

Wildlife accidents. The new Swedish preventing strategy.

Anders Sjölund MSc. Ecologist/ National Coordinator Landscape. Market and Planning.
The Swedish Transport Administration.

A few years after the turn of the century it was noticed that the number of wildlife accidents increased in spite of the fact that the populations of moose and raw deer was decreasing. Furthermore it was difficulties locating the scene of the accidents since it often was not properly marked. And often voluntary hunters were not able to trace the injured animal due to poor equipment, unskilled dogs or where insufficiently trained themselves. A growing population of wolfs, brown bears and lynx caused new problems. How to deal with injured and dangerous predators?

At the same time crucial questions was raised about responsibility, financial compensation to involved hunters and about the overall organisation.

It was obvious that Sweden needed a new strategy to diminish wildlife accidents, to secure that injured animals was properly found and killed and that killed animals was removed safely.

The Swedish government established a completely new organisation for this purpose, the National Wildlife Accident Council. At the same time changes in the legislation was introduced. Also a new system for registration of accidents was taken into operation. The responsibility for this new organisation was designated to the Swedish Police. At the same time the Swedish Transport Administration was given a special responsibility to provide measures against wildlife accidents.

Although the numbers of wildlife accidents are still very high in Sweden (last year a total of 44.366 accidents was recorded) we have a good hope for a change in the future. This is due to:

- The new organisation guarantees cooperation between all concerned parties (Authorities, Agencies, Administrations, the Swedish Hunters Association, several insurance companies, SOS-Alarm, The Swedish Motor-Vehicle Inspection Company.)
- All members works towards the same targets and all have stated their intentions.
- All wildlife accidents must be reported according to the new law.
- All wildlife accidents must be properly marked according to the new law
- All wildlife accidents are reported with co-ordinates
- All hunters involved are approved and have passed an advanced course
- All involved hunters are guaranteed proper equipment
- All approved hunters are financially compensated