

In 2023, the Gävle Goat faces a new threat to its survival

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As I've noted a few times before, the Swedish town of Gävle has erected a giant traditional Swedish straw goat since 1966. The Gävle Goat (*Gävlebocken* in Swedish) is famous for being the largest Yule Goat, and is even more famous for its notoriety: Vandals have set fire to the goat for more than half of its seasons. You can even place bets on whether the goat will survive the year without going up in flames. (Personally, I root for the goat to survive, because I am not a sicko. Or perhaps, more precisely, because I am not a sicko with respect to this specific issue.)

This year, Gävlebocken faces a new threat: Being eaten.

Due to the extremely wet weather in late summer, the straw used to construct the goat contains a higher than usual amount of seed, and local jackdaws have discovered that it can be used as a food source. The goatkeepers decided not to take protective action against the birds on the grounds that they are a natural threat and not a human one. Reports from the scene are that the goat is looking quite ragged already, and whether or not it survives the season may come down to what your definition of "goat" is.

You can check out the goat for yourself (for as long as it stands) on the Gävlebocken live cam.