



*Press release from Protect the Forest, November 5, 2012:*

## Forestry companies are bluffing about the amount of protected forest

**The Swedish forestry industry organization Skogsindustrierna, where the companies Sveaskog, Stora Enso, SCA and Holmen skog are members, have published a website: [protectedforests.com](http://protectedforests.com), with a map of what they claim is protected forest in Sweden. On the website they claim that as much as 25% of the Swedish forest are protected, and they also claim that Swedish forestry is environmentally sustainable. The organization Protect the Forest has examined the map and the published statistics, and the conclusion is that the campaign is simply a bluff.**

An important topic of the forestry debate in Sweden is how much productive species-rich forest is in fact protected. Another topic is how much needs to be protected in order to reach the government's goal that all naturally occurring species should maintain populations that are large enough for long-term survival. Sweden has signed the Nagoya treaty, which specifies that we must protect at least 17% of the forest before 2020, but leading scientists warn that Sweden is far from reaching the goal. It lies in the interests of the forest industry to ensure that they have access to as much of the productive forest land as possible, and that is why Skogsindustrierna has published these inflated figures, according to Protect the Forest.

"The forest industry claims that we have already protected too much. But according to official statistics, less than 4% of Sweden's productive forest has formal protection from logging. In the area below the foothills of the mountains, it is as little as 1.6%," says Viktor Säfve, chairman of Protect the Forest.

**Protect the Forest's examination of the campaign "Protected Forest" shows that large parts of the formally protected areas on the map consist of mountainous areas above the treeline, and that they also include a golf course, lakes, quarries, and nature reserves that do not ban logging.**

"I have scrutinized these maps on behalf of our organization, and I can state that large parts of these areas are not protected forest. This is a blatant attempt to mislead politicians and customers as to the real state of the forest," says Björn Olin from Protect the Forest.

Protect the Forest also disagrees with the way the forest industry includes areas which are voluntarily set aside alongside the formally protected areas.

"We do not think these voluntarily "protected" forests should be included in the statistics of protected forests, since these forests lack long-term protection. They are also not marked in the field, and their quality has not been assessed by independent experts. But most of all, these forests can be cut down if the owners change their minds, or if the land is sold," says Viktor Säfve in Protect the Forest. "It's great that maps are now available of most of the voluntarily protected areas, but if the companies really mean what they say, these areas should be given long-term protection. Also, many of the voluntarily protected areas which are owned by

individuals are not documented anywhere, even though the forest industry includes them in their statistics."

The forest industry also includes among their statistics sparsely forested wetlands, rocky areas, and forests near the treeline with low productivity. But these areas have no strong protection.

"More than half of the forest industry's 25% protected forest consists of these kinds of forests with low productivity. On the one hand, their figures are incorrect, but also, these forests are not relevant to the discussion, because they cannot be logged productively anyway. And more than 90% of all red-listed forest-living species in Sweden are dependent on productive forest," says Viktor Säfve.

**For more information visit our website:**

<http://protecttheforest.se/en/pressmeddelanden/26-pressmeddelanden/1664-skogsindustrierna-bluffar-om-skyddad-skog>

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