

Att. Minister of Food, Agriculture and Fisheries Jacob Jensen  
The Ministry of Food, Agriculture and Fisheries  
Holbergsgade 6  
1057 København K

26. May 2026

## **Regarding the statement on the release of animals for nature management - follow-up to the statement on rewilding**

The Danish Animal Ethics Council has received a request from the Minister of Food, Agriculture and Fisheries, Jacob Jensen, dated 4. September 2025, requesting an assessment of whether the development since the Council's statement on rewilding from 2018 gives rise to an update of the Council's statement. The Danish Animal Ethics Council has previously issued a statement on rewilding in the Statement on the use of animals for rewilding in nature management (2018)<sup>1</sup> and in the Consultation Response on the Establishment of nature national parks (2021)<sup>2</sup>. The background to the request is that the first nature national parks were opened in the summer of 2025, and that animals have been released here on the basis of exemptions from the Danish Veterinary and Food Administration regarding supervision of the animals in question. It is further stated that since the Council's previous consideration of the subject, rewilding has been the subject of debate regarding animal welfare and animal ethics at both political and professional levels, and the rewilding projects have developed.

In its statement, the Danish Animal Ethics Council has chosen to discuss the release of animals for nature management in general, not just in nature national parks. The Council notes at the outset that the release of animals under fences for rewilding in the sense that the animals can be left completely on their own is not permitted in Denmark. The Council therefore uses the more accurate term nature management in its statement.

The Danish Animal Ethics Council's overall assessment is that there is a need for changes and development of the legal framework for keeping animals for nature management in order to prevent and handle the negative welfare aspects that may arise as far as possible. After the summary of the Danish Animal Ethics Council's recommendations below, the Council explains in more detail the framework for discussing the subject and elaborates on its considerations and recommendations.

- **Regarding the legal framework**

The Danish Animal Ethics Council recommends that the same general rules for the protection of animal welfare should apply to all keeping of animals, i.e. that the exemption option in the Animal Welfare Act should be removed. The Council further recommends that rules for keeping animals for nature management be laid down in an executive order, supplemented by guidelines. The Council emphasises that this must not entail possible exceptions from the Animal Welfare Act, and that the rules should apply to all keeping of animals for nature management.

- **Regarding management plans**

The Danish Animal Ethics Council recommends that management plans focus in particular on assessments of suitability prior to the release of animals, assessments of animal welfare, contingency plans and monitoring of the project.

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<sup>1</sup> [The Danish Animal Ethics Council: Statement on the use of animals for rewilding in nature management \(2018\)](#).

<sup>2</sup> [Det Dyreetiske Råd: Høringssvar om etablering af naturnationalparker \(2021\)](#).

- **Regarding educational requirements**

The Danish Animal Ethics Council recommends that rules be laid down on educational requirements in relation to animal welfare for persons supervising animals in nature management projects.

- **Regarding the public debate**

In addition to the above, the Danish Animal Ethics Council recommends that it is crucial to have the aforementioned measures communicated so that there is no doubt about which rules apply.

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Only the introduction and summary have been translated.

[The full statement is available \(in Danish\) here.](#)