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WolfPrint

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WolfPrint

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Aims of The UK Wolf Conservation Trust

- To enhance the conservation, scientific knowledge and public awareness of the environment.
- To stimulate greater interest in Wolves, their food, their habitat and their behaviour.
- To provide opportunities for both ethological research and for people to interact with Wolves.
- To improve the chances of survival of European Wolves in the wild.
- To set up an education programme for schools, conservationists and dog trainers.

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Editorial



Wolf conservation takes place in human dominated landscapes. And therein lies the dichotomy: on the one hand, our technological and industrial advancements distance us further from the natural world than we have ever been, but it is these very same technologies that are leading us to encroach on wild habitats as we seek out more and more of the planet's resources.

In addition, although we have gradually become more enlightened about environmental issues, more and more of us do not have any real connection with nature, and we have lost valuable knowledge. We no longer 'know' how to behave or react in situations that would have been second-nature to our ancestors. It is human nature to use 'stories' in an attempt to understand the world around us. This used to be in the form of myths and legends, and stories were often a necessary tool in learning how to survive in the wilderness. Now that we no longer live in the 'wilderness', the stories have changed and our representations of the natural world are much more anthropomorphic, and Disneyfied versions of animals that bear no resemblance to the real thing.

So now we are faced with a growing problem. We encroach on wild habitats, taking with us our social constructs of wild animals that are very often not true representations. The animals themselves are affected by our activities and the modifications we make to the landscape and consequently to their behaviours, which in turn leads to increasing encounters, with sometimes devastating results for both humans and wildlife.

One of the recurring themes throughout this particular issue is human/wolf encounters, some as a result of habituation, others as a result of human activity (hunting, mining, logging, etc). In a remote area of Saskatchewan, Canada, a young man recently lost his life (see page 14 – Wolves and Humans: Shared Landscapes). The investigation thus far is inconclusive as to whether he was killed by wolves or a black bear, or whether they were simply scavenging. Whatever, the cause of death of the young man, the incident has generated a lot of media interest, and will continue to do so. The topic of habituation is also something that threads through many articles published in Wolf Print.

Last October, I heard a presentation by Josip Kusak in which he told two stories of two individual wolves that had come into contact with local villagers. The tales highlight some of the different attitudes towards wolves (see page 10).

Emre Can is based in Turkey and is currently working in wolf and bear conservation. In an interview with Pierre Zuppiroli and Lise Donnez, Emre talks about his work and the attitudes of people there (see page 8).

I am pleased to report that, following his move to Boston, Bill Lynn is now back with us with the latest edition of Ethos. Although scientific research has done a great deal to further our knowledge and understanding of wolves and their behaviour, science alone doesn't provide us with the whole picture, and it doesn't help that wildlife conservation in the United States is heavily mired in legislative action from both pro and anti wolf groups. In the midst of all this legal madness, Bill reminds us that it is easy to forget the real issues, which ought to be about trying to co-exist with other creatures on the planet in an ethical way.

Finally, I would like to welcome a new member of the team. Chris Senior joins us as Assistant Editor. Chris has been a regular contributor to Wolf Print and we agreed that his role should be on more formal footing. As well as being an excellent writer, Chris also takes some pretty stunning photographs so I'm glad to have him on board.

FRONT COVER PICTURE CREDIT: PETER PHELAN



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ETHOS - Breaking the Silence



WOLVES of the WORLD ...

EUROPE

Finland

Several wolf sightings confirmed 50km from Finnish capital

Finnish wildlife authorities told the Finnish News Agency (STT) on Thursday that several wolves had been active in Uusimaa, the country's most densely populated province.

In Nummi-Pusula alone, a municipality about 50km from the Helsinki metropolitan area, five wolf reports have been confirmed by the Finnish Game and Fisheries Research Institute (RKTL) in November and December, including that of a deer carcass half eaten by two large wolves.

The Finnish government is in the process of reviewing its wolf population management policy after the European Commission in September initiated legal action against Finland, claiming wolf hunting licences had been issued too easily.

Source:
http://newsroom.finland.fi/stt/sho_warticle.asp?intNWSAID=11257&group=General

Finnish government plans shift to prevention in wolf policy

Finland's Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry said in a statement on Wednesday that the government should prevent rather than remunerate for livestock losses caused by wolves.

The ministry's wolf population management plan, undergoing preparation, suggests measures such as wolf fences, sealing-off lines and electrified pens.

The plan also outlines the government's wolf population monitoring and hunting supervision policy.

The document is to be sent to the European Commission, which in September brought an action against the Finnish government, accusing it of issuing wolf hunting permits too easily.

Source:
http://newsroom.finland.fi/stt/sho_warticle.asp?intNWSAID=11244&group=Politics

Norway

A speaker at World Wild Fund's WWF wolf symposium in 2002 in Vålådalen Sweden addressed Norway as the bad-boy regarding large carnivore conservation policy, and bad-boy strikes again. The Norwegian Directorate for nature management opened for a culling of five wolves starting from Saturday the 8th of January this year. This constitutes approximately 25% of the amount of wolves in Norway. The total population within Norway counts about 20 individuals.

It is not the first time Norway has reduced the number of wolves dramatically: In 2001 the Norwegian Directorate for nature management performed a culling where the Atnadal pack and the Imsdal couple were wiped out using helicopters (nine wolves). This time it is the Koppang pack that is the main target but in contradiction to 2001, the culling will not be performed by rangers paid by the government but by local hunters. The arrangement is that hunters within the local communities can apply for a license to participate in the culling. The local communities are the municipalities of Stor-elvdal, Rendalen, Engerdal, Elverum, Løten, Åmot, Ringsaker, and Hamar where over 130 have

applied for a license in the three first municipals and 178 in the five last municipals.

The habitat of the Koppang pack is within the municipals of Stor-elvdal and Rendalen. These two municipals provide perfect wolf habitat covering an area of over 5,300 square kilometres. However, a scattered population of 5,000 people in the two municipals enforces a non-tolerance policy regarding wolves. At this stage of the culling - 22nd of January 2005 - both the alpha male and alpha female have been shot. Additionally, the alpha female of the Gråfjell pack was shot by mistake leaving the Gråfjell pack without an intact alpha couple. Usually a pack without the leadership of an alpha couple will disperse. This means that there will only be one pack (family group) of wolves left in Norway.

Working for the protection of wolves in Norway is a very frustrating business and we are grateful for international support. Questions regarding wolf management and requests to stop the ongoing culling can be forwarded to the appropriate authorities within Norway through:

The Norwegian Ministry for the Environment, with overall responsibility for conservation policy in Norway:

postmottak@md.dep.no

Norwegian Directorate for Nature Management, with overall responsibility for execution of the conservation policy in Norway:

postmottak@md.dep.no

There is also a petition that may or may not be beneficial to sign. It is always better to advocate directly by writing letters, sending faxes, and emails to those in Norway who will be making the decisions.

We have been able to make a difference in Norway in the past by direct advocacy and we can do it again!

After you send your email directly to the Norwegian Ministry for the Environment, visit:

<http://www.thepetitionsite.com/takeaction/399085910> - sponsored by Norwegian Wolf Project, an organisation that fights for the future survival of wolves in Norway. They need as many signatures as possible to put pressure on the Norwegian government to protect their wolves - instead of slaughtering them!

Sweden

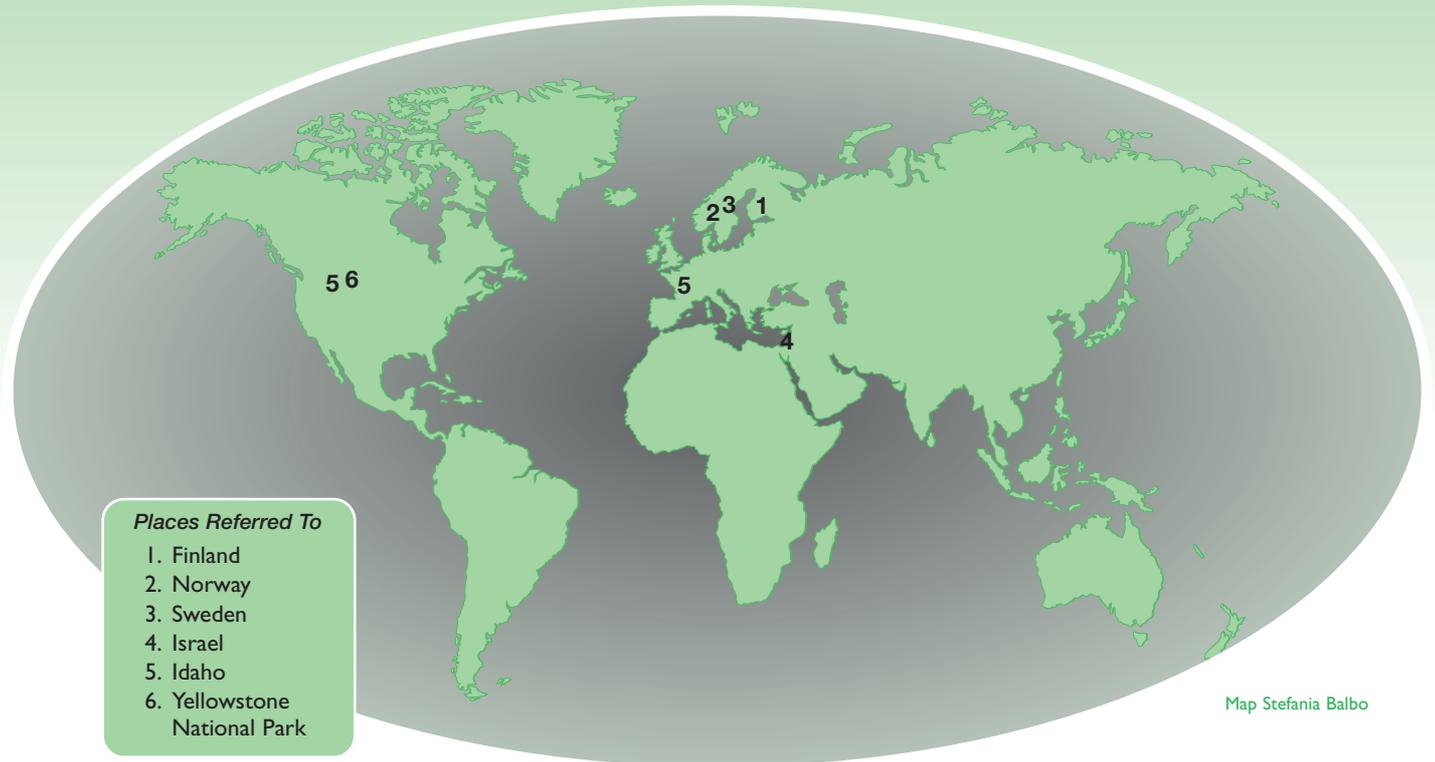
Swedish farmers demand right to kill wolves

STOCKHOLM (Reuters) - A Swedish farmer sentenced to jail for shooting a wolf preying on his sheep petitioned the government on Thursday for a pardon as a dispute grew between the wildlife lobby and farmers alarmed at growing wolf numbers.

Depleted by centuries of hunting, Sweden's wolf population has benefited from preservation programs and legislation to now number about 150. Wolves have even been seen near Stockholm.

Animal rights groups say the population is still critically low, making it vulnerable to inbreeding and disease, but the farming and hunting lobby says wildlife laws introduced in 2001 leave their livestock and dogs unprotected from attack.

Farmer Stig Engdahl, who got a six-month sentence last May for shooting a wolf in 2003 that he believed had killed 10 of his sheep and had just attacked his neighbour's animals, said he "would do it again if I had to".



Places Referred To

1. Finland
2. Norway
3. Sweden
4. Israel
5. Idaho
6. Yellowstone National Park

Map Stefania Balbo

"I am seeking a pardon to make my case known among those who have influence," he wrote in a petition delivered by his lawyer.

Showing that feelings are running high, about 3,000 farmers from the thickly-forested Dalarna region of central Sweden held a protest on New Year's Eve with torches and banners reading: "One Wolf is One Too Many".

CONSCIENCE

The influential Swedish Hunting Association launched a campaign in December to get legislation changed to give farmers and hunters more rights to shoot wolves.

The association takes issue with a clause that only permits wolves to be shot if they are killers or are caught "red-handed". Engdahl says he was warned by a neighbour whose flock was attacked 10 minutes earlier that the same wolf was on its way to his farm.

His wife Anne-Christine told Reuters from their home in Ed that all their livestock had gone to slaughter "because our conscience forbids us from feeding the wolves with our sheep". Stig, 64, will go to jail in March if the petition fails.

The Engdahls are unimpressed that compensation for a sheep killed by a wolf is higher than the price they fetch at the butchers. "It is our moral and legal responsibility to care for our animals," said Anne-Christine.

At the Swedish Carnivore Society, deputy chairperson Ann Dahlerus told Reuters it was acceptable to kill "problem wolves", but this practice had to be "extremely restrictive".

"Wolves don't kill much livestock, something like 100 sheep a year, but they also kill 10 or so hunting dogs which is a big issue for hunters," she said.

"The anti-wolf lobby is very loud and make themselves spokespeople for everybody in the country."

Source:

By Stephen Brown
http://today.reuters.com/news/newsArticle.aspx?type=scienceNews&storyID=2006-01-12T162942Z_01_WRI259316_RTRUKOC_0_US-SWEDEN-WOLF.xml

MIDDLE EAST

Israel

Rancher says wolves devoured two of his lambs

Four wolves devoured two lambs before dawn on Saturday in the Western Galilee, a rancher from Moshav Shumra reported.

The rancher, Yehuda Deri, told Haaretz that went to check his herd after hearing the lambs baying. When he approached, he said he saw four wolves tearing into a lamb. He said the wolves had already killed a second lamb.

Deri said he immediately called the Parks Authority and requested permission to shoot the wolves. No further information on the wolves' fate was available.

According to Deri and other area ranchers, wolf attacks in the area are on the rise.

Parks Authority spokesman Amnon Nachmias said that there are currently a number of wild wolves roaming the Western Galilee region, though not necessarily in the region of Saturday's incident.

According to Nachmias, anyone who sees a wolf attack must notify the Parks Authority before taking action, since wild dogs can be easily mistaken for wolves.

If the Parks Authority confirms that the culprit is in fact a wolf, they recommend either shooting the wolf or trapping it.

Source:

By Jack Khoury,
 Haaretz Correspondent
<http://www.haaretzdaily.com/hase/n/spages/681466.html>

NORTH AMERICA

United States

Idaho

Who's afraid of the big bad Canadian wolf?

Since the first captured Canadian grey wolves bounded out of their cages 10 years ago and headed into the trees, the animals that were once hunted to near-extinction throughout the American West have become a rare success story.

Thanks in part to strict federal protection, nearly 900 wolves now roam in packs across their historic range.

The wolves' comeback is all the more remarkable given the hatred that heralded their reintroduction, followed by a campaign of shooting and poisoning that continues today. There is still so much antagonism that federal wildlife managers are hesitant to remove wolves from the endangered species list,



even though the population is many times greater than required to delist.

Of all the recent reintroductions of native animals, none has provoked as much opposition as the wolf. The US Fish and Wildlife Service released 66 radio-collared wolves into central Idaho and Wyoming's Yellowstone National Park in 1995 and 1996. Some were killed by hunters opposed to reintroduction, but most flourished, coming together in the wild to form resilient packs. The animals are now scattered across Idaho, Oregon, Montana, Wyoming and Colorado.

As the Fish and Wildlife Service ponders a delisting plan that would turn over management of the wolves to the states, federal officials are baulking at plans they fear would allow hunters to exterminate whole packs.

Idaho, home to the largest population of wolves in the West, has been the least welcoming. Officials say hundreds of wolves have been shot, in violation of federal law. A recent spate of poisonings has not only killed wolves, but dozens of ranch dogs and family pets that ingested pesticide-laced meatballs left along wildlife trails, state wildlife managers say.

Idaho's anti-wolf crusade is expected to reach a crescendo in coming weeks with the federal trial of Tim Sundles, an ammunition maker from Carmen, a rural town of 600 in Idaho. He is charged with attempting to poison wolves in the Salmon National Forest last winter, and placing a pesticide on federal land without permission.

Sundles, 47, operates an anti-wolf website that provides detailed instructions on how to "successfully poison a wolf". He says he is innocent of the attempted poisoning charge.

Sundles dismisses the poisoning of pets as "collateral damage" and blasts federal wildlife managers for "dumping" wolves in the state.

"I'm shocked that human blood hasn't been spilled on this issue," he says. "I'm surprised there hasn't been a gunfight. I'm surprised that the feds who've done this haven't been hunted down and killed."

Ron Gillett is another trying to eradicate wolves from the state.

"Let me tell you something. We will get rid of these wolves, one way or another," he says.

"We will try it legally. But I'm not going to live with no elk, no deer, no big horn sheep and no goats, just because some environmentalist some place wants to hear a wolf howl. No. You either give up or move over, because we are going to run over you. No compromise. No negotiation. No Canadian wolves in Idaho."

But Steve Nadeau, wolf co-ordinator for Idaho's Department of Fish and Game, says the state's elk population has been stable for years. This year "has been a banner year for elk and deer. Really good hunting," he says.

Mr Nadeau estimates that wolves are responsible for about 1 per cent of elk deaths in Idaho. According to many wolf biologists, hunters aren't seeing as many elk because wolves are driving them into higher country, which is less accessible to humans.

In Idaho, data from the National Agricultural Statistics Service indicates that only 35 per cent of sheep deaths are attributable to predators, with wolves accountable for only 0.4 per cent. The data shows that domestic dogs are responsible for nearly 20 times more sheep kills than wolves. The same numbers hold true for cattle, with wolves responsible for 0.6 per cent of predator kills.

AS FAR as the threat to humans, a 2002 study by Alaska wildlife officials found that there have been only a handful of documented wolf attacks on humans in North America since the 1800s. The Royal Canadian Mounted Police suspect wolves in a fatal attack on a man in Saskatchewan last month. If true, it would be the first such recorded death in 100 years.

Fears about wolves aren't related to the facts, insists Suzanne Stone, of the group Defenders of Wildlife.

"It's almost impossible to discuss it rationally," she says. "It doesn't have anything to do with logic or reason, it's so steeped in myth. And this mythical wolf really doesn't exist."

Ms Stone runs the Defenders' compensation program. In many cases, the compensation has not softened the attitudes of ranchers who have lost livestock.

Sheep and cattle rancher Mick Carlson says he has lost about 300 animals on his ranch along the Salmon River to wolves in the past two years and has been

compensated for most of them by Defenders. Yet he says he will not hesitate to use lethal methods to stop one.

"I live in a small town of about 400 people," says Mr Carlson, 70. "I guess you could talk to any man in town, and he'd shoot a wolf on sight."

Wolf biologists say that 90 per cent of documented wolf kills are at the hands of humans.

Some are done legally, when, for example, a wolf pack habitually attacks livestock. But most wolf killing is not legal, and federal agents who investigate rarely find enough evidence to bring charges.

"These are, without a doubt, the most difficult cases I've ever worked on. It's been extremely frustrating at times," says Craig Tabor, the Fish and Wildlife Service's lead law enforcement agent in Idaho. He and his agents put together the Sundles case - the rare instance, the agents say, where evidence was available.

A state-wide tip line offering a \$US5,000 (\$A6,870) reward for assistance in wildlife cases has received one wolf tip call in four years. That came when a hunter killed a wolf, cut off its tail and bragged about the conquest to so many people that authorities required little help to make a case.

Officials hope that once wolves are removed from the endangered species list and even legally hunted, some of the anger will dissipate. But there is also a fear that delisting could lead to the sort of unregulated hunting that all but erased wolves from the West.

Carter Niemeyer, Fish and Wildlife's wolf co-ordinator based in Boise, says: "It's like Groundhog Day: you get up in the morning and start all over again."

Source:

By Julie Cart, Boise, Idaho
<http://www.theage.com.au/news/world/afraid-of-the-big-badwolf/2005/12/31/1135915722837.html?page=fullpage#contentSwap2>

Our thanks to Pat Morris (Wolfseeker) for the regular supply of wolf news from around the world. Articles that are reprinted in full are appropriately credited with the author's name and details of where the article was first published.

Yellowstone

Officials: Some wolves "fearless" in search of human food

JACKSON - People in Yellowstone National Park apparently have fed wolves in the area, as animals in one pack are increasingly approaching vehicles in what appears to be a search for food.

Wolves in the Hayden Valley pack reportedly have been approaching snowcoaches and snowmobiles, even peering in windows of snowcoaches.

Doug Smith, leader of the Yellowstone wolf project, said park officials have received reports since this summer of two of the alpha wolves from the Hayden Valley pack showing "fearless behaviour" toward cars and snow machines.

"That got us paying attention to them," Smith said. National Park Service officials are first verifying if this behaviour is occurring, then will conduct "aversive conditioning" -- such as use of rubber bullets or cracker shells -- to deter the wolves. Cracker shells are explosive charges that make loud noises.

"The big problem we have is people actually like it if wolves approach them closely," Smith said. "They move toward the wolves, and that's inappropriate behaviour. Unfortunately, it takes just a few people -- people flip them food -- (to) really begin the habituation process."

He said the agency has gotten verification that wolves have approached vehicles, but not that they have been fed.

People touring the park this winter have said wolves are walking up to snowcoaches, looking in windows and "walking to the other side for a better look," Smith said.

Ed Bangs, wolf recovery coordinator for the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, said the behaviour indicates the animals have probably been fed, perhaps by someone throwing food out a window.

"We haven't heard any real concerns, other than feeding animals is illegal, and these wolves are acting as if they have been fed," he said. "There's been no trouble, other than they could get run over. It isn't like food's everywhere or everyone's feeding them."

Smith said there is no human safety risk. He also said this has



happened with five other wolves - just 1 percent of the park's total wolf population - since reintroduction in 1995. Three responded to aversive conditioning, and two stopped the behaviour after winter.

"The park has incremental strategies to deal with these kinds of situations, whether it's deer, raccoons, wolves or bears," Bangs said. "If it gets to the point where they can't fix it, there is an option of lethal removal. This now is not even a problem, other than it's enough to keep our eye on."

Bangs agreed with Smith that the public does not need to be afraid.

"My guess is these wolves found food on the road or were fed some stuff," he said. "Now they are looking for it. It's not like, 'This guy didn't have a sandwich, we are going to attack him.'"

The Hayden Valley pack is regularly seen and photographed by park visitors, who often approach wolves in a manner officials fear is cause for concern, as wolves' fear of humans may be decreased.

Wolf attacks on humans are extremely rare, and none have occurred since the animals were reintroduced to the greater Yellowstone area 11 years ago. Still, some believe it is just a matter of time before wolves around Yellowstone cause injury to people.

"Any wildlife in Yellowstone needs to be respected," Smith said. "Don't give them exposure to people that reinforces this kind of behaviour. If you see a wolf approach you, retreat to your vehicle."

Source:

By Whitney Royster, Star-Tribune environmental reporter
Wednesday, February 01, 2006
<http://www.casperstartribune.net/articles/2006/02/01/news/925e9744a3057fc7872571080006ce2a.txt>

Editor's Note: See Wolves and Humans: Shared Landscapes on page 14 for more information on habituation. This is a topic that is becoming increasingly important in wolf conservation, and one that will be a recurring theme in Wolf Print.

Nordulv, a Swedish organisation for the protection of Scandinavian wolves, is seeking support for its current petition to the Swedish Agriculture Minister, who recently made it easier to shoot wolves.

Although the petition is in Swedish, an English version of Nordulv's statements is given below. If you agree with these statements, and wish to sign the petition, then please go to their website:

<http://www.petitiononline.com/nordulv/petition.html>

www.nordulv.se

PETITION

1. I believe that methods to eliminate conflict between livestock and predators must become a higher priority and not just in a legal sense. Some examples of these methods are fencing, trained sheepdogs, radio signalling devices on free-range livestock, the use of bells on hunting dogs, training of dogs to avoid wolves, as well as the forbiddance of the use of certain hunting dog breeds within established key wolf pack areas.
2. I believe that a modification of § 28 that allows wolves to be shot before an attack on livestock and dogs is going to allow a wide level of misuse and will result in increased temptation of hunters to shoot wolves that they observe on their hunting grounds, even though the wolves are not in proximity of their dogs. I believe that this modification will also increase the risk that other dogs will be shot while in the company of their owners in the forest or other areas, which is already an existing fear shared by many dog owners.
3. I believe there must be a quality standard required on fencing that is used to protect livestock if hunting is allowed within the fenced areas in accordance with the newly changed § 28. I also believe that the fence quality and protection function should be the deciding factor of the amount of claims that are to be paid out. These claims must be generous and paid as soon as possible after an attack.
4. I believe that the agreements Sweden has with the European Union and other international organizations regarding protection of endangered species must be respected and not cast aside through the use of creative rewriting of Swedish laws, as for example the allowance of the hunting of Wolverines after pressure from hunters unions and other groups.
5. I believe that a larger portion of wildlife conservation funds must be used to eliminate the two biggest risks to the Scandinavian wolf, which are genetic inbreeding and the existing problem of poaching. An eventual importation of Finnish or Russian wolves in order to reduce this acute inbreeding problem within Sweden's wolf population should in no way affect Sweden's ambitions of a long-term, healthy Scandinavian wolf population.
6. I believe that the punishments imposed for breaking of hunting laws should be severe enough that they act as a protective shield for our wolves, and also be directed towards a removal of hunting and weapon possession privileges for those convicted of these crimes. This method would increase public knowledge and respect of these laws to a level that approaches laws regarding other types of criminal activity. I feel that similar punishments could also be imposed on persons who do not cooperate with investigations, or attempt to protect those who have committed poaching from prosecution.
7. I believe that the decisions made regarding the predator issue must be decided by the entire public population, and not just the small groups that claim to be affected by predatory wild animals. I believe the situation today with regional predator advisors does not in any way represent public opinion in these areas, since this advice is mainly only expressed by those who themselves hunt, whether these advisors are representatives for forestry, justice system, local communities, or other organizations.
8. I believe that the method of hunting used in Sweden today, with hunting dogs which are allowed to run loose a great distance from their owner, is not a sound method in an ethical sense, as this exposes hunting dogs to huge risks and disturbs all forms of wildlife. The dogs are not only at risk to being injured or killed by wolves, but are at a great risk of being killed by automobiles, kicked and severely injured by moose, attacked by wild boar, falling through thin ice, and drowning. This hunting method also is extremely stressful for wildlife, during the late winter period when wildlife is at its most vulnerable.

(Please use your true first and last name!)

Collected signatures will be presented to the Swedish Agriculture Minister.)



An interview with Ozgun Emre Can on The Wolves In Turkey

by Pierre Zuppiroli and Lise Donnez

Emre is currently researching for his PhD at the Middle East Technical University and is a member of the IUCN's (The World Conservation Union) Wolf, Cat and Bear Specialist Groups.

Emre has previously written articles and updates for Wolf Print and given a presentation at one of the UK Wolf Conservation Trust seminars.

Pierre and Lise: Emre, we had the opportunity to meet you at the World Wolf Congress, November 2003 in Banff, Canada. At this event gathering some 400 scientists and wolf conservationists you told that wolf attacks on human beings had been always claimed in Turkey. In March 2004 there were some rumours that attacks on humans had taken place in Erzurum and Hakkari in Eastern Turkey. What exactly is going on?

Emre: Pierre, wolves have been accused of attacking people for many years in Turkey. This is often presented as fact, and it is difficult to question the claims of wolf attacks when talking to authorities and locals. I have been following such claims of wolf attacks on humans since 1998. News of alleged wolf attacks appears on local television channels all over Turkey and therefore more people are now being made aware of the claims of wolf attacks on humans. However, I must say that not all claims appear on the news.

The events in Erzurum and Hakkari were circulated in the national press, and also received media coverage in Germany, Norway, Sweden and possibly in some other countries. From what I heard from colleagues in those countries, it seems that the Turkish wolf stories are heavily used by anti-wolf lobbies.

One of the so called "wolf attacks" happened in Erzurum. One animal, which was a wolf according to local authorities, attacked a group of children in a remote field site and one boy was killed. The local authorities announced that they identified "wolf" tracks around the body and "a wolf" was responsible for the unfortunate event. In fact, even biologists and hunters may confuse wolf and dog tracks with each other. The area was a place where feral dog packs are known to occur and there have been cases of dog attacks on local people during the last couple of years. There are also chicken farms in the area and they dispose of dead chickens and related wastes in the district and this supports the feral dogs that travel in packs of 5-10 or more. The unfortunate event



Photo: Aykut Ince

happened during the day between 12.00 pm and 2.00 pm. The victim was in a group of children, and they were playing in a remote field site. The children saw the animal running towards them and screamed "a dog is coming!" but the last child left behind was killed. Several days later, the same local authorities in Erzurum and news sources announced that a "dog" which is believed to have attacked and killed the boy was itself killed. The picture and the news appeared in the media but as one can imagine, it did not appear on the front pages this time.

The second event that really shocked everyone, and received enormous media coverage, happened in Hakkari. According to the news, wolves attacked people in a village and injured 15 of them. This time, contradictory news items appeared in the press and on television. According to one news source one wolf attacked the people; according to another four wolves attacked the people. I made this observation to the editor of a national news television channel.

According to some news sources, it was a pack of wolves that attacked the people. However, this is not realistic; we expect that a rabid wolf (that is at the stage of attacking people) would run away from its pack. Also, contrary to the information presented on television and in newspapers, no one had seen a pack of wolves or even two wolves together in the vicinity. The likeliest scenario is that there was only one rabid wolf or one rabid dog involved. In fact, there have been several cases in that region where feral dogs have attacked children before and that is why some of the locals officially contacted the local authorities and complained about the dog attacks on people in the region.

In the days following, the local authorities shot an animal which they identified as "wolf" and sample tissue was sent to a state laboratory for a rabies test, which was positive. From my experience in other countries, I cannot be sure about the wolf which was found to have rabies. In such situations, I have found that the officials usually announce that they have found rabies even when they have not done so. This is because they usually don't like to take the risk of diagnosing rabies. If the person who has been attacked develops rabies then this is clearly not good for the officer who tested the samples.

In this particular case it was announced by a news source that one child (some of the victims were children) was diagnosed to have rabies. In that same period, a suspicious animal was shot in the vicinity which was thought to be a wolf. It was no surprise to me, that the animal was a dog, not a wolf! As far as I know, they just threw away the carcass and did not test it for rabies.



Photo: Tugba Can

Emre with pup.

I have previously surveyed this region, and I can say that this is one of the remotest and wildest places in Turkey. Some villages have no contact at all with the rest of the country during a two month period when there are very severe winter conditions. In fact, it is hard to believe how people survive in those areas. When I consider the wolf attack stories from Russia and India, and if I were to make a list of the places where wolf attacks are likely to occur in Turkey, then I would put the name of this area on the top of the list.

Pierre and Lise. You mentioned feral dogs. Do we have a similar issue in Turkey as in Ethiopia where we see a human expansion on the wolf habitat and the surrounding feral dogs transmitting rabies to some wolf populations?

Emre. The feral dogs are a serious problem in different regions of Turkey. I, and others, have observed feral dogs attacking roe deer in the wild for example. Dogs are in national parks and in other protected areas but we do not know their actual impact, their role in disease transmission etc. Rabies is also an issue in Turkey. We do not have documented case where rabies has been transmitted to wolves from feral dogs but I believe the transmission happens both ways in Turkey. Some time ago, I searched the official health records for information about the transmission of rabies from wolves to people in Turkey. It was interesting to see that there was only one record that says rabies was transmitted to a man by a wolf. This may indicate that rabid wolves do not pose a significant threat to people in Turkey, which is similar to the situation in other countries with wolves.

Pierre and Lise: It is rare that we get any specific data on wolves in Turkey. Once I saw the number of 1000 with a question mark. It is not a lot for a big country like Turkey. How many wolves would you estimate that there are in Turkey today and is the number declining or increasing?



Emre. Dave Mech and Luigi Boitani presented the number 1000, as the possible wolf population size in Turkey in their landmark publication "Wolves" in 2003. I did not have chance to comment on this number before its publication but I can say that it is safe to say that Turkey holds a wolf population of about 7000 individuals. There are some local extinctions especially in the western parts of Turkey and the wolf population is declining in Turkey as a whole.

Pierre and Lise: As we understand it, the wolf is not protected by law in Turkey. Is this something that is going to change also in view of Turkey's potential entry into the EU?

Emre. Historically, the wolf has officially been considered a pest species and so it was hunted throughout the year without any limits. It was only in 2003 that the wolf received a game species status. Now people cannot hunt wolves without limits according to the law, but since the wolf has been considered a pest until very recently, it will take some years before people really learn that the wolf has game species status now. This means that the wolf can only be hunted using established quotas. The EU process has an overall positive effect on nature conservation but I can say that from the carnivore conservation and management point of view, so far the EU has had no effect at all. We will see what will happen in the near future. Since we have other species like the hyena and caracal in Turkey, and the wolf and bear population is higher than that of EU countries, I believe that the EU has to pay special attention to the carnivores of Turkey during the EU process.

Pierre and Lise: The co-habitation between wolves and people is a challenge around the world. Therefore are there any programmes you are undertaking to improve the relationship between wolves and people in your country and when will you know that you have achieved success?

Emre. The Kangal dogs are believed to be effective against limiting wolf damage to livestock. Although there is no scientific study investigating this claim, it is an old tradition to keep these particular dogs against wolves. There is currently a project that provides Kangals to livestock owners for protecting their livestock against wolves. I hope that I will be able to say more about this



Shepherd with Livestock Guarding Dog.

issue in the next year when I have some data. But I would suggest that the national and local authorities encourage people to have Kangals where wolves and livestock are found together.

Pierre and Lise: What kind of support do you get from the international community to achieve your conservation objectives? Is there something we can do to help?

Emre. I conducted a research project on the wolves in Turkey with support from the European Union between 1998-2000. This was for my graduate thesis and it was the first scientific study on wolves in Turkey. Over the years, we have implemented several studies on carnivores and carnivore-human conflict but it is difficult for us to find support from both national and international funding providers. In Turkey, I do not think that we can say there is a tradition of supporting NGOs, as is the case in Europe and the USA. Turkey also gets little support from international donors compared to its rich biodiversity and country size. Recently, I focused on conservation and management priorities for the wolf and I am working on a draft wolf action plan for Turkey. Perhaps you can spread the word that we need support to complete it.

Pierre and Lise: Your "Kangal" (Turkish livestock guarding dog) gets a lot of good international press! Apparently it is still widely used in your country and it works very effectively under extreme meteorological conditions. How many "Kangals" are there in Turkey and are they still favoured by shepherds over other dog "breeds"?

Emre. I do not think there are reliable figures available about the number of Kangals but there is a need to promote the breeding of Kangals in Turkey. The hybridisation of Kangals is a serious threat to the breed. Therefore, we have to carefully select the right individuals and establish a countrywide breeding program. One issue that shepherds raise is they can not easily find Kangals. It is a strong dog and I know that people have been using them to limit wolf, cheetah and leopard damage to livestock in different parts of the world.

Pierre and Lise: Last but not least, we had the wonderful opportunity to visit your country in March for the first time. We were emotionally touched by the unconditioned hospitality of the people we met in the small villages we visited. What are the areas you would recommend that wolf conservationists visit to optimize their possibilities of perhaps finding some wolf scats or seeing some tracks?

Emre. I have had the opportunity of travelling to different parts of world and I can also say from my own experience that Turkish people are among the most hospitable people. To try and see wolves, I suggest going to the forest areas around Ankara-Bolu, Sivas, and Erzurum. Perhaps the easiest area to travel to for a visitor to track wolves is Ankara-Bolu region. Here it is fairly easy to find wolf scats and tracks in the field, given that one can identify the scats and tracks correctly.

Pierre and Lise: Thanks, Emre, for your valuable input and for providing new insights into a country with lots of natural treasures still to be discovered and explored - and certainly preserved. To conclude our interview would you like to make some final remarks?



Photo: Aykut Ince

Emre. There are around 18,000 forest villages (an official term for us) in Turkey and they hold a population of about 18 million people and most of those people live in wolf country. If the wolves attack people as frequently as people imagine, we would hear the news and reports on the "wolf attacks" on a regular basis, just like we hear the news about traffic accidents. But this is not the case. One must also remember that there are millions of visitors travelling in wolf country in North America.

But if we go back to some of the principal questions:

Do rabid wolves attack people? Yes, of course they do if people are around.

Do healthy wolves attack people? As the recent incident from North America where a healthy wolf attacked a 55 year old miner, and the death of 22 year old person by wolf attack on November 8 2005 in Saskatchewan, reminds yes healthy wolves may attack humans under certain conditions.

But this does not mean that all wolves should be considered a serious threat to humans living in or visiting wolf country. Wolves and other wild animals are unpredictable. Wild animals and even domestic pets have been known to present a serious threat to people under certain circumstances. The danger may lie more in how we as humans behave in the presence of a wild animal and not the other way around. Today, wolves rarely, if ever, kill humans. We can guess that they have done so in the past, during the times when humans did not have guns. Therefore I do not think that we can take a position against the possibility that attacks on human may occur. I believe they are just very rare events.

Editor's Note

Also in this issue we have reported on the death of the 22 year old man in Saskatchewan, and the evidence is currently inconclusive. It is not certain whether the young man was killed by a black bear or by wolves. See the article on Page 14 for further details.

Lise Donnez is a speaker at the next UK Wolf Conservation Trust seminar to be held on 9th April 2006. If you haven't already booked, then do so straight away. Tickets for the seminars now sell out very fast, and they are an event not to be missed.



Wolves and Humans in Croatia – Two Stories

by Josip Kusak

Wolves and humans is a topic we cover regularly in *Wolf Print*, and below are two stories that highlight the reactions of villagers in Croatia who came into close contact with wild wolves in their region. These two incidents have also had a profound effect on Josip Kusak, the biologist called on to try and help rescue the wolves. Without wishing to spoil the stories, the final outcomes are not positive for the individual wolves, but the attitudes of the local people surely must provide us with some hope for the future survival of the wolf as a species.

Editor

Adam and Eva

One of the regular 'Large Carnivores' committee meetings was taking place last February, when my mobile started to vibrate. An unknown voice told me that a wolf had been captured alive and was being



Female wolf Eva under surgical treatment in the veterinary ambulance in Imotski on 26 February 2005. Photo: J. Kusak



FWound on female wolf Eva under surgical treatment in the veterinary ambulance in Imotski on 26 February 2005. Photos: J. Kusak



Releasing the wolf Eva after surgical treatment and marking with GPS-VHF collar. Photo: Braco Ćosić

held in a village called Sebišine, near Imotski town in Dalmatia. A quick check by the local Damage Inspector, Damir Bosiljevac, confirmed the news.

Imotski is in the southern part of the wolf range in Croatia, and is a 6 hour drive to get there. The next morning, loaded with all the equipment needed for tranquilizing and processing a wolf, and accompanied by a student, Vedran Slijepčević I was on my way to the Imotski area.

We arrived at Sebišine in the early afternoon, to a crowd of curious locals, several journalists, and even a reporter from national television. It was quickly established that local resident, Adam Bakavić, had found a female wolf caught in a poacher's snare set for wild boars near the village three days previously.

The wolf had become quite a celebrity in the area and had been visited by hundreds of locals since being captured. When we arrived she was sitting in a corner opposite the barn door, and appeared very stressed. We quickly darted her and ten minutes later she was fast asleep, now blissfully unaware of the crowd around her.

The wolf was a young female in her second year of life. The steel cable had caught her around the abdomen and cut through her skin and muscles while she was struggling in the trap. The wounds were very severe and had already become infected.

Her new found celebrity status led to her being followed by journalists while she was being transported to the local

veterinary ambulance where her wounds were surgically treated and sewn up.

The whole event was transmitted live on the local radio, and while putting the stitches in I had to explain, on air, what her chances of survival were. People later phoned in proposing a name for the wolf, and Eva was chosen, because the name of the man who freed her from the trap was Adam.

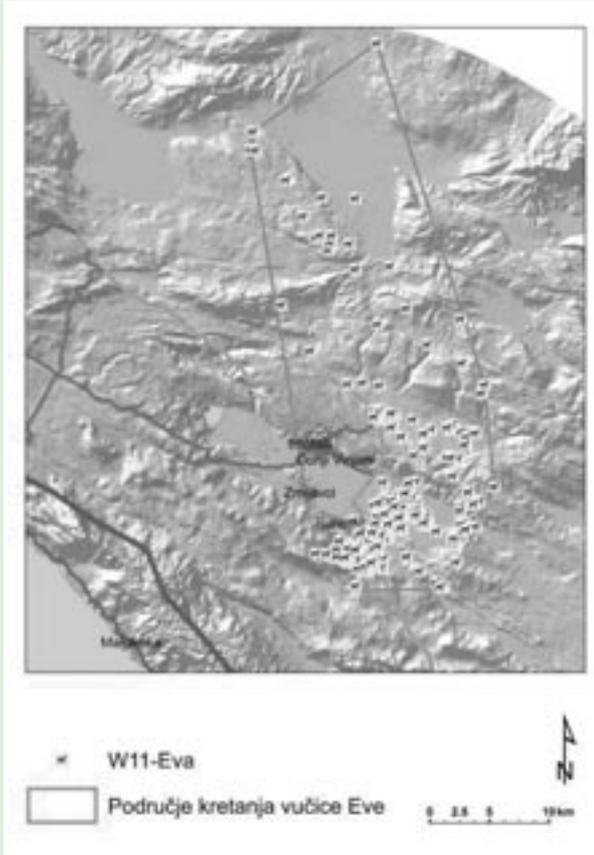
I fitted Eva with a GPS-VHF collar and released her back into the wild the same evening. Considering the severity of the wound, I did not give her more than a 50/50 chance for survival. What I didn't know at that time was that Eva would have a rich food source at a slaughter dump in the vicinity. She joined the rest of her pack, and we confirmed this with the howling of 3-5 wolves from the direction of the VHF signal.

The pack was staying in the Imotski area most of the time, resting in the dense chaparral during the day, and descending to the open fields of the "Imotsko polje" valley at night. The border between Croatia and Bosnia and Herzegovina is in the middle of valley and was established in the Middle Ages, during the Turkish invasion, and is the point which a canon would reach by it shooting from the highest tower toward the southeast.

Eva and her pack crossed this border many times, staying in both countries (47.1% in Croatia and 52.9% in Bosnia and Herzegovina). They were visiting the slaughter dump and also the only herd of goats in a village. Damir Bosiljevac knew the



Female wolf Eva at the release site on 26 February 2005. Photo: Photo J. Kusak



Locations (541) and range (640 km²) in Croatia and B&H of female wolf EVA during 157 days of tracking in 2005.

When wolves reappeared in Dalmatia some 10-15 years ago, many people believed these were captive wolves brought by conservationists in helicopters at night. My explanations about the great ability of wolves to disperse into new areas were worthless until those who saw a map of Eva's wanderings started to believe me.

Adam Bakavić is a car mechanic, but his mother keeps a small flock of sheep. The whole village is surrounded by dense shrubs of Mediterranean oak and hornbeam, with patches of small meadows interspersed within this forest. One Sunday morning, when the sheep were grazing on a meadow only 50m from the house, a wolf attack happened. Four sheep were killed, and two lambs were missing. The data from the collar was clear: Eva had been there that morning. Some of the villagers were laughing behind Adam's back, but he said that a wolf is a wolf, it does what wolves do, and it is

During the summer a pack started to kill the dogs in the surrounding villages. This was mainly on the Bosnia and Herzegovina side of the border and it was usually hunting dogs that were killed. The explanation that wolves are protective, and that they see dogs as intruding wolves and were probably defending pups, did not help. The local hunters were angry. On 3 August 2005, at around 3.30 am, Eva approached the houses in the village of Vinjani, in Bosnia and Herzegovina, probably to settle a dispute with one of the dogs. This time a man with a gun was waiting for her and shot her. Wolves in Bosnia and Herzegovina are not protected and their hunting is legal. Adam went to Vinjani and collected the collar and Eva's body which was without a head. The hunter had decided to keep this as a legal trophy.

Croatia and Bosnia and Herzegovina have long had a common border and share the same wolf populations, but the status of wolves in the two countries is different. Many people now feel it would be beneficial to coordinate the legal status and management of all large carnivores and other wildlife according to international conventions.

Eva was tracked for a total of 157 days, and was located a total of 541 times. She was located 255 times (47.1%) in Croatia and 286 times (52.9%) in neighbouring Bosnia and Herzegovina. In Croatia she used the small area around Imotski, whilst in Bosnia and Herzegovina she travelled up to 80 km inland, reaching Tomislavgrad, before returning back to the border area where she spent most of the time. The total area she used was 640 km², which is three times the average size of wolf pack territory documented so far in Croatia. I can only assume that Eva walked at least part of that time alone, and was getting ready to leave the pack and look for potential new territory.

owner well as he was often called on to examine cases of wolf attacks on that herd.

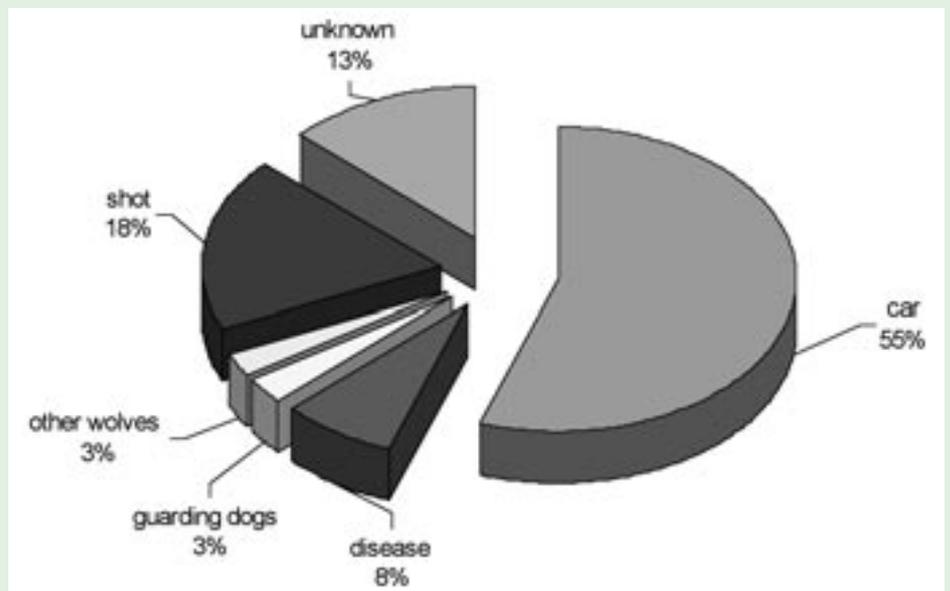
Eva's story was broadcast on Croatia's national news network on four occasions during the Sunday evening news bulletins, with new information each week about Eva was faring. She became famous, and it was revealed that at on one occasion she made an excursion 80 km into Bosnia and Herzegovina before returning 10 days later.

up to us to be aware of this and to protect our sheep. On television he said that the important thing was that Eva was OK. Many people saw this, but one woman reacted. She was a dentist, living in the capital, Zagreb. She called Adam and donated twice as many sheep as he had lost to the wolves. This was shown on television again, and the neighbours did not laugh any more.

Attempt to rescue a wolf named Mane (WCRO 67) from Mazin

Lika is situated between the mountains of Velebit and Plješivica on the Croatian border with Bosnia and Herzegovina. The size of the area is roughly equivalent to the size of Yellowstone National park. The mountains and hills in that region are all covered with forest, with several large open valleys between them. The name Lika comes from the ancient Greek word Lycaion, which means wolf, and which determines the area as a "country of wolves". Traditional foods in this region are sheep cheese and lamb meat, and it has always been as much sheep country as wolf country.

In the past, those who were able to kill a wolf were admired among other villagers,



Causes of known wolf mortality in Croatia during the period from 2002 to 2005.



Photo: Braco Ćosić



Photo: Braco Ćosić



Josip Kusak tranquilized a wounded wolf near village Mazin in Lika at 01.09.2005 20:00. It was an adult male wolf, 37kg. Locals were rather interested in saving the animal, they even gave it a name "Mane", after the village where it was found. Photos: J. Kusak

who would stuff the killed wolf with straw, put a pole through its body, and carry it from village to village, singing traditional songs about the event of killing a wolf, and collecting rewards (usually food) for doing a good deed for the community. Nowadays, although wolves are protected, they are still being illegally shot. But, is this going to change?

On 1 September 2005, something very interesting happened. Locals from the village of Mazin in central Lika found a wounded wolf. Instead of killing it, they called a local veterinarian who in turn called us. Describing the situation, they explained how the wolf had somehow crawled close to Mazin and entered a fenced orchard yard behind one of the houses and could not move any more. The first information we received suggested that the injuries resulted from a collision with a car. However, soon afterwards, local Damage Inspector, Igor Hak, who is also a Large Carnivore Emergency Team member from this area, together with regional coordinator for wolf conservation program, Dragan Sarić, arrived at the village. After a brief consultation we decided to try to save the wounded wolf and try to return him to the wild. Before I could go to Lika, I had to collect a Mongolian student, Enkhsaikhan Namtar, who was arriving from Germany at the train station later that afternoon. As we were going to spend the next month together doing field work, I asked him for an easier nickname, and he proposed that

Saikhanaa would serve this purpose. Soon after the introductions and explanations, we were both in my small field car, with a large cage behind us upon which we fixed Saikhanaa's two backpacks. It was already dark when we arrived at Mazin. The wolf was still there, being "guarded" by a dozen curious locals, including women and children. The wolf was barely able to lift its head, and did not look in good shape. However, the villagers were keen that the poor animal should be taken to the Veterinary faculty and medically treated. They named him Mane.

Later that evening we brought Mane back to the Veterinary faculty in Zagreb. He was an adult male, approximately 3 to 4 years old, and weighing 37 kg.

The following morning, the surgical team from the Clinic for Surgery, Orthopaedics and Ophthalmology started the treatment. The X-ray taken showed a bone fracture in the right hind leg which had been caused by a gun shot. It was decided to perform surgery, but unfortunately, during the treatment the wounds were found to be too serious to treat, and were deeply infected and already invaded by maggots. The veterinary surgeons felt that Mane did not have much chance of survival, and that treatment would just prolong his suffering. In agreement with representatives from the State Institute for Nature Protection, it was decided to euthanize the animal.

As Mane had been illegally shot, the case was reported to the nature conservation inspection of the Ministry of Culture.



The X-ray taken showed the bone fracture in the right back leg caused by a shot and it was decided to perform a surgery. Unfortunately, during the treatment the wounds were found to be too serious to cure, deeply infected and invaded by maggots. Photos: J. Kusak



Josip Kusak tranquilized a wounded wolf near village Mazin in Lika at 01.09.2005 20:00. It was an adult male wolf, 37kg. Locals were rather interested in saving the animal, they even gave it a name "Mane", after the village where it was found. Photos: J. Kusak

There were 38 wolf deaths reported in Croatia between 28 January 2002 and 24 December 2005. The main cause of known wolf mortality was traffic (55%), followed by illegal shooting (18%) and diseases (rabies, leishmaniasis). We even documented a case when a wolf was killed by livestock guarding dogs, and by other wolves as well.

We are aware that these data are biased because illegal shooting usually is not reported, and other mortality cases unrelated to humans might not be found. This mortality rate is not threatening the population, which has actually increased during the last five years to about 200, with their range also increasing.

I have been involved in the wolf conservation program since the very beginning in 1993 and 1994 – a year of wolf in Croatia, which resulted in legal protection in 1995. We are used to thinking about population numbers and trends, but having had the opportunity to save individual animals has given me a different and much more personal perspective about the whole idea of saving them.

As well as dealing with the cases of Eva and Mane, I have also been called on to tranquilise and release back to the forest two orphaned lynx kittens and one poacher-snared young bear.

Interestingly, cases where locals have found captured or wounded wolves and lynx and did not kill them, but instead called authorities for help, have never before been documented. We believe this is another "side effect" of the whole conservation program and efforts, where locals recognized there is somebody who is helping those animals, either on an individual basis or on a population level.



Wolves and Humans: Shared Landscapes

by Denise Taylor and Chris Senior

On 8 November 2005, the body of 22 year old Kenton Joel Carnegie, a student and artist, was found at Points North Landing, near Wollaston Lake in the Canadian province of Saskatchewan.

Initial reports pinpointed four wolves as the prime suspects, with evidence to support that they had indeed been in the vicinity. Wolf tracks were found around the body, and cloth, hair and what appeared to be human remains were found in the stomachs of two of the wolves that were subsequently killed.

Although there are many deaths throughout the world each year as a result of direct contact with wild animals, the tragic death of Carnegie received a lot of media attention because of the high levels of emotion that wolves often provoke.

In this particular case, one of the investigators, Paul Paquet, wolf biologist at the University of Calgary, said that some of the evidence found also indicates that a black bear may have been involved. He went on to say that the final report is likely to be inconclusive and the real cause of Carnegie's death may never be fully known. (Pers.comm.)

This doesn't get the wolves off the hook, but in reporting on this incident for Wolf Print, we would like to take a look at some of the issues raised, which has as much to do with the conflict between the pro-wolf and anti-wolf groups as it has to do with human/wolf conflict.

As we are already seeing happen, each group is taking a stance and using the situation to gain political leverage. It has already been reported that the attack may reshape the wolf debate in the US. (Bergquist, 2005). This is mainly because for decades the pro-wolf mantra has been that no healthy, wild wolf has killed a human in North America. The anti-wolf lobby has immediately seized on this, and there have been a number of news reports, with sensationalist headlines, which have gone on to demonise the wolf.

Propagandising from either group is doing nothing to tackle the fundamental problems. Whether or not wolves or black bears were responsible for Carnegie's death, we need to keep a perspective on this incident in relation to the number of deaths and injuries as a result of contact with wild animals. A news report in 2001 stated that the 1990s was the worst decade

ever for shark, bear, alligator, and cougar attacks in North America, largely due to the fact that people are encroaching on wildlife habitat everywhere. Alligators attacked 78 people in the United States in the 1980s and 110 people between 1990 and 1995. During the 20th century there were reported to have been 128 deaths

from grizzly and black bears in North America, with 56 of those occurring in the last two decades. Half of the 20th century's 14 known deaths from cougar attacks in North America occurred in the 1990s. (Lowy, 2001).

This increasing trend of attacks, which is as a result of the expansion of human populations into non-urban landscapes, has resulted in an increase in wolf-human conflicts. Wildlife species habituate to human activities and humans themselves, resulting in more frequent encounters at the interface. (Boyd)

It has been reported that Carnegie and other workers in the area had had close contact with the wolves and had been seen feeding them. Paquet also stated that although the area is very remote, there has been a lot of industrial activity through mining and logging, thereby increasing the potential for human-wolf interaction. (Pers.comm.) A report by Mark McNay (2002) which gives a case history of Wolf-Human encounters in Alaska and Canada, also cites a number of incidents where workers in remote areas have had encounters with wolves, many of these as a result of habituation.

It is this increased level of habituation that Paquet and others see as the real problem.

A simple definition of habituation is learned behaviour where an animal becomes conditioned to responding to or ignoring certain stimuli after a period of exposure. In the case of wolves, it would seem from case studies that their fear of humans is being overridden as they adapt to being around human habitations. Wolves have learned that garbage dumps and camping grounds are a good food source. People also often feed wolves directly, and over a period of time wolves will also adapt to this food source, becoming increasingly bolder in their approaches. This leads to varying degrees of wolf-human interaction depending on the level of habituation, and



Saskatchewan - Wollaston Sector Area Map. Last update Aug 17 2005.



the behavioural traits of individual wolves. In his case history, McNay (2002) describes the different types of aggressive and non-aggressive encounters which range from investigative approach behaviour through to predatory behaviour.

Wolves are naturally curious and playful creatures, and although not all encounters are aggressive, there is nevertheless the danger that even playful behaviour can be harmful to humans. (Sharp teeth and soft human skin are not a good mix.) There is the potential of a playful situation quickly escalating if the wrong signals are given, and which then triggers a reflex response in the wolf.

The health of the wolf is also a key factor in an encounter. Many of the fatal attacks documented throughout Europe have been from rabid wolves, which can attack a large number of people and livestock in a short space of time. Extreme socio-environmental situations can also have an effect. For example, where landscapes have been heavily modified, making wild prey scarce and leading to wolves exploiting food sources associated with humans, such as livestock or garbage.

In Norway, a report, commissioned by the Norwegian Ministry of the Environment, was released at a press conference in 2002. The report was the result of in-depth research carried out by John Linnell at the Norwegian Institute for Nature Research with the help of colleagues throughout Europe, and which detailed wolf attacks on humans going back hundreds of years. Some of the cases documented were gruesome, and it was expected that the results would "really whip up a storm of hysteria... but in fact the opposite happened. Everybody calmed down. There was no longer a debate about how dangerous wolves were for people. The public felt that scientists and wildlife managers had understood that wolves could be dangerous." (Linnell, 2003).

The researchers found that the fear of wolves had grown out of proportion, and it was the uncertainty of the dangers and threats posed that was the problem; not the actual dangers themselves. Once the local people had a 'truth' that they could accept, they were able to deal with this. As Linnell points out: "This fact is reflected in bears. Everybody knows that bears can attack people if you are unlucky enough to surprise them in the wrong way, or injure them when hunting. The risk is real, but people do not get hysterical about it, they just accept it." Many of the conflicts associated with wolves are not directly about wolves but about the symbol of the wolf, and what it represents. (Linnell, 2003).

Despite four decades of research, we still have a lot to learn about wolves and their behaviour. And also about our perceptions

and attitudes towards them. The oft-quoted example of there being no documented deaths in North America as a result of attacks from healthy wild wolves has perhaps done little to help shape our attitudes towards wolves. They may not be the devils portrayed in centuries of myth and legend, but neither are they the cute, cuddly and non-threatening creatures that some wolf advocates would have us believe. A wolf is a wolf and will do what wolves do as a predator, a large carnivore, and a member of a mammalian family. One of the greatest disservices we do them is to simplify or pigeon-hole their behaviours, or even worse, anthropomorphise them. Unfortunately, people do this all too often, to their own detriment, but equally importantly to the detriment of the wolves. Each time an aggressive encounter occurs, the outcome often leads to the death of the wolf or wolves involved.

Our encroachment into non-urban landscapes is leading to increased encounters with wildlife. But does this necessarily have to be a negative thing? If we could just change our attitudes to accepting that we do not have dominion over nature, but are a part of it, we might be able to accept other creatures for what they are inherently, and not for what we would like them to be or what they represent to us.

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Biology and Conservation Status of the Arabian Wolf

by James D. Murdoch¹ and Peter Phelan²

Photos: Peter Phelan

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The Arabian wolf (*Canis lupus arabs*) is a subspecies of the grey wolf that ranges across the desert and mountain regions of the Arabian Peninsula (Harrison and Bates 1991, Pocock 1935). Known to occur in Saudi Arabia, Oman, Yemen, Jordan, and Israel, the wolf in Arabia represents one of the southernmost populations of *Canis lupus* (Gasperetti et al. 1985, Harrison and Bates 1991, Sillero-Zubiri et al. 2004, Spalton 2002). Arabian wolves inhabit a wide variety of desert habitats, but little is known of their biology or conservation status and many populations are thought to be declining.

Arabian wolves survive among some of the harshest conditions in the Middle East – areas characterized by high temperatures and little to no annual precipitation resulting in low prey density. Arabian wolves live in sandy and scrub deserts, gravel plains and rugged mountainous regions, foraging opportunistically and subsisting on gazelles (*Gazella* spp.), carrion, small birds, rodents, reptiles, and insects (Gasperetti et al. 1985, Harrison and Bates 1991). They tend to be less social than wolves living in temperate, more northern regions (Gasperetti et al. 1985, Harrison and Bates 1991). In Israel, for example, wolves forage in smaller groups and occupy smaller ranges than wolves elsewhere

(Hefner and Geffen 1999). In other areas like Saudi Arabia, however, there are anecdotal reports of larger packs (Lipscombe Vincett 1982).

Arabian wolves once ranged extensively throughout Arabia (Harrison and Bates 1991), but in recent years, wolf populations have become increasingly fragmented due to loss of habitat and intense persecution by humans (Harrison and Bates 1991, Mendelsohn 1983b). Interestingly, wolves seem to adapt to human presence and often live in close proximity to settlements and agricultural areas where they prey on livestock and eat refuse (Hefner and Geffen 1999, Mendelsohn 1983a, Mendelsohn 1983b). Unfortunately, conflict with livestock often results in poisoning and other forms of retaliation killing (Mendelsohn 1983a).

In February 2005, the Breeding Centre for Endangered Arabian Wildlife in Sharjah, United Arab Emirates, hosted the 6th annual Conservation Workshop for the Fauna of Arabia. The workshop was sponsored by the Environment and Protected Areas Authority of Sharjah and aimed to evaluate the conservation status of the Arabian wolf and other canids in Arabia. The workshop brought together biologists, conservationists, wildlife managers, government officials, educators, and policy makers from over 10 countries in Arabia and surrounding regions.

Delegates from each region pooled information on the distribution and population status of wolves and identified key threats to their survival. Using IUCN criteria, delegates then evaluated the regional conservation status of the species (IUCN - World Conservation Union 2004). The last assessment of this kind occurred in 2000 at the 2nd annual Conservation Workshop for the Fauna of Arabia.

Canis lupus is currently listed globally as a species of Least Concern by the IUCN Red List (www.redlist.org, Sillero-Zubiri et al. 2004). At a regional level, however, participants of the workshop upgraded the conservation status of the species to *Endangered*. This was in response to perceived declines in recent years. In the United Arab Emirates, for example, there have been no reports of wolves since 1986 and they now appear to be locally extinct (Gross 1987). Declining trends are not only confined



to the Emirates and have been reported across their range.

Workshop participants identified habitat loss and persecution resulting from conflicts with livestock as the main threats to Arabian wolves. Other important threats mentioned included trade in wolf parts (i.e., skins, bones, and organs), poisoning, and interbreeding with feral dogs. Researchers also confirmed that disease (rabies) affects some localized wolf populations in Oman and Saudi Arabia.

Conserving the Arabian wolf will require cooperative, multi-national efforts. The workshop was an important step in building collaborative relationships among researchers and conservationists in Arabia and identifying goals for conservation. Some of the conservation actions discussed for Arabian wolves included:

- Developing a population monitoring program. Little information on the distribution and abundance of Arabian wolves exists. A collaborative monitoring program in each range country would allow researchers to build baseline information and evaluate population trends over time. It would also help researchers determine the impacts of threats such as habitat loss and persecution.
- Improving law enforcement. In many areas throughout Arabia, particularly outside protected areas and in rural regions, enforcement of wildlife laws and regulations is limited. Law enforcement officials require proper training, equipment, and support to adequately protect the species.
- Launching public awareness and education initiatives. Many deep rooted misconceptions surround the wolf in Arabia. Wolves are also commonly

mistaken for golden jackals (*Canis aureus*) where the two species are sympatric. Education programs that aim to improve the image of the wolf and provide reliable information on the species may help reduce declines and mitigate livestock conflicts.

Understanding of the fundamental biology of Arabian wolves is also critically needed. The majority of wolf research in the past has focused on wolves in the temperate and colder regions of North America, Europe and Asia (Mech and Boitani 2003). The Arabian wolf lives in very different environments and information on their behaviour and ecology will be necessary to develop realistic, effective, and lasting conservation measures for the species.

For more information on Arabian wolves or details of the workshop, please contact the Breeding Centre for Endangered Arabian Wildlife, Sharjah, United Arab Emirates (website: www.breedingcentresharjah.com; email: breeding@epaa-shj.gov.ae) or IUCN/SSC Canid Specialist Group (website: www.canids.org; email: canids@zoo.ox.ac.uk). We thank Claudio Sillero and Richard Reading for reviewing this article.



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Ethos

Breaking the Silence

by Bill Lynn

In 2000 the Bush Administration forced a political sleight-of-hand on the US Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS). Up to that point in time, the Gray Wolf (*Canis lupus*) was considered an endangered species in federal policy. But a new policy was soon announced. The administration wished to consider the wolf as 'recovered' (no longer endangered) throughout its range, when it was recovered in only a small part of its range. Management would then be turned over to the states, and federal protections would end. This policy was heedless of fragile population levels, inadequate recovery areas, the absence of landscape linkages, and increased poaching. It flatly ignored the availability of suitable habitat elsewhere, much less the mandate of the Endangered Species Act (ESA). It would achieve, however, the administration's goal of undermining the ESA, play to the anti-environmental prejudice of the Republican Party, and off-load endangered species management to under-prepared state wildlife agencies.

So under the coercion of political appointees, the FWS gerrymandered maps of wolf recovery, declared the gray wolf recovered in a few places (e.g. the Rocky Mountains and Great Lakes), and proceeded to 'down-list' wolves as quickly as possible. The exceptions were the Red Wolf (*Canis rufus*) in the southeast, and the Mexican Gray Wolf (*Canis lupus baileyi*) in the southwest. Wolf recovery did not charge ahead for these critically endangered species either. The Red Wolf program has been isolated for years in one recovery area. In 2005, a back-room deal between ranching interests and the FWS resulted in a moratorium on further reintroductions for Mexican grays.

The response of animal protection, wildlife conservation and environmental groups was decisive. Defenders of Wildlife and other non-profit groups sued in federal court, and won a series of impressive verdicts. The courts held that the FWS had proceeded illegally, cloaking political motivation in the guise of science. The administration's policy was reversed, wolves are again considered an endangered species, and new areas for wolf recovery (e.g. New York and New England) are mandated for consideration.

Now that the courts have spoken, we can rest easily, right? Hardly. The mere possibility of reintroduction does no make it so. There are legitimate scientific, social and ethical questions about where, when and how we should reintroduce wolves. The confusing genetics of wolves and other canids makes it difficult to

identify the correct species or subspecies to restore. Of far greater importance is the political opposition from a cohort of agency, commercial and extremist 'property rights' interests collectively masquerading as proponents of 'wise use'. Once all the ecological and ethical issues are solved (and they shall be), advocates for wolves must still organize sufficient political power to achieve their goals.

Moreover, while legal victories are important, they do little to challenge the underlying rationale used to justify the administration's policy in the first place, namely that once recovered, wolves should be managed like any other commodity via State-level game regulations. This is one reason wolves got into trouble in the first place. For example, none of the management plans adopted by western states do more than keep a bare minimum of wolves on the landscape. This is not recovery. It is the creation of outdoor museums, places where wolves are incarcerated in relic landscapes surrounded by what amounts to free-fire zones. If you want to understand the real intentions behind these plans, think of ethnic cleansing in the former Yugoslavia, or the homelands of South Africa. What is envisioned here is a kind of species apartheid, where a few wolves would live in the back-country, while the remaining landscape is made 'safe' for over-hunting, over-grazing and over-development.

The dispute over wolf recovery in the US is a microcosm of parallel controversies across the globe. At its core is the question of how we ought to live with wolves. This kind of question is ethical in character, and demands a rethinking of our relationship with animals. It is also practical, as re-envisioning how humanity might live with wolves is the only means of securing short-term legal and policy victories, through long-term cultural and political change.

When discussing wolves, we hear familiar arguments for and against recovery. Most of these arguments rely on science, and invoke the role of predators in natural landscapes and the conservation of biodiversity. Some of these arguments are social, and focus on the (un)desirability of having wolves in humanized landscapes where they will come into conflict with livestock and companion animals. Few of these claims emphasize the moral reasons for wolf recovery. A few examples include the place of wolves in our stewardship of creation, the biological heritage that wolves contribute to our children and our culture, as well as the intrinsic value wolves have in and of themselves. You hear less of these ethical

reasons, because wolf advocates, biologists and policy makers are not used to thinking about such matters. While people of good will and character, they have difficulty relating moral questions to issues of management, policy and politics.

I want to help end this relative silence on ethics and wolves. And I need your help to do so. In future columns I shall share the many ethical reasons I see for wolf recovery. I hope you will share your thoughts and experiences. *Ethos* is not a set of lectures masquerading as a column. I do enough lecturing in my day job! It is, rather, a conversation about ethics, culture and their effect on wolves and other living beings. Your thoughts need not be long, but they will help guide and enrich our dialogue. So do send your opinions by email or post, and the ensuing conversation will be all the better for it!

Cheers, Bill



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Byw gyda'r **Blaidd**

Walking With **Wolves**

**Fel rhan o Wythnos Genedlaethol
Gwyddoniaeth**

dydd Sadwrn Mawrth 18^{ed}
11^{am}-4^{pm}

Cyfle unigryw i ddod yn agos at
Fleiddiaid Llysgennad Ymddiriedolaeth
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Harrop-Smith , Celfyddyd
Amgylcheddol gyda Jane Thewlis,
Artist Preswyl 2004 yn ogystal â
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