the Swedish forest landscape. Nowhere in the Swedish boreal forest is it possible to draw a circle on the map without most of it being tree plantations – even in a

⁴ Naturvårdsverket (2017): *Värdefulla skogar*, page 65:
<https://naturvardsverket.se/upload/miljoarbete-i-samhallet/miljoarbete-i-sverige/regeringsuppdrag/2017/vardefulla-skogar-redovisning-av-regeringsuppdrag-2-170130.pdf>

⁵ Naturvårdsverket (2017): *Nationell strategi för formellt skydd av skog. Reviderad version*. Page 14.
<https://www.naturvardsverket.se/upload/miljoarbete-i-samhallet/miljoarbete-i-sverige/regeringsuppdrag/2017/nationell-strategi-for-formellt-skydd-av-skog-reviderad-2-2017.docx.pdf>

⁶ Metria (2017): *Landskapsanalys av skogliga värdekärnor i boreal region*.
<https://www.naturvardsverket.se/upload/miljoarbete-i-samhallet/miljoarbete-i-sverige/regeringsuppdrag/2017/bilaga-4-landskapsanalys-oreal-region-rev170119.pdf>

⁷ Metria (2017): *Landskapsanalys av skogliga värdekärnor i boreal region*, page 5
<https://www.naturvardsverket.se/upload/miljoarbete-i-samhallet/miljoarbete-i-sverige/regeringsuppdrag/2017/bilaga-4-landskapsanalys-oreal-region-rev170119.pdf>

study like this where the authors have tried to identify areas with large proportions of forest value cores.

Forest protection and restoration needs to take a landscape perspective. In many of the tree plantations, active measures are needed to recreate a resilient and natural forest ecosystem with a diversity of species. Under all circumstances, buffer zones are needed around the biologically important forest value cores to that they are not negatively affected by logging in surrounding areas.