

International Workshop:

Ground-Based Wolf Capture Methods

Evenstad, Norway, 20–22 October 2025

The Scandinavian Wolf Research Project (SKANDULV), in collaboration with the University of Inland Norway (INN) and the Swedish University of Agricultural Sciences (SLU), organized an international workshop on ground-based wolf capture methods in Evenstad, Norway, during 20–22 October 2025. The workshop was supported by the Nordic Board for Wildlife Research (NKV) and brought together researchers, wildlife managers, veterinarians and experienced trappers from Europe and North America.

Purpose of the workshop

The primary goal was to exchange experiences and knowledge on ground-based wolf capture methods that could potentially be applied in Scandinavia. Particular emphasis was placed on evaluating the advantages, limitations and practical feasibility of different approaches under Scandinavian ecological, logistical and legal conditions.

The workshop focused on:

- Ground-based capture methods, including leg-hold traps and foot-snares
- Capture efficiency and trapping strategies
- Bycatch prevention and animal welfare considerations
- Injury mitigation and trap modifications
- Trap preparation, alarm systems and monitoring technologies
- Practical field demonstrations and trap deployment techniques

Broad international participation

The workshop gathered experts from eleven countries representing a wide range of wolf populations, landscapes and management systems. Participants came from Norway, Sweden, Denmark, Germany, Switzerland, Spain, Portugal, Italy, Croatia, the Czech Republic and the United States. The invited speakers represented several internationally recognised wolf research and management programmes, including the Voyageurs Wolf Project (USA), LUPUS Institute (Germany), KORA (Switzerland), Grupo Lobo (Portugal), the Spanish National Research Council (Spain), LIFE Wild Wolf (Croatia) and others. This broad representation created a unique opportunity to compare experiences across regions with very different wolf densities, terrain conditions, legislation and capture objectives.

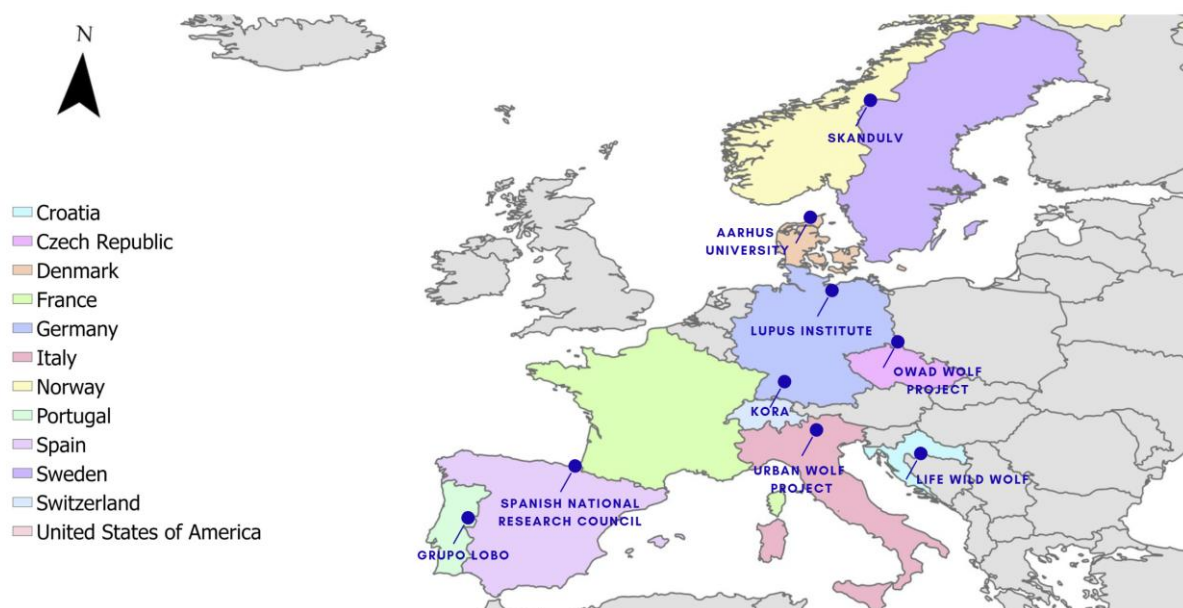


Figure 1: Geographic distribution of workshop participants and invited experts attending the international workshop on ground-based wolf capture methods held in Evenstad, Norway, in October 2025. Participants represented research institutions, wildlife management agencies and wolf conservation projects from 11 countries across Europe and North America (America not shown on the map – Voyageur Project researchers joined the workshop).

Main lessons and discussions

Participants presented capture methods currently used in North America and Europe, including modified leg-hold traps and various foot-snare systems. Discussions focused not only on capture success, but also on animal welfare, selectivity, bycatch prevention and operational logistics.

Several examples were presented of trap modifications designed to reduce injuries, including rubberized jaws, shock absorbers, swivels, modified trigger mechanisms and modern alarm systems that reduce response time after capture. Experiences from multiple projects highlighted the importance of careful trap placement, intensive monitoring and standardized protocols to minimize risks to both target and non-target species.

A recurring theme throughout the workshop was that capture methods must always be adapted to local ecological and social conditions. Approaches that perform well in one region may not necessarily be directly transferable to Scandinavia without modifications.

Practical field session

An important component of the workshop was a hands-on outdoor session where participants demonstrated trap preparation, trap placement strategies and field deployment techniques. This allowed participants to directly compare different systems and discuss practical challenges associated with weather, terrain, human disturbance and animal behaviour. The

practical demonstrations stimulated valuable discussions on how future testing and evaluation of ground-based capture methods could be conducted in a Scandinavian context.



Figure 2 Participant demonstrating the setup, operation and triggering mechanism of a Belisle trap during the practical field session. The outdoor demonstration provided participants with an opportunity to compare capture systems, discuss deployment strategies, and evaluate their potential applicability under Scandinavian conditions.

Relevance for Scandinavia

Capturing wolves safely and efficiently remains an important component of Scandinavian wolf research and management. Reliable capture methods are necessary for GPS collaring, movement ecology studies, monitoring population dynamics and understanding predator-prey interactions. The workshop provided a rare opportunity to gather international expertise and critically evaluate whether, where and how different ground-based capture approaches could potentially contribute to future Scandinavian research and monitoring efforts. Equally important, the workshop highlighted knowledge gaps and identified areas where further evaluation would be required before implementation under Scandinavian conditions. The workshop successfully strengthened international collaborations and established a foundation for continued exchange of experiences between wolf researchers and practitioners across Europe and North America.

Outcomes and future directions

The workshop generated several concrete outcomes that will continue beyond the meeting itself.

First, the discussions and material presented during the workshop formed the basis for a comprehensive literature review on wolf capture methods. As a direct result of the workshop,

a Master's student has initiated a systematic review of published studies on wolf capture techniques, animal welfare outcomes, capture efficiency and methodological developments. The review is currently in preparation and is expected to be submitted to a peer-reviewed scientific journal.

Second, participants agreed on the value of maintaining this international network and expressed strong interest in continuing the exchange of experiences and expertise. As a result, a follow-up workshop is planned for 2027, allowing participants to revisit ongoing developments, evaluate new techniques and continue discussions on the applicability of different capture methods under Scandinavian conditions.

Finally, participants identified a need for a practical guide on wolf capture methods. Work has therefore begun on developing a shared guidance document that will summarize experiences from Europe and North America, including considerations related to animal welfare, capture efficiency, bycatch prevention, trap preparation, monitoring systems and field logistics. The long-term objective is to provide researchers and wildlife managers with a practical resource that can support future wolf capture efforts and methodological evaluations.



Figure 3: Participants of the international workshop on ground-based wolf capture methods, held at Campus Evenstad, Norway, 20–22 October 2025. The workshop brought together researchers, wildlife managers, veterinarians and experienced trappers from 11 countries to exchange knowledge and discuss capture methods that could potentially be adapted for Scandinavian wolf research and monitoring.

Acknowledgements

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