

# The mystery of SKOGSMULLE'S red feather



**SKOGSMULLE**  
FRILUFTSFRÄMJANDET

A discovery trail for children in  
the exhibition *Swedish Nature*.

## THIS IS SKOGSMULLE!

Born in the forest, Skogsmulle is a creation of nature. Plants and animals helped him to get his clothes. Birds gathered leaves for his costume. A birch tree let fall a piece of bark and, in no time, Skogsmulle had fashioned a hat from it. Mice gnawed loose some tree roots that became Skogsmulle's tail, which he uses to tidy up in nature. Children gave him boots to protect his feet from sharp objects when he walks in the forest. Skogsmulle is especially proud of the red feather in his birchbark hat. He got it from a black grouse that dropped a white feather to the ground; then lingonberries coloured it so red and fine. Skogsmulle can talk with animals, play and sing with children, and he wants everyone to help him keep nature neat and clean.



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## THE STORY THUS FAR...

Skogsmulle is terribly sad because he has lost the red hat-feather of which he is so proud. What luck that he can talk with animals! He can ask them if they have seen his red feather. You can help Skogsmulle search for it.

"First, let's go to the elk family," says Skogsmulle.



### 1. THE ELKS

The elk calf is now quite large, but still follows its mother everywhere. She teaches the calf what is good and safe to eat in the forest. Skogsmulle explains that, when the mother gives birth to a new calf, she chases off the one from last year. The grown-up calf must then be able to find food for itself. Skogsmulle asks you to look everywhere to see if the red feather is located among the elks. The papa elk, usually called a stag, is off by himself. He wears a heavy crown of antlers on his head. "That's why he is called the king of the forest," notes Skogsmulle.

How many points do the antlers of the stag elk have? Can you find any elk droppings? What do they look like?

"Now let's go the wise old owl," says Skogsmulle, and heads into the dark and dense spruce forest.

### 2. THE OWL IN ITS NEST

Skogsmulle shows you an owl that is lying in its nest atop the tall trunk of a dead tree. Perhaps she is keeping her eggs warm. Beside her sits the papa owl, scanning the area for food. "We don't have time to search for your feather now," he says to Skogsmulle. "But you are welcome to have one of my feathers." However, Skogsmulle would rather have his own red feather back.

What is the colour of the owl's feathers?

"Follow me into the anthill," says Skogsmulle and enters the enormous home of the ants.

### 3. THE ANTS IN THEIR HILL

"Listen, and you will hear the ants at work. They scurry everywhere throughout the forest to collect food and bring it to the anthill. They collect tiny dead animals, honey and plant juices," explains Skogsmulle. Look at all the tiny cells that the ants have built for their larvae and pupae. The cells are the nurseries of the ants. Skogsmulle sees no red feather. Do you? All of the ants are in a great hurry and do not reply to Skogsmulle's questions.

How many legs has an ant?

"Look!" exclaims Skogsmulle when he emerges from the anthill. "An entire pack of wolves has come to this place."



### 4. THE PACK OF WOLVES

"See how the wolf cubs roughhouse with each other," says Skogsmulle. "The leader is the one that makes the most important decisions. The others fight over which rank they will have in the pack. Each wants to be the first to feed," explains Skogsmulle. "Can you see my red feather?"

How many wolves are there in the pack?

Which wolf do you think is the leader?

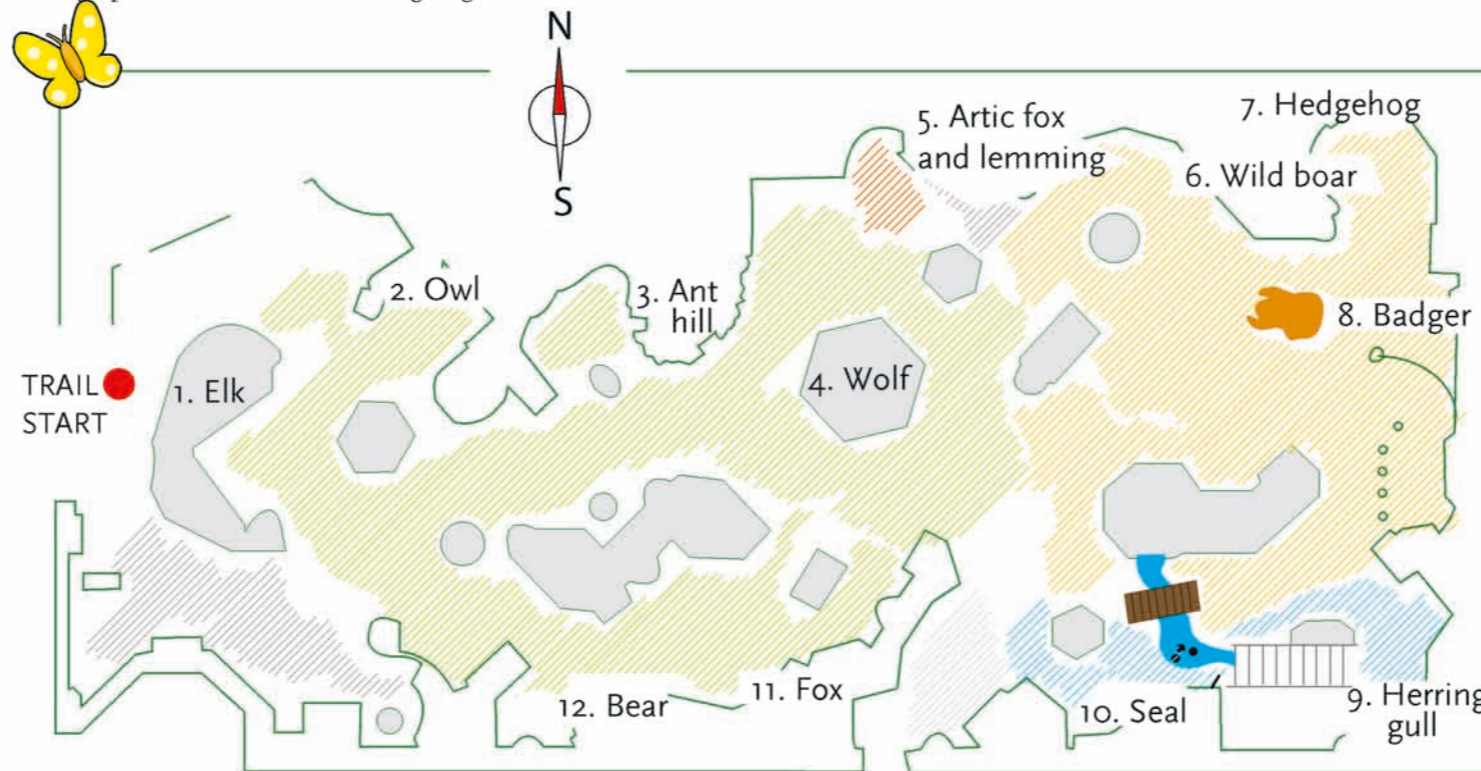
"I think we should leave them to themselves and move on to the Arctic fox behind the wolverine's tree."

### 5. THE ARCTIC FOX AND THE LEMMINGS

"Here is the Arctic fox, a good friend of my pal, Fjällfina, who lives in the mountains. Maybe I dropped the feather here when I visited Fjällfina last summer," says Skogsmulle. "Has she said anything about my red feather?" he asks the Arctic fox. "Not to my knowledge," replies the fox, and continues to hunt mountain lemmings because he is hungry.

How many mountain lemmings can you spot?

"Let's go and listen to the mosquitoes," says Skogsmulle, "so that we can hear the sounds among the birches in the alpine forest. Listen to the humming of the mosquitoes — and they can also sting. But they provide an excellent food supply for the many bird chicks," explains Skogsmulle. "Now follow me to the wild boars. We'll go past the red deer and the big frog, then turn to the left."



### 6. THE WILD BOARS ROOT IN THE GROUND

"The wild boars search for mushrooms, larvae, worms and slugs by rooting in the ground with their snouts," explains Skogsmulle. Maybe the feather lies hidden under the moss somewhere, he suggests. "I have not seen anything red," says the big wild boar. The mama boar is called a sow, and her young are called piglets. Skogsmulle cannot find his red feather under the moss. Can you help him search carefully?

How would you describe the pelts of the young piglets?

"We can ask these hedgehogs if they have seen the red feather," says Skogsmulle.

### 7. THE HEDGEHOGS' NEST

The mama hedgehog watches over her young. Skogsmulle asks if she has seen his red feather, but the hedgehog replies that she has not, and does not have time to help. She has been out searching for earthworms and must now hurry back to her young to feed them. Skogsmulle



tries asking the hedgehog piglets, but they are only half awake and want to go back to sleep in their nest.

How many piglets has the mama hedgehog?

"Let's go to the badgers. Maybe they have my feather," says Skogsmulle as he walks past some butterflies.



### 8. THE BADGERS IN THE MEADOW

In the meadow are two badgers. "They are searching for their favourite food," explains Skogsmulle. "Have you seen my red feather?" he asks. "I saw it flutter past, carried by the wind toward the sea," replies the smaller badger. "Ask the big grey gull," suggests the larger badger.

Do you see what the badger likes to eat?

"On to the meadow by the sea," says Skogsmulle, "straight past the ducks."

### 9. THE HERRING GULL IN THE MEADOW

"Look! There is the large bird called the herring gull. But my word, it is in such a great hurry! It has just stolen an egg from another bird," says Skogsmulle.

"Let's return past the ducks and play in the water by the bridge," says Skogsmulle.

### 10. THE SEALS AND THE GREATER BLACK-BACKED GULL

Seals are lying in the sun on the rocky ledge along the shore. But high up on a large rock stands a greater black-backed gull and scans the sea. "Hello... yoo-hoo!" calls Skogsmulle to the black-backed gull. "You have such a clear view of the surroundings. Have you seen my red feather fly past?"

"Hello, Skogsmulle!" replies the gull. "I just saw your red feather being blown into the wood over there. Perhaps it has fastened in a tree." Nearby is the herring gull, and Skogsmulle shows you its chicks. "When the chicks want food," he explains, "they peck at the red spot on the parent's beak."

"What shall we do now?" wonders Skogsmulle. "I think we should visit my friend, Gullräven." We pass all the birds and make a turn when we come to the lynx.



### 11. THE FOX GOES ON THE HUNT

"Hello, Gullräven!" cries Skogsmulle to the red fox. "Do you remember how I helped you when your paw got stuck in the beer can? Now I need your help to find my red feather." "I have not seen it, Skogsmulle," replies the fox. "Maybe it is covered by the snow. Ask the stoat and the vole — they scurry about beneath the snow." Help Skogsmulle search beneath the snow. Do you see anything red?

How many voles can you see beneath the snow?

As you pass by the mountain hares, Skogsmulle points out that they already have their beautiful white winter coats. "We had better hurry to the bear before it goes into its winter sleep."

### 12. THE BEAR BEGINS ITS HIBERNATION



The mama bear is already fast asleep in her den. Listen to her snoring! "We'll have to go and ask the papa bear about the feather," says Skogsmulle. The papa bear is making rumbling noises and has eaten all the blueberries growing on the old abandoned anthill. He

will be stuffed with food when he lies down to sleep for the winter.

"Hello! Have you seen my red feather?" asks Skogsmulle. "Yes, I have," rumbles the bear. "As I was taking my midday meal on the great big anthill, I saw it on the top of it. You had better go and look before the snow lays its white carpet over everything."

How many claws does the bear have on each of its paws?

"Well, then, let's go back to the giant anthill right away," says Skogsmulle and thanks the bear.

We search everywhere around the anthill — up, down and inside. You find the feather before Skogsmulle does.

There it is — big, red and bright! "Thanks for your help," says Skogsmulle. "I am very happy! Now my hat looks so fine again."



FRILUFTSFRÄMJANDET

Skogsmulle is a children's programme of Friluftsförbundet (Swedish Association for Outdoor Life), whose educational approach is based on play and the delight of discovery. The idea is that children and leaders together shall experience the pleasure and excitement of investigating the

natural world. Friluftsförbundet is a non-profit organization with over 100,000 members which offers guided outdoor activities.

Information about the Skogsmulle programme is available at: <http://www.skogsmullestiftelsen.org/eng/index.htm> (English) [www.skogsmulle.se](http://www.skogsmulle.se) (Swedish)