

Proposal degree project, “On the effects of wild boar and other predator species on the breeding success of Capercaillie Tetrao urogallus in a boreal forest landscape”.

Background

The Capercaillie (*Tetrao urogallus*) is a large forest, ground-nesting grouse (Tetraonidae). It is considered an umbrella species in the boreal forest, as they are very good indicators of high biodiversity of the forest. There are many different opinions about the abundance of capercaillie populations, although according IUCN Red List of Threatened Species it as a species with a lower risk of extinction. However, some studies claim that the Capercaillie is declining over much of its range because of the increasing fragmentation of the old forests. Most central European coniferous forests are productive and rather dense, compared to boreal forests in Sweden. Breeding success of ground-nesting birds is in many circumstances influenced by distance from the forest edge, and nest predation is the most common cause of breeding failure.

The wild boar (*Sus scrofa*) is one of the most widely distributed mammals in the world. It has increased a lot in the last decades in Europe and has caused many damages in agriculture, and also conservation problems and health risks. Wild boar has a very good ability to adapt to the environment by changing its eating habits. It has also many effects on fauna and flora, and has been identified as a common nest predator of ground-nesting birds. However, a number of other predators than the wild boar may also be potential predators on Capercaillie nests, and therefore we need more experimental studies to investigate about the effects of other species on Capercaillie breeding success.

Aim of the present study: To investigate the potential effect of the wild boar and other mammals and birds as predators on the Capercaillie nests. We will do this in an experimental test by putting out eggs filled with plaster to be able to see marks of teeth from mammal predators, and we will also have half the eggs fresh in order to see if a bird predator has been predated the nest.

Area of study: The study will be performed in Uppland and Gästrikland during the period from last week of April and until the first week of June.

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