

Cultivating Arctic Landscapes

Knowing and Managing Animals in
the Circumpolar North

Edited by David G. Anderson and Mark Nuttall



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7

Political Ecology in Swedish Saamiland

----- **Hugh Beach**

In northern Sweden today (and indeed over the centuries albeit, in changing ways) two animal species, wolf and reindeer, in their relations to humankind and to each other hold key positions in a number of ongoing local debates. Both, wolf and reindeer are major economic determinants of the livelihood of indigenous Saami pastoralists. Both are also powerful symbols, moving debates of resource conflict and compensation dramatically into larger discourses of principle concerning the relations between a native minority and the nation-state and between environmentalists and the Saami herders who have increasingly been cast in terms of 'eco-criminals'. Both Bjørklund and Wishart note similar processes of the criminalisation of indigenous livelihood traditions, in this volume.

Despite the fact that Sweden has ratified conventions and is subject to the EU's habitat directive, we cannot provide our predators threatened with extinction the protection they need and their proper place in their native lands because of aggressive minority interests. The existence of predators is threatened mainly by trophy hunters (a perversion among the hunting group), illegal hunting and the extensive animal handling practices of the reindeer business. (Lindberg 2001: 21)

To appease these Saami, the taxpayers are forced to give them compensation for lost reindeer. Should we not acquiesce to this, they would start exterminating our protection-worthy species.... My question to you Saami now is: how can you claim to be a nature-loving people today? (Löfgren 1999: 2)

Taken together, these two quotes point to the debates as perceived by the majority population, which generate a haunting political question: what obligations does the state hold toward the protection of the livelihood and culture of a small, indigenous people when balanced against the obligation to preserve Nature for all of humankind? While not presuming to answer this question, I will in the following pages seek to uncover spurious arguments in these debates and to refine their terms.

Just as, on the one hand, unrecognised consequences of Swedish herding policy are wrongly attributed to anachronistic Saami cultural values (Beach 1981), so, on the other hand, are unrecognised anachronistic cultural values of the majority population often cloaked in terms of hard science.

The reindeer is a key cultural symbol for anyone claiming Saami identity. Although, in Sweden, reindeer herding is a significant if not the major source of livelihood for only about 900 families, 2,500 people, or 10-15 percent of the Saami population, it is through this occupation alone that all the concrete rights to land and water accruing to the Saami people, either as an indigenous population or as individuals with immemorial rights, are allowed expression in Swedish legislation. Even Saami hunting and fishing rights, which are certainly as immemorial as that of reindeer herding, have been subsumed by herding legislation, so that they adhere as appendices to the Reindeer Herding Act and are available only to those actively engaged in the reindeer herding occupation.¹ Saami land rights based on the criteria of immemorial right rather than form of occupational livelihood were addressed in the Swedish Courts during the fifteen-year long Taxed Mountain Case (Cramér 1968-2002; Svensson 1997). Although the Saami did win some points of principle about the ability of pastoralists to own land, which might cause future claims to be successful in other areas, this case did not lead to any concrete changes in the contemporary legal framework nor in the actual Saami access to and utilisation of specific lands.

Moreover, and adding to the importance of the reindeer to the Saami, the right to herd reindeer (not necessarily to own them) is prescribed by Swedish law to fall only to those of Saami heritage, and all reindeer, regardless of owner, must have a registered (Saami) herder. Hence reindeer herding is a distinct Saami ethnic marker in Sweden, an ongoing traditional livelihood entailing the apprenticeship of skills and dwelling in Saami taskscapes, establishing deep-rooted continuity with past generations (Beach 2000a; Ingold 2000), and finally, it alone carries the formal legal expression of all practically recognised Saami land claims.²

Yet forces of change threaten the continuity of Saami herding traditions and redefine the content of Saami symbolic capital. A herd that is something for a Saami herder to be proud of is not simply one which brings high profits. It has beautiful animals in various proportions of age and sex classes (cf. Paine, 1994). More than just that, it also reflects the patterns of control exercised by its herders. Each animal and each herd entity as a whole, through its behaviour becomes the emblem of

its herders. Despite such traditional Saami herd values, however, the pressures towards rationalisation and extensivity are inexorable, and herders have of necessity been quick to comply. Compliance is definitely not a painless adaptation.

Crudely drawn, problems with reindeer as perceived by the majority occur when this should-be tamed and controlled livestock becomes too wild. In contrast, the wolf becomes problematic both to the local population and to the ideological stance of their environmentalist protectors when it becomes too tame and subject to control. The different contributions to this volume clearly indicate the need to be culturally sensitive to different conceptions of such terms as 'wild' and 'tame'. Differences do not at all necessarily follow a Native/non-Native dichotomy. While so opposed in political position regarding natural resources, contemporary Saami and majority 'Swedes', it can be argued, share the same logic of what is 'wild' as opposed to what is 'tame'. Of course, what passing tourists might consider to be wilderness will be home ground for Saami herders dwelling in the land, but for both groups (at least as gleaned from the rhetoric of their spokespersons) the idea of 'wild' is that which is closest to a pristine nature devoid of human influence. It is just that the Swedes often do not *perceive* the Saami influence. However, to the Gwich'in (described in this volume by Wishart), 'wild' animals are those that have had their normal relationship with humans disrupted. Being 'wild' takes on the flavour of becoming temporarily insane, something quite unnatural.

A commonly held belief in Sweden today is that irresponsible herders have allowed such herd increase that their reindeer have exceeded rational reindeer quotas and threaten to trample and overgraze sensitive mountain areas into a rocky desert (Beach 1997; Ihse 1995:14). The complaint becomes ethnically politicised immediately by media presentations announcing that the Saami herders are destroying the *Swedish* mountains (*Norrbottnens Kuriren*, 9 December 1994, my italics). Claiming reindeer damage to newly planted saplings and general inconvenience and obstruction in the logging process by reindeer, numerous private forestland owners have recently brought Saami herding groups to court, in a series of notable cases, to contest the Saami right of traditional usage to graze reindeer on their lands (Cf. Sveg Case lower court verdict 1996). The accepted wisdom to account for such dire conditions is that the herders who own deer privately but who graze them on common lands are structurally trapped in the so-called 'problem of the commons', resulting in excessive herd growth. This, when compounded by modern 'high-tech' herding technology - snowmobiles, trucks, helicopters, motorbikes - results in ever-increas-

ing herding 'extensivity' whereby the reindeer are subjected to short intermezzos of strong dominance but on the whole to diminished control. Large numbers with higher density of deer naturally imposes its own extensive herding pressure, for the animals are more prone to disperse in search of adequate grazing, and should grazing resources become ravaged, the imperative of commons dilemma moves with circular reinforcement, from the motivation of individuals to accrue even more surplus reindeer wealth, to that of securing the bare minimum number to survive within their livelihood. Even those of pro-Saami disposition, while they might absolve the herders of blame for the consequences of their actions (or inactions) because these are seen to stem from the logical and incontrovertible workings of the commons-problem structural trap, view the scenario as true nonetheless. Grudgingly they come to agree that curbs are demanded for a herding livelihood and further constraints for indigenous self-determination if Nature is to be preserved.

They generally fail to recall that the tragic element of the commons tragedy has been triggered far more by the massive exploitation of grazing lands by other competing land-use enterprises than by destruction of grazing by reindeer, and most importantly that the structural trap they correctly regard as a real problem need not be so were Saami demands for a 'reindeer account' policy permitted. As I have elaborated elsewhere, this is a system whereby reindeer could be removed from the grazing lands (i.e. slaughtered) and stored instead as wealth in the bank without incurring disadvantageous taxation regulations. Simply put, the reindeer could be slaughtered according to ecological factors but utilised according to a herder's need (Beach 1993:112). In fact, when faced with herd sizes considered excessive, the punitive measures legislated in 1993 as addendums to the Reindeer Act of 1971 for oversized herds might better be exchanged for regulations devised so that slaughtering for bank storage became decidedly advantageous to the herders.

Similarly, with respect to the increasing mechanization of herding labour, it is rarely understood that this is today a trend driven by the stick far more than induced by the carrot. Market pricing, especially as reindeer meat has come to compete with the imported meat³ of other deer species, leads to the condition whereby the herder needs an ever-increasing herd size simply to maintain his current living standard (a trend well established prior to the advent of costly high-tech herding, even if this has surely added impetus). Having reached a point whereby his household economy cannot be sustained on herding alone, the herder must invest his labour elsewhere for individual ben-

efit, thereby relying more upon the collective work efforts of his Sameby colleagues to work in his herding interests as well as their own. Hence we find established a kind of tragedy of the labour commons (Beach 2000b: 198ff.), whereby the labour one removes from the collective herding effort causes less immediate economic harm to the individual in relation to the benefit of the same labour time invested in a private undertaking. Increased use of high-tech equipment compensates decreases in the herding labour force and labour time investment. The dynamics of such a situation leads directly to what I have previously termed 'the extensive spiral' in herding (Beach 1981). With the extensive herding spiral, the less time and labour one invests in herding, the wilder the deer become, the greater the reindeer losses, the less profits those remaining produce, and the less time one can devote to the livelihood, and so on.

These two trends, regardless of their ultimate origins or responsibility, integrate with each other. 'Rational herding', - that which by definition is to provide the greatest possible profit from herding within the bounds of environmental sustainability - demands a herding practice driven at full throttle with herds at the maximally permitted herd limits. At any one point in time variables such as rational herd age/sex composition can swing considerably according to market whims, such as those of meat classification with variable pricing and the meat-to-bone proportions favoured by restaurants. Yet, despite such ever-present shifts in reindeer husbandry variables to strive towards the elusive rational ideal, a precondition for attaining greatest rationality in herding is the sustainably *maximal* utilisation of the grazing lands. Herds established at this level, poised at the brink of excess, taken together with the trend towards increasing herding extensivity and mechanisation, rolling into the extensive spiral with diminishing herd control, are bound to breach established rational herd limits, unleashing cries of environmental degradation. In fact, one might claim that if this scenario does not repeat itself frequently, if herd sizes do not rise to challenge sustainable grazing limits, then herding is not ideally rational and the Sameby in question must suffer some negative herding pressure such as heavy predation.

The matter of herder enskilment is also vital to this equation (Beach 2000b: 204). Herders raised and active in a long-term period of extensive herding come to lack the skills of their predecessors. Admittedly they have new skills, but reversion to intensive-herding practices either of the past or of a modern variety is more than a matter of need and desire; it is also a matter of know-how. For the reindeer too, habituation to a herding system of greater intensive control is not something

that can be reestablished in a season, a year or even a reindeer generation.

As we have seen above, harsh pressures towards extensivity and rationalisation characterise modern reindeer herding in Sweden today. At the same time, however, there exist a number of serious pressures calling for greater intensive herding measures. Public opinion demands animal handling practices involving little stress and closer human-reindeer contact. Many environmentalists regard low-tech but labour-intensive herding methods to be the least harmful for the land. Most importantly, should large numbers of reindeer become lost to predators following new legislation protecting species like wolves, herders must guard their reindeer more intensively.

The wolf is by far the predator species that carries the greatest symbolic capital for the environmentalist lobby. The wolf has returned from the brink of extinction in Sweden. In the early 1970s Sweden was the home of one purported lone wolf. Today the count is about eighty, most of them descendant from a single wolf pair. While Swedish researchers advocate a minimal wolf population of 500 to avoid the growing defects of inbreeding, the government follows a step-by-step programme which accepts the initial (more socially acceptable) goal of 200 wolves (Regeringens proposition 2000/01: 57). Towards this end, the wolf enjoys various forms of protection from hunting, which undergo continual negotiation.

According to the general Hunting Ordinance of 1987 (Jaktförordningen 1987: 905) a wolf might be hunted only if there is no other reasonable solution and if the maintenance of a viable wolf population in its natural area of distribution is not impaired. Even so, proper consideration must be taken for the size and composition of the wolf population. Such a hunt must be selective and controlled. The possible hunting of predators which might occur under the rubric of 'protective hunting', designed to protect property (livestock) from serious damage, cannot be invoked to hunt wolves, since the wolf population is considered too low and does not yet demonstrate a high enough birth rate to tolerate decrease. Security for wolves within the borders of national parks is even greater. According to the Hunting Law:

Has a bear, wolf, wolverine or lynx attacked and injured or killed tame livestock and there is reasonable cause to fear a new attack, the owner or caretaker of the livestock may without hindrance ... kill the attacking animal, if it occurs in direct connection to the attack. Such hunting is however not permitted within a national park. (Jaktlag SFS 1987, 28§)

With respect to the wolf, the general law of self-defence for oneself and one's private property has been constrained. A herder can no longer, without serious reflection, inflict injury on a wolf that is attacking his reindeer. A herder can try to round up and relocate his herd, but he cannot retaliate against a wolf aggressor upon its first attack. Retaliation can occur only when the attack is repeated and even then cannot involve chasing or tracking with any kind of motorised vehicle. Other legal paragraphs prohibit anyone to travel by motor vehicle together with a fully assembled weapon, or for the weapon to be used in the vicinity of the vehicle. In short, the herder must in all probability be present during the first attack, when he must refrain from offensive measures, and certainly during an ensuing, second attack, when his response must be on foot, immediate and face-to-face. These are hardly the characteristics of wolf-hunting practices, which rarely occur directly under the nose of a herder.

The biodiversity argument invoked in favour of maintaining a wolf population takes as its point of departure that each species has evolved to play a role in the total holistic ecological system, and to eliminate one player impairs the survival of the others and handicaps or threatens the survivability of the whole. Yet for predators at the top of the food chain, this argument has vulnerable points. They themselves hardly service other species significantly by their own meat as food; instead, their beneficial ecological role for the larger whole is through their killing services, combined with the 'trickle-down' distribution of the carcasses of their prey by which wolves come to circulate resources back into the system, and through their services as selective breeders for other species, culling out inferior stock.

One must question if a wolf population of even 500 individuals would contribute in any meaningful way to these ends. Moreover, then-selective breeding benefits, certainly to the reindeer population at least, are obviated by the slaughtering practices and selective breeding practices of the herders themselves. Instead, the wolves can come to destroy the herders' selective breeding efforts by killing valuable reproductive stock. Inferior reindeer have already been culled out with good husbandry methods. While the biodiversity argument might in principle retain some limited validity for wolves in the reindeer-herding regions, the presence or absence of wolves even in the maximal numbers considered does not carry great practical ecological significance of a positive kind. Yet, there are still other arguments for preserving a viable wolf population despite the enormous economic, social and political costs involved.

Aside from arguments based on the role any species plays in the larger ecological system, the environmentalists advocate wolf preservation on the grounds that Sweden must fulfil its international obligation to protect endangered species *per se*. When the Saami point out that internationally the wolf is far from endangered, with many thousand nearby in Russia, the point is made that Sweden must do its part to maintain the particular Scandinavian wolf type. And yet, when the pro-wolf lobby discusses the goal of 500 wolves in Sweden against the backdrop of the inbreeding threat, it is argued that this potential problem might be overcome as fresh wolf genes are added to the Swedish pool by wolves crossing from Russia into Sweden via Finland:

For genetic exchange to occur between the Scandinavian and the Finnish-Russian wolf populations, wolves must be able to move from the border with Finland to the area where the main part of the Scandinavian wolf population is located. Such an exchange is of highest importance to ensure that the Scandinavian wolf population does not become genetically impoverished. (Regeringens Proposition, 2000/01:57, p. 42)

In January of 2002 a rare drama unfolded: a lone wolf had wandered across the Finnish border into northern Sweden. Once discovered by the Swedish Environmental Protection Agency (SEPA), the animal was tagged with a radio collar two days later and for many months has been monitored in its every move. The wolf was put to sleep, and DNA samples were taken which confirmed that this wolf was genetically close to wolves found in eastern Finland and Russia and is, therefore, according to the SEPA, 'a highly interesting individual' (2002). Helicopters have followed it by air, and snowmobile-mounted protectors have kept a watchful eye to ensure that it will not be shot. The Agency points out that the radio collar should help the Saami herders to move their herds out of harm's way. Already the herders estimate the cost in extra work occasioned by this wolf to be approximately US\$3,000. In a decision taken on 11 March 2002, the Agency denied petitions to shoot the wolf or to move it out of the herding area with the declaration that '...the goal for the distribution of the wolf population shall be that it spread itself over the land in a *natural way*' (my emphasis).⁴

When the ideal of gaining freedom from the impending inbreeding problem is considered in relation to: (1) the time-scale of the government's step-by-step programme and the huge public 'NIMBY' ('not in my backyard') outcry against even the existing wolf population by local people, not to mention the goal of 200 or the dream of 500; and (2) the infrequency of genetically attractive Russian/Finnish wolves straying permanently into Sweden, the idea has been broached of flying in

wolf sperm from Russia. Hence, a genetically healthy wolf mix could be obtained without prejudicing a hot debate with added wolf bodies. Interestingly, and as I have argued elsewhere (Beach, 2001: 97), implementation of such a concept would subject what can justifiably be called 'wolf-managers' to the same critique as that held against Saami reindeer managers, viz. that theirs has become an 'unnatural' high-tech-dependent enterprise of little economic benefit to the majority, a kind of hobby maintained by the Swedish taxpayer. In fact, the remarkable helicopter-and-radio-monitored surveillance operation around this most recent wolf immigrant displaces this point as one of mere conjecture. And, ironically, the culling of eastern wolf sperm for implantation in Sweden, which was at first launched as a humorously provocative extreme argument to pin down a point of principle, is no longer met with a dismissive smile; the SEPA, now seriously worried over the safety of their latest immigrant wolf, the improbability that it will travel far south to mix with the permanent Swedish wolf stock, and the extreme expense of the surveillance venture, are now contemplating culling his sperm.

It seems that endangered status does not hold in itself as an argument to preserve a viable and free wolf population in Sweden, and the argument based on Scandinavian typing defeats itself by its own anti-inbreeding survival plan of 'foreign' wolf import. However, there are still other arguments involving ethical and moral principles, which hinge largely on what is considered to be true and pristine Swedish wilderness. A deep-seated and understandable conviction of the environmentalist ethic is that at least somewhere within the nation's borders, humankind must command a halt to its destruction of Nature and leave the land unbent by human purposiveness. Of course dilemma ensues, for this too is a human purpose, and just as in the case of discriminatory affirmative-action employment programmes to right the wrongs of previous discrimination, environmentalists seek by means of the oxymoron 'wilderness management' to regain Eden lost.

But what exactly is the Nature targeted as pristine? Does it include modern reindeer herding? Or, if there is to be herding at all, should it be only of the low-tech variety? Did Swedish Eden have eighty, 200 or 500 wolves? Nature becomes consciously negotiated in direct proportion to the conscious command we have over it. A capability unexercised becomes as decisive a human (in)action as its implementation. In effect, doing nothing of what one *could* do becomes an instance of wilderness management, whereas previous to such ability of control and beyond its reach, all that occurred was 'natural'. Hence Nature itself shifts along an intensive-extensive continuum of control, analo-

gous to that of herding, depending on our knowledge and abilities, regardless of its actual environmental state. This point is far from being simply philosophical. A concrete example from Saami herding reality and minority politics will serve to illustrate its bearing.

Few things can be more illustrative of the conception of Nature than the discourse around compensation funds or subsidies, when distributed to ease the suffering of what is considered to be natural disasters or unavoidable misfortune. Funds paid for the reindeer that herders lose to predators are commonly perceived of and counted as a subsidy - to the reindeer herders - by the state. One recent investigation concluded that the reindeer livelihood was subsidised by fully 178 percent of its production (Johansson and Lundgren, 1998). Naturally this enrages the common Swedish taxpayer who thereby seems to carry the burden of sustaining this troublesome little minority. Adding insult to injury, Saami herders, it is argued, insist on engaging in a counterproductive business, a kind of cultural hobby that impedes industrial development and full employment in the north; and, finally, to cap it all, Saami livelihoods are supposedly destroying the environment.

Certainly the funds are a partial compensation to the reindeer managers for their losses, but they are simultaneously a subsidy not to them but to what we might justifiably dub today the 'wolf managers', to establish conceptual parity with reindeer managers. Should the government buy fodder to feed cattle threatened by starvation, this would be considered to be a subsidy to the cattle owners. However, when the government buys predator food (reindeer) to feed predators, this is considered a subsidy to the reindeer herders. If the Swedish accounting system were made to reflect expenditures whose true goal is to sustain the lives of wolves and other natural predators, then the amount posted at the door of the Saami herders themselves would shrink correspondingly. This would undoubtedly be fairer and more representative of the Swedish government's actual commitment to the Saami herding culture as such.

The reason compensation money is counted as a subsidy for the reindeer herders lies, I believe, to a great extent in what we consider natural, and the priority of Nature over human claims. We think it only natural that wolves kill reindeer, that wolves should abound in reindeer pasture lands, and that the state is doing a good deed by helping the herders absorb their losses. But it is also natural for the herders to kill wolves to protect their property; and this the law does not permit. Historically, the dramatic decline of the wolf population in Sweden over the centuries has not been caused primarily by Saami hunters, but rather by the spread of Swedish settlement. The establishment of a

viable wolf population in Sweden today is a feat of human environmentalist engagement and government legislation.

Finally, it might be appropriate to quote here the ultimate expression of globalised political conservationist argumentation for wolf protectionism in Sweden. When asked at a conference about predators why Sweden should protect endangered predators, the Minister of the Environment, Kjell Larsson, replied:

It is not a burden that we have accepted to do this. It is a small, small price that we have to pay, but it gives us the possibility to participate in international discussions about the preservation of endangered species. We can put pressure on other countries if we ourselves take responsibility for our threatened species. (Larsson 2001)

Cynical herders are among the first to confirm that it is indeed only a small, small price that the government is willing to pay them for all the damage caused to their livestock by predators. Recently, however, compensation sums have improved, even to the point of incorporating what is commonly considered to be a kind of 'bribe factor' to induce the presumed future guilty Saami herders to refrain from killing endangered predator species illegally (Dahlström 2003: 483).

The policy for predator compensation has been totally revamped. A new system of compensation agreed upon and proposed by both the herders and the Swedish Environmental Protection Agency is that the herders receive payment not for the number of animals lost, but instead according to the number and kind of predators with their dens on Sameby territory. Of course, predators do not necessarily care whether they are hunting on the territory of the Sameby receiving compensation for them, or if they leave their home area to hunt in the neighbouring Sameby. In such cases, 'shared' predators elicit coefficients for multi-Sameby compensation. However, the government did not finalise in legislation the new system it called for, once appraisals of reindeer losses indicated just how much livestock the predators destroyed, i.e. how much it would cost to convert the wolf from being an economic burden on the Saami into being instead a source of economic gain. At first the government appropriated only a part of the funds known to be necessary to compensate herders for their losses. Nonetheless, the new form of compensation, based on living predators rather than dead reindeer, brings Sweden closer to the principles advocated by eco-tourism.⁵ The presence of predators introduces the possibility of their becoming economically attractive to the herders (especially if intensive herding methods were to minimise reindeer losses). Such a form of compensation, it is believed (provided it is ade-

quately funded), would convert into predator protectors those who might otherwise want to disregard the law and to snipe at wolves.

It is assumed at least that the new higher rates paid for predators will stop herders from killing them illegally. That amount of compensation, which exceeds real losses constitutes the so-called 'bribe sum'. The reindeer herders' political organisation, SSR, has officially objected to any such bribe sums, dubbed as 'nature value' grants placed on the predators, since it has been so obviously connected to the unwarranted conviction that trigger-happy herders will hunt illegally without compunction. Hence, if predators are spared, herders are viewed as having taken the 'bribe'. If not, it will confirm the idea that herders are irrationally rabid predator haters for whom even superadequate compensation is meaningless. Either scenario confirms the assumed guilt of the herders, their eco-criminality.

As human control and even possible control over the environment increases, we are forced to re-evaluate what we conceive of as Nature, and, as a consequence of this, how we conceive of and relate to indigenous livelihoods. Ironically, the same kinds of international covenants and declarations devised by removed, often foreign, politicians, dedicated to altruistic principles of conserving the unique and threatened, and invoked to 'save the wolf, may come to be invoked to 'save the Saami' as well. Already it is difficult to conceive of an indigenous population anywhere whose traditional livelihood is as carefully controlled and managed as that of the Saami in Sweden. New and simplistic ecological arguments for further increases in regulation (whether born of good intentions or ulterior motives) further constrain Saami self-determination nonetheless, spawning among Saami terms such as 'eco-colonialism' or simply 'ecolonialism'. To the Saami, Swedish environmental concerns are unavoidably tainted by hypocrisy. It is the majority Swedish society which has permitted the massive exploitation of northern natural resources, forced herding into a tight corner, and which now castigates and fines small-scale Saami livelihoods for being ecologically non-sustainable and threatening to that terribly diminished 'wilderness' which the majority wants to maintain for its own needs of tourism and nature romanticism.

Ecology in practice is unavoidably political and never purely scientific. Goals of 'sustainable development' beg the questions: what is to be sustained, and for whom? There are an infinite number of long-term sustainable ecosystems that can be promoted in a given region, which is a political question. What can be termed 'vulgar ecology' tends to cloak the role of human purpose in conceptions of Nature. It is a perspective readily revealed by the reductionistic, monetary metaphors it

employs; one should live on the 'interest' and not deplete the 'capital' of natural resources. Supposedly, if one follows this rule of thumb, Nature (or whatever ecosystem has been targeted by human purposiveness, for example 'wetlands') will be sustained. However, in the monetary metaphor, even if amounts of it change, money is a constant. One is sustaining it, increasing it or depleting it. But ecosystems do not work this way. In whatever way they are being utilised and to whatever degree, they thereby alter character (not just quantity).

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Notes

- 1 Note, however, that in 1993 the Swedish state confiscated the Saami exclusive small-game hunting right on Crown lands, claiming that the Crown holds a parallel hunting right as owner of the land — although the state has been unable to prove ownership. Nonetheless, the Crown's parallel right has been implemented, and while the Saami small-game hunting right continues, it is no longer exclusive and cannot be orchestrated by the herders to be conducted in a way harmonious to the spatial and seasonal calendar of herding activity (Beach 1994).
- 2 In Sweden, it becomes necessary to distinguish between having a right and being permitted to practise that right. For example, in what appears to be a broad ethnically based right, *all* Saami have the right to herd reindeer according to the first paragraph of the Swedish Reindeer Herding Act. However, ever since 1928, only those Saami who are members of the Sameby herding collectives (of which there are about fifty in Sweden) have the right to *practise* this herding right on Sameby territory. These Samebys form 'closed shops', as the membership of each Sameby is controlled by its existing membership, who are not at all prone to take in newcomers to share further their limited grazing resource and tightly regulated total 'rational' Sameby herd sizes. For an account of Saami herding conditions and legal constraints in Sweden, see Beach (1981, 1994 and 2000b). For a detailed historical account of the development of Swedish legislation concerning the Saami, see Cramér (1968-2002).
- 3 Interestingly enough, one of the effects of the Chernobyl nuclear disaster was to establish firm mule-deer meat imports from New Zealand to substitute for the loss of reindeer meat on the Swedish market due to fears of contamination.
- 4 Recent news alerts of this wolf indicate that it is moving farther north, to the chagrin of the SEPA, which hopes it will bring its genes south to be united with the rest of the Swedish wolf gene pool. Moreover, movement by this wolf in any direction out of the maximally protective zone afforded by the Lapponia World Heritage Site's complex of national parks causes anxiety to those bent on his survival and breeding success. Yet

the herders who knew of its presence for months before the SEPA, and who might have surreptitiously disposed of this wolf, did not.

Saami political discourses about tourism, which I have encountered in Sweden concern the issue of who shall benefit and how it can be pursued so as not to hamper or disrupt reindeer management. Placing it under Saami control in herding rangelands would favour proper integration with herding practices and also provide Saami with employment opportunities. Practising Saami herders are likely to express priority for the well-being of the animals in their care, but such attitudes are distinctly different from the kind of non-intrusive respect of non-human species and the consideration for the landscaping habits mentioned by Wishart in this volume, as illustrated by the Gwich'in.

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