

# Wolf Print

The UK Wolf Conservation Trust

Issue 40 Summer 2010



The Trust celebrates 15 years



## Editor's Letter

It was a tough winter and a dramatic, sad spring at the UKWCT (see the wolf news section). We are now looking forward to the calm, hormone-free summer where the wolves are lazy and gentle. As usual we are busy; each year I am amazed that we can fit more into the same amount of time, but we do. We've noticed over the rare, quiet periods that the wolves really miss the visitors, confirming that they love their work.

This issue has the normal mix of UKWCT news with new information about wolves around the world. Kirsty Peake gives us her insightful update about what's going on with the Yellowstone wolves and Anne Riddell tells the history of the Wildwood wolves in Kent. Many of you will know that they are related to Lunca and Latea. Apollo, their father, is in fact still alive and in charge of the pack. Life and Behaviour of wolves looks at the subject of self-medication. This research is unique in the wolf world and originated at the UKWCT, proving yet again that we are leaders in the care of captive wolves and contributing to the pot of information about wild wolves.

Other articles update you on some of the projects we support and where your donations have been used. It's not all comfortable reading about the wild wolf population but it would be so much worse without your help.

We've got some great book reviews and new merchandise plus a whole host of activities coming up for the summer and autumn of 2010. Don't forget to book early to avoid disappointment.

Please send me ideas of what you might want to see in Wolf Print, or photos and articles that we could include in its pages. As usual, the address to send them to is [education@ukwolf.org](mailto:education@ukwolf.org). We can only accept photos and text electronically due to the lack of time we have to produce the magazine.

Have a great summer.

*Toni Shelbourne*

Education Officer / Senior Wolf Handler / Wolf Print Editor

# Wolf Print



Editor  
Toni Shelbourne  
Tel: 0118 971 3330  
Email: [education@ukwolf.org](mailto:education@ukwolf.org)

Assistant Editor  
Julia Bohanna

Editorial Team  
Angela Barrow, Sandra Benson, Vicky Hughes,  
Tsa Palmer, Denise Taylor

Published by  
The UK Wolf Conservation Trust  
Butlers Farm, Beenham,  
Reading RG7 5NT  
Tel: 0118 971 3330  
Fax: 0118 971 0522  
Email: [ukwct@ukwolf.org](mailto:ukwct@ukwolf.org)

Patrons  
David Clement Davies  
Erich Klinghammer  
Desmond Morris  
Michelle Paver  
Christoph Promberger

The UK Wolf Conservation Trust Directors  
Nigel Bulmer  
Anne Carter  
Charles Hicks  
Sue Hull  
Tsa Palmer

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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 provide education programmes for schools, conservationists and other organisations.

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email: [enquiries@businesspluspoint.co.uk](mailto:enquiries@businesspluspoint.co.uk)

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Cover photo: Latea by Joan Paddick



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Dakota, by Mikaela Wild of Thatcham Photographic Club



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# Wolf NEWS: Update on the Trust Wolves



Mosi and Mai - by Franca Knight

It's all change at the UKWCT for the wolves: this year's breeding season back in the spring was packed full of surprises and drama. Over the past two years, **Mosi** has come into season mid-February with **Mai** starting a few days after. This was their first true breeding season as mature wolves and it's seen a change of leadership between Mai and Mosi. As always, it's the boys who cause all the trouble and when Mosi became receptive to **Torak** mating her, which is around ten days after the season starts, he took full advantage and paired up with her. They tied several times and Mosi took the opportunity to lord it over Mai with Torak backing her up. The end result was that Mai was deposed as the dominant female. Mosi has always pushed her claim for the top



Torak - by Alvin Yap

position but until recently had been put down by Mai and, when needed, Torak backed her up. As usual though, when a male has one thing on his mind it can cause all sorts of upsets. Mosi harassed and dominated Mai so much that she was able to suppress her season, therefore Mai had no opportunity to re-challenge for leadership. Once the deed was done, Torak left the girls to sort themselves out and didn't protect Mai or join in the ritualised aggression, choosing to look the other way and stay out of it. Will Mosi be a good leader? We doubt it; her character is more like Latea's and we fully expect Mosi to be a bully but she might surprise us. Watch this space!

Although the girls have switched their roles, Mai still does all the raised hackle and tail displays when the pack walks past Duma. Mai and Duma haven't got on since Mai matured and they are big rivals. While Mai fence-runs with Duma, Mosi is telling Mai off while Torak mostly looks the other way. It's fair to say that Torak is not a patch on the brilliant Alba, his

uncle, who would never allow the girls' dominance displays to get out of hand. Torak has a lot to learn and is usually the one to start trouble or help it continue, with a glint in his eye as he piles into the melee.

**Latea** and **Lunca** have had a few months to adjust to the loss of their brother Alba back in January. It's been hard for them and they have seemed a little subdued but very calm with each other. With Alba gone there was no competition between the girls in the breeding season and the only ritualised aggression seen between them has been at feeding time. Even this was low key and normal. It seems boys really are the root of all ills in a pack. We were worried about how they would get on without Alba to keep the peace, but they have been angels and probably the easiest wolves to deal with in the high octane hormone period of the year. Before a recent enclosure swap, being in the top enclosure, Latea continued her self-appointed duty of meeting all the visitors with a friendly wag of her tail and a wolfy grin on her face. She rubs her body along the fence line and shows everyone how relaxed our wolves can be around things like coaches, cars and crowds of people. This greeting ceremony even cuts into her play time, to the disgust of Lunca, who at a recent Howl Night split her time between looking in the window of the Education room and inviting Latea to play. Latea was having none of it; she had people to show off to. Lunca spent her time lying just outside the observation window, either pretending to dose off or howling, to the delight of the visitors. When she wasn't howling or being nosey, she would invite Latea to play, performing the classic play bow, but Latea knew her priorities and still had people to welcome!

On their enrichment walks, Lunca and Latea have loved exploring the front field, jumping in the water troughs and sniffing everything and everyone. Now there is less competition between them, they both seek out affection from the handlers and love to have a scratch behind their ears. Years ago when they were young, Lunca especially wasn't easy to catch for walks but nowadays we often find them on the kennel yard waiting for us, having slipped in via the night kennel traps. They are

Lunca and Latea - Danny Kirby-Hunter



impatient to be off and getting their collars on can be a bit of a dance as they charge around getting excited about their walk. In 2010 we are hoping to get them out for more members' walks. They love the line-up and sniff everyone intently, but be warned ... they don't wait around for meet and greets, too many things to explore. Don't worry, we'll get other wolves out for you to interact with later. The Euro girls really are special.



Duma - by Alvin Yap

**Duma** has had a frustrating and difficult spring, with the loss of her sister in April she has had to live alone for the first time in her life; it's never easy for a wolf to be without company. We try to walk her daily and spend as much time as we can in the enclosure. She seems to be more settled when housed next to the European girls Lunca and Latea in the double-skinned enclosure but for now that is all we can do for her. Mixing adult wolves is very tricky so for her safety it's best for now that she stays on her own and has time to get over the trauma. We are keeping a very close eye on Duma's stress levels and health and will of course keep you informed of any changes. In the breeding season with no male to interact with Duma became frustrated and looked for love amongst our handlers, which was of course unrequited. As she was in the enclosure next to Torak she had to watch Mosi get all the attention. 'If only Torak could come and play with me for a while' is what Duma would have said if she could. To compensate she took up her old trick of flirting with handlers and people on the walks. Many new volunteers have been inducted into the Duma 'bounce'. She took some of her frustration out on Dakota before her death who kept a low profile when Duma was feeling hormonal. She has now calmed down but still likes to spend most of her walk over-marking where Mosi and Mai have walked earlier. She may be twelve but she shows no sign of slowing up or wanting to retire from public life. In fact she would hate not having her job as the pre-eminent Ambassador wolf at the Trust, especially now she is the last of her pack. ■

# Death of an Ambassador

## Dakota: 1998 - 2010

It is with a heavy heart that we inform you of the death of Dakota, one of our North American wolves. You will be aware that over the past three years Dakota has been living with lymphatic cancer. However, she defied the odds and with determination and much veterinary support, we were lucky to enjoy her company for three years after the diagnosis.

Dakota had recently been off her food a little but both our traditional and homeopathic vets had visited in the last few weeks and where happy with her condition. She walked around the site on Monday 26th April with Duma and she was her usual cheeky self, trying to grab bits and pieces from the hedgerow as she always did. The next day she wouldn't eat and her breathing seemed a little laboured. The vet was called to see Dakota on the morning of Wednesday 28th April. The diagnosis was possible pneumonia but in all probability the cancer had finally reached her lungs. She was given a couple of injections and prescribed antibiotics. However, 24 hours later Dakota had shown no sign of improvement and the vet was called again. A unanimous decision was made that Dakota had fought for long enough and that it was kinder to let her go. She went peacefully with some of her many human friends around her when she died. Duma her sister sat close at hand on the other side of the fence and was then brought in to say goodbye.



Dakota and Duma were the Trust's main ambassadors for many years and had appeared on TV programmes such as Monarch of the Glen, Blue Peter and the Paul O'Grady Show. They featured in news programmes and countless newspaper and magazine articles. Dakota was a very charismatic and photogenic wolf; she seemed to know just how to pose for anyone with a camera and always delighted visitors with a howl, sitting at the end of the photo mound. This was the signal to her handlers that she had finished with the public and that it was time to go back to her favourite activity which was sleeping in the sun.

Although retired from public duties since 2008, Dakota still led a full and active life, whether it was going for a walk with handlers, interacting with Duma or helping students with their research by rolling in scents or following food trails. She enjoyed the introduction of the new pond and waterfall in the bottom enclosure and on warm days could be found cooling herself off in the water or sleeping under a tree. In the winter she would take herself off to a warm straw bed in the kennel block, only poking her nose out of the trap if someone interesting walked by.

For many people, whether a volunteer or member of the Trust, Dakota was often a favourite among all that met her due to the sparkle in her eye and the outstanding zest for life and, above all, mischief. We all have happy memories of her cheeky and endearing ways. She will be deeply missed.

*Photos, clockwise from top right, taken by:*  
Mikaela Wild  
David Southard  
Paul Denton  
Claire Ash





Photo: Mei, by Joan Paddick

## SNOWDROP WOLF WALK

On a crisp afternoon in February we took our three Canadian wolves for a day out in the country to the beautiful Welford Park Estate located near Newbury, Berkshire - and what a day it was!

The object of the exercise, what we term an enrichment walk, is where the wolves are allowed, within reason, the freedom to 'do their own thing' without the pressure of their ambassadorial work of meeting people. It's a bit of down-time for both wolves and handlers and everyone enjoys these walks tremendously.

As we pulled up in front of the elegant Queen Anne house, we were welcomed by the lady of the manor, Mrs Puxley who, together with her son, kindly escorted us around the extensive grounds, which we had almost to ourselves as it was a day they were not open to the public. Here, the wolves and their handlers were free to enjoy the first of the snowdrops opening after their long winter sleep, displaying their beauty to us in their thousands, like a woodland carpet under the beech trees. Our boy Torak was fascinated with the kissing gate and by standing on his hind legs showed us how to open it with his front feet!

Meanwhile, Mosi and Mai, having found a nearby fallen tree trunk, chose to stroll along

the top to get a better view of the passing stream running alongside but, after finding that their attempts to cross it were thwarted by their handlers not wanting to get wet, had to content themselves with crossing via a nearby footbridge. Further along the bank we came across a mini waterfall which fascinated the wolves but the stream's attraction finally became irresistible and they all went in for a paddle.

Even though it was a chilly day, the backdrop of the blazing red dogwoods and snowdrops was a delight to see, but all too soon it was time to load up and return to the Trust with three happy wolves.

Sue Fine.

## News from the Anglian Wolf Society on the sad death of Torak's mother

It is with great sadness that I inform you of the death of our North American female wolf, Sefka.



She died shortly after three o'clock in the afternoon on Friday February 26th. Immediately beforehand, she had been observed sparring briefly with her daughters, which she frequently did. Within a few minutes, she collapsed and subsequently died. A post mortem conducted by our vet revealed a number of trivial bite marks and some bruising in various places around her neck, but identified the cause of death as a small puncture wound to one of her lungs. The small size of the wound

suggests that it was probably an accidental injury. Given the fact that breeding season rivalry had already been over for several days, with all the wolves calm and non-competitive, we are led to the conclusion that her death was the result of routine sparring which simply went wrong. The rest of the pack are in good shape with no indications of any adverse behavioural effects.

Phil Watson  
Anglian Wolf Society

**WORLD ANIMAL DAY 2009.** In the spring 2010 issue of Wolf Print on page 8 the main picture featured a display by the Amwest Native American Dancers. The editor would like to make it clear that the gentleman in the red shirt standing in the background on the right is not, and never has been, a member of Amwest. We apologise for any embarrassment that inclusion of this picture may have caused Mr Holcombe or his family.

## IN MEMORIAM

When I last came to the Trust, for my first walk with the wolves, it was the 23rd January and, sadly, the Trust lost Alba that day. My mum and I have attended many events at the Trust over the last 12 months and are passionate about the cause. We absolutely love spending time around the wolves and with everyone who helps and gives us talks, information and wonderful stories of living with the Trust wolves.

We were so touched by the loss of Alba; I desperately wanted to do something to help. So although only a small amount, I emailed and got in touch with everyone I knew and gave them the information about the Trust, what it does and the good causes it supports, along with the wonderful times we have spent in the company of the Trust's wolves themselves. I got creative, and made some hand-made cards, in an effort to encourage people to donate their hard earned cash, and mum even painted some howling wolves for some of the cards. All the cards had the UKWCT logo on the back, and because I asked everyone to take a look at the website too, I hope you may even get some further interest from this neck of the woods. The fundraising brought about some fabulous opportunities to talk to people face to face about what the Trust is and does and I was pleasantly surprised with the interest and enthusiasm this brought about.

So, in memory of Alba, please accept this cheque for £100 from the people of Lancashire! Most of all, thank you for allowing us to have this experience. Without it, we wouldn't have been so aware of the issues and so moved by the experience of being so close to the wolves.



Photo: Clive Readings

Thanks for all the hard work the volunteers put into making our time at the Trust great!

Kind regards  
Carolyn Barton

*Editor's note:*

*Thank you to Carolyn and others for your kind donation and words about Alba. We have decided to create an area for all our departed wolf friends on site. This will be in the form of ornamental boulders, one for each wolf. No marker will be placed by the rocks but volunteers will tell you what they are for if asked. This is an idea we got from Wolf Park and we feel it is nicer than having plaques all around the site.*



Carolyn Barton with Duma, Paul Denton and Cammie Jones



Anne with Duma

As I write this we are now into spring and all the frosts and deep snow are hopefully a thing of the past. During the frequent heavy snow falls at the Trust the wolves thoroughly enjoyed themselves. The Canadians especially loved pouncing in it, rolling in it and demolishing snowmen so obligingly built by volunteers. I think Torak must hold the record for managing to completely annihilate a snowman as it took about 45 seconds for it to become a pile of snow.

## DIRECTOR'S LETTER

Sadly, we lost both Alba and Dakota this winter. Both had serious health issues and at the ages of 10 and 11 had led long, happy and fulfilled lives at the Trust. We had been hoping that we could have been the recipient of some cubs this spring but very few establishments are breeding since birth control methods have been put in place in most of the UK wolf packs. As three of our remaining wolves are now elderly, Duma being 12 and Lunca and Latea now 11, we are actively looking to either import some adult wolves to the UK from abroad (as we did with Athena, Apollo and Luna in 1998), or take in a pair of young wolves already living in the UK, not related to each other, who are surplus to requirements. Now we are in the process of being accepted into the British Irish Association of Zoos and Aquariums (BIAZA) we will have better access and relationships with the zoo community. Our aim then would be to breed from these wolves next year.

Down at the badger sett we have been very busy and have installed a further two

cameras, making four in all. We are now able to monitor much more closely what is going on and have the facility to move the cameras to keep up with the ever-changing scene.

With the very cold and prolonged winter, we have not yet seen any badger cubs emerging. However, with the onset of summer we are hopeful that the cubs will soon be out with the adults to go foraging in the nearby fields. The badger hide that was built last year will be available from May onwards for those wishing to watch the badgers and photograph them. Like all wildlife watching, it can be a long and patient wait but it is well worthwhile and gives a fascinating insight into the world of the badger.

Much is going on at the Trust with Predator to Pet workshops, Open days and World Animal Day, when all manner of species will be on display. All in all, a very busy time for everyone at the Trust!

Anne Carter, Director

# Challenging Times for the

An update on the wolf situation in Yellowstone National Park  
by Kirsty Peake

*Lone female wolf, now of the 755 pack.  
Photo: Peter Murray*

When we returned to England from Yellowstone National Park in early October 2009, we left a fairly healthy wolf population on the Northern Range. Yes, the Druids had mange but other packs had survived it. The wolves in the South of the Park were doing well and the numbers in the packs were growing.

**W**e left the Druid Pack with ten wolves and two surviving pups from their nine, all with mange. The Blacktails had six adults and five pups, the Cottonwoods had five adults and three pups, the Everts with four adults, and the Quadrants with four adults and three pups. The Canyons had four adults and one pup and the Agates with four adults. The Mollie pack was thirteen in number, having recovered from mange. 147's Group of three wolves (very confusing as two have similar numbers - 147 and 471!) and there were a few loners in the area.

Between October and when we returned in mid-January everything had changed. Amongst other things hunting had returned to Montana. The Cottonwood territory bordered the Park and hunters had shot and killed three of them, including the Alpha female. The pack disintegrated and has since disappeared. The Druids fell apart after the death of the Alpha Female in September. The remaining two pups did not survive. Five of the pack went off on their own, with mange. 480 was left with just four of his daughters approaching breeding time but he left the pack, with mange. The reason for his leaving could well be that he could not breed with his daughters as wolves actively avoid inbreeding. The Evert's Alpha Female died from an attack by other wolves. The Canyons went down to three adults, no one knows what happened to the pup and the other adult.

Depressing reading but normal life for wolves. For the Druid girls, life was exceedingly tough as they had no winter coats to help them cope with the severe weather due to the mange.

They would not lie down on the snow and would be seen standing sleeping, occasionally falling over and quickly trying to stand up again. They would seek out dirt patches around the base of trees to stand on.

Into this scene we arrived in mid-January and what follows is just one snapshot of our experiences. So much was happening that at times it was hard to keep up. The Druid girls had attracted a couple of young healthy males. One had arrived in late December and the other in February. Could this be the saving of the pack we all wondered? What we had not bargained on was 'Aggie' - she was born in 2006 into the Agate pack (hence Aggie!) and had taken a definite shine to these two young men. She has a reputation as being a bit of a 'tart' and last year had left her pack in pursuit of males only to find that she could not return to the Agates. She had joined 471 and 147 but now appeared to have left them and was once again on her own and on the look out. Aggie is a consummate predator; she brings down elk on her own. We realised that she was in fact feeding a lot of wolves with her predation techniques. Certainly the Druid girls were benefiting from this as the boys were proving not to be great hunters - they were still young and had a lot to learn. It was taking the Druid girls all their time to cope with staying alive without having to deal with a challenger for their boys.

In the same area as the Druids and Aggie was also her maternal pack, the Agates. This consisted of an Alpha Female, young Alpha Male (known as Big Blaze) and another young female.

**LAMAR VALLEY WAS EMPTY OF WOLVES** ...or was it? At the far end a pack of four had been seen, the Silver Pack. They had been seen briefly in January 2009 before disappearing. There was a rush to see them before they disappeared again, but there was no need as they are now well established! They are called the Silver Pack as the Alpha Female is a beautiful silver colour. The Alpha male is a huge wolf (possibly from the Mollie Pack), there is also a juvenile female and a yearling female - all of them grey. They took over Lamar Valley but were obviously keen to explore more. This was a decision that, at the time, the Alpha Male may have regretted because 147 (also leaving 471!) was attracted to the pack and started to try and approach the Alpha Female. The Alpha Male consistently chased him off and over several days this game was played. On the day that the Alpha Female was ready to be mated there was a short battle and 147 found himself the new Alpha Male of the Silver Pack. It was easy to see how pleased he was with himself as his tail was high and wagging. The old Alpha tagged along behind the group. The juvenile female fell completely in love with 147 and could be seen trying to solicit play from him. He is a wonderful Alpha Male and puts up with all her attention. He mated the Alpha Female... and the juvenile female! The pack is now five in number as the old alpha is accepted and 147 has even been seen giving the old boy a face wash after a kill. The assumption that the old boy was from the Mollie Pack gained further weight when he and the three females brought down a female bison (147 slept through all this in the sun!) Mollie's main prey is bison.

# The Wolves of Yellowstone



While all this was going on the Druid girls were floating back and forth from Lamar Valley. Two of them had collars and the other two had the nicknames of White Line and Thin Female. One of the collars started to send out the mortality signal. Her body was found and showed signs of a wolf attack - possibly the Silvers. The average weight for a female wolf is 90lbs - she was only 79lbs. It was possible to see how thin and lacking in coat she had been.

Not being satisfied with the Lamar Valley, the Silvers have been seen in several other pack territories and everyone appeared to manage to avoid each other, with one sad exception.

**THE BLACKTAILS MOVED OVER TO JOIN IN** with this huge wolf party that was going on. We had the Blacktails, the Druid girls and their two boys and Aggie all in the same area. There was a kill, probably Aggie's, and the Blacktails were taking their time on this before moving away. Aggie made an approach on the two Druid new boys and was seen off by White Line. The Thin Female approached the kill and unfortunately did not realise that the Blacktails were returning as well. The Blacktail males are her brothers but the Blacktail Alpha Female has no relationship with her. The males attacked but retreated but the Alpha Female went in and had Thin Female by the throat. They did not kill her. She got away and came towards us and stopped at a sage bush. She did not make it through the night and we had an opportunity to say goodbye to her the next morning. When she was weighed she was only 75lbs. The Druids were now down to two females. Aggie had succeeded in taking away the two young males for herself.

Into all this came two grey wolves - males. One was the deposed Alpha male of the Mollie pack and the other also from the Mollies. These two wandered up and down through the territories before joining in the wolf party and deciding

to take over the Agate pack. The first foray into this saw them chase off Big Blaze, the Agate young Alpha Male, after a fight. He was no match for these two big wolves. He disappeared and we held our breath. After a few days he reappeared and we breathed again. Having regained his strength he tried to re-establish himself with the Agates. This proved to be a big error in judgement. One of the Mollie's had him by the foreface and was shaking him. Big Blaze would not go down and stood his ground but the attack was ferocious. There was a huge weight and size advantage to the Molly. Eventually they broke apart and the Mollie male moved away, covered in blood - Big Blaze's blood. He has not been seen since.

We were now down to two Druid females, both with mange but appearing to be improving. I was watching them in Lamar Valley when they surprised a coyote and gave chase. They caught it and killed it. That is where it should have ended - wolves do not eat adult coyotes. If you are starving though I suppose you do not pass up a chance of a meal. White Line looked at the carcass but 690 just turned away. White Line 'toyed' with it for a bit then took a bite. She ate on it for over an hour but 690 never touched it. These two then appeared to go their separate ways but in the same area. Unfortunately White Line had another run in with Aggie and although she got away she was hurt. We did not see her for several days. Then someone spotted what they thought was a wolf body. It was White Line but evidence showed that she had been killed by a mountain lion. The Druids were now down to one wolf - 690 - that we knew of and 5 who had disappeared at the start of the winter.

**WHY ALL THIS MOVEMENT?** In my opinion it shows the importance of the pups to a wolf pack's cohesion. The only pack that more or less stayed in their territory was the Blacktails, with five pups. None of the other packs had

pups and this appeared to be a big contributor to the lack of stability that we were watching.

It will be interesting to see what this breeding season gives us. At the moment the Alpha Female of the Silvers is pregnant as is Aggie, also the Alpha Female of the Canyons. The Blacktails possibly have two females in pup. There were not enough sightings of the others to determine whether or not the females are pregnant. Perhaps, if all goes well, the new arrivals will inject stability back into the wolf population.

The overall population of the wolves in Yellowstone National Park is currently about 95, a big drop from their high of 170 in 2003. All this though is completely normal for wolf populations. Many packs no longer exist in the Park and new ones form. If the Druids completely disappear (and there have been sightings recently of some of the ones who went off on their own), it will be us wolf watchers who will feel it the most. They are the most famous pack in the Park, formed in 1996, the second year of the reintroduction.

We are looking forward eagerly to our next trip out in June to see how things are for the wolves of Yellowstone. They have been challenging each other and their environment has been challenging them, but I have no doubt that we will all still be watching wolves in Yellowstone in the coming years.

Kirsty Peake  
[www.peakeservices.co.uk](http://www.peakeservices.co.uk)

- *All the wolves in Yellowstone have identifying numbers.*
- *Some of these wolves receive nicknames from the people who watch them regularly.*
- *Each pack has a group name*

# wolves of the world

news from  
around the  
world



Photo: Torak, by Clive Readings

## nibbles

- **Wolf Survey Planned for Northern Lower Peninsula.** Michigan State in the USA is planning to start a survey aimed at finding grey wolves in the northern Lower Peninsula. The Department of Natural Resources and Environment says survey teams will be searching areas where the public reports observing a wolf or wolf tracks during the survey period. Wolves are a federally protected species in Michigan, and began returning to Michigan's Upper Peninsula via Canada and Wisconsin in the early 1990s, and more recently have been spotted in the northern Lower Peninsula. Michigan gray wolf information, observation reports: [www.michigan.gov/wolves](http://www.michigan.gov/wolves) and [tiny.cc/7vx3y](http://tiny.cc/7vx3y) (requires website registration).
- **Trichinellosis in wolves from Croatia.** A study to investigate the prevalence of Trichinella infection in wolves (*Canis lupus*) was carried out in a 17,468 km<sup>2</sup> area in Croatia. Muscle samples were collected from 67 wolves between 1996 and 2007 and analysed by artificial digestion. Muscle larvae were detected in 21 wolves (31%) and genotyped by multiplex PCR. *Trichinella britovi* was the predominant species confirmed in 90% (19 wolves) while *Trichinella spiralis* was detected in 9% (2 wolves). The presence of the so called "domestic" *Trichinella* species was a surprise since, to-date, only *T. britovi* had been reported in wild animals in this region. The larval burdens in infected animals ranged from 0.3 to 45.9 larvae per gram. The prevalence of infected animals varied by geographic region; infected animals were found in the region of Gorski Kotar (20%) which has very similar environment to the region of Lika, where almost all wolves were found infected. Interestingly, this is the first report of infected wolves in Dalmatia.

## Hunters urge calm as wolves return to Bavaria

The ÖJV ecological hunters' association urged Bavarians to remain calm following confirmation that a lone wolf has been spotted near the southern community of Brannenburg. "Fear of a single wolf would be totally unfounded," ÖJV leader Wolfgang Kornder said, advising anyone out for a walk in the forest to behave "normally."

"Wolves have no interest in coming into contact with humans," he said. Bavarian Environment Ministry wildlife manager Manfred Wölfl confirmed that a wolf had been identified based on sightings and evidence of bite marks found on deer carrion. According to Wölfl, the animal has been seen in the area since December and has not attacked any livestock.

The ÖJV's Kornder speculated that the rare canine was a young male on the prowl for a new area to settle. "It can't be assumed he brought along a whole pack," Kornder said, adding that his organisation hopes the animal stays in the southern German state. "It's a fascinating occurrence when the big predators return. We should be happy that it's happening." The return of wolves to the area means that environmental conditions are improving, Kornder asserted, though he

admitted that there could be problems too.

"Naturally one has to assume that in the future he could kill a house pet or two or, for example, sheep in the fields at night," he said. But people can erect electric fences and anyone who loses an animal to a wolf is entitled to compensation from the state, he assured. "We just need to be engaged," he said, urging residents to be understanding.

The *Canis lupus*, or grey wolf, was hunted in Germany beginning in medieval times. The species disappeared from the country in the 19th century, when they were driven east to Poland and Russia. The wolf has been making a slow return to Germany despite residents' fears and several lethal incidents with angry hunters. Experts estimate there are about five packs totaling in some 45 wolves in the northeastern part of the country. The five wolves in Mecklenburg-Western Pomerania are believed to have wandered into the country from Poland. In June 2009 a hunter in Saxony-Anhalt was charged with killing a male wolf that lived with a female and their young cubs at the military training facility in Altengrabow. ([tiny.cc/5v1mw](http://tiny.cc/5v1mw))

For the latest information on what's happening to wolves, join the Wolf Seeker Yahoo group by emailing [WolfseekerNews-subscribe@yahoo.com](mailto:WolfseekerNews-subscribe@yahoo.com)



## Wolves fly across country

Four endangered Mexican wolves have recently been flown cross country to start new lives. Three wolves from the National Zoo in Washington USA - one male and two females - will have a new home just outside Albuquerque. In the same trip an injured female will be moved from the project in Albuquerque to the National Zoo. "The Mexican wolves are smaller than the larger, more commonly-known grey wolf" said Kelley Tucker, LightHawk's Eastern Region program director who works near Lake Placid, N.Y. "It was hunted almost to extinction," Tucker said. "There were a couple of handfuls of animals left in the US and Mexico; now both countries are working to save this species."

The three going to Albuquerque include a male with arthritis, named Cheveya, who is around age 11 and will benefit from the dryer climate. His companions are Catella and Nieca, sisters who are four years old. The animals aren't usually named, said Tucker. She thinks all three were born in captivity. In Washington, they were not on display as zoo animals, she said. In New

Mexico, they will be placed in the Wildlife West Nature Park, a new preserve that's billed as an "enhanced zoo."

"They're trying to keep the wolves safe and at the highest level of nutrition," said Tucker. "There's no stress, they're in a very natural environment. They're there to learn to be wolves." The hope is the wolves will breed, and that they or their offspring will be able to be released into the wild. So far, more than 50 Mexican wolves have been released, she said, under the program Species Survival Plan, which works with zoos accredited by the Association of Zoos and Aquariums.

The female Mexican wolf returning is known only as 749. She was part of a pack at a facility in California caught in the wildfires, said Tucker. The wolf suffered minor burns and lost many of her pups in the fire. She and her mate were sent to New Mexico, where the plan was to release them into the wild. Then her mate died of cancer.

The wolf is showing the stress of her ordeal and is going to a facility in New York to



Mexican wolf © US Fish & Wildlife Service

recover, "While there, she is expected to meet some new, good-looking men," said Tucker. "We're honored to get to help them," she said, "to get these wolves to safe places." ([tiny.cc/50w7r](http://tiny.cc/50w7r))

■ **Denali Wolves.** In early 2008, State wildlife officials confirmed the presence of a young female wolf in North eastern Oregon near the Eagle Cap Wilderness. A radio-tracking collar she'd been wearing since 2006 confirmed that she had migrated from a pack in Idaho. Apparently, she's been doing well for herself in Oregon. Officials have captured excellent video footage of her in the rugged Imnaha region in the northeast corner of the state. She's now the alpha wolf in an unusually large pack of 10 animals, including what appears to be a large number of pups. [www.daily.sightline.org](http://www.daily.sightline.org), November 2009, ([tinyurl.com/yemldz3](http://tinyurl.com/yemldz3))

■ **The permeability of highway in Gorski kotar (Croatia) for large mammals.** The highway from Zagreb to Rijeka stretches 68.5 km through a wildlife core area in Gorski kotar (Croatia). It has 43 viaducts and tunnels, and one specifically constructed (100 m wide) green bridge (Dedin). One quarter of the total highway length consists of possible crossing structures. At Dedin green bridge, a total of 12,519 crossings have been recorded during 793 different days of active infrared monitors being in operation, or 15.8 crossings per day. Two monitored tunnel overpasses had 11.2 and 37.0 crossings per day,

respectively, whilst 4.3 crossings occurred per day under one monitored viaduct. Of those crossings, 83.2% were by ungulates and 14.6% by large carnivores. Radio-tracked large carnivores, brown bear (*Ursus arctos*), grey wolf (*Canis lupus*) and Eurasian lynx (*Lynx lynx*), expressed strong positive selection for tunnels and viaducts, whilst avoiding small underpasses or bridges. Selection for the use of Dedin green bridge was equal to its availability. This green bridge, constructed as a measure to mitigate the negative effects of the studied highway, serves its purpose acceptably. Territorial and dispersing radio-tracked large carnivores crossed the highway 41 times, during the survey, using both sides of the highway as parts of their home ranges. Overall, the highway in Gorski kotar does not seem to be a barrier. This demonstrates that it is possible to maintain habitat connectivity during the process of planning the highway route.

■ **Wolf Attacks in Georgia.** Tamaz Jaoshvili, 36, a resident of Tsnori village, Kakheti Region, was hospitalized with bites and scratches he got as the reported wolves assaulted him in his village. The man had injuries on her left hand and abdomen. The doctors say surgical measures were carried out;

however, the patient was discharged from hospital on the next day from the incident. The locals in the Kakheti Region have been complaining about the frequent assaults of wolves recently. On February 5th, a married couple was injured by wolves, another man, Gia Kakashvili was found dead on the territory of local cemetery. He had injuries which, according to the experts, were bites by wolves. ([tiny.cc/g27038](http://tiny.cc/g27038))

■ **Dogs likely originated in the Middle East,** new genetic data indicates. Dogs likely originated in the Middle East, not Asia or Europe, according to a new genetic analysis by an international team of scientists led by UCLA biologists. 'Dogs seem to share more genetic similarity with Middle Eastern grey wolves than with any other wolf population worldwide,' said Robert Wayne, UCLA professor of ecology and evolutionary biology and senior author of the Nature paper. 'This is the same area where domestic cats and many of our livestock originated and where agriculture first developed,' Wayne noted. 'We were able to study a broader sampling of wolves globally than has ever been done before, including Middle Eastern wolves,' said the paper's lead author, Bridgett von Holdt. ([tiny.cc/gupn3](http://tiny.cc/gupn3))

# Do Wolves Self-Medicate?

## An investigation into the possibility of self-medication in wolves

Victoria J. Allison Hughes



Mosi and Mai sample the herbs

**The Grey Wolf (*Canis lupus*) is the largest member of the canid family; a species once found throughout the northern hemisphere. The habitat of the wolf includes the high Arctic, tundra, taiga, forests, plains, deserts and virtually every ecological niche which could provide sufficient prey for its existence (Busch, 1998).**

In areas of the world where wolves still remain they are at the top of the food chain. Being carnivores and opportunistic predators, studies looking at the wolf's diet through analysis of scat and stomach content shows it consists mainly of ungulate prey, including deer, moose, elk, caribou and wild boar. In southern areas of Eurasia greater amounts of plant material have been found in wolf scats when compared to North America; this could be a direct result of the greater availability of fruit trees. Radio collared wolves in the lowlands of Italy have been monitored as they moved through mature vineyards (Ciucci & Peterson, 2003). It was considered that consumption of fruit may provide vitamins for wolves during the summer months, as even in North America it is not uncommon to find seeds from raspberries and blueberries in wolf scats (Mech, 2003). Cherries, apples, figs, plums, grapes, melon and watermelon have also been recorded (Ciucci & Peterson, 2003). The question remains: do wolves consume these miscellaneous foods during the short periods when they are abundant and their usual choice of prey is unavailable, or is there another reason?

Plants which commonly appear in wolf scats throughout North America and Eurasia, with a 14 - 43 % frequency, are grasses from the family Gramineae. It has been acknowledged that this grass possibly acts as a scour or inducement to vomit, ridding the intestine of parasites or stomach of long guard hairs that may delay the passage of food through the gut (Ciucci & Peterson, 2003). This could be the only documented evidence of self-medication (Zoopharmacognosy) in wolves; however, there are a large range of diseases that wolves are susceptible to, some of which could be treated by the use of medicinal herbs or plants.

Through the process of natural selection a range of behavioural strategies exist which enable all living organisms to cope with the range of health threats that come from injury, poisons, and other pathogens (Engel, 2002; Hart, 1990). Little is known about the way that animals regulate their health through diet and little research conducted, although it could have many implications in the management of captive species. For millennia humans have been using plants for medicinal purposes; the range of species used and their scope for healing is vast. The science of phytotherapy studies the use of herbal remedies to treat the sick, covering everything from powerful medicinal plants such as Digitalis and Belladonna to plants with gentle actions such as chamomile and mint. Zoopharmacognosy is a term coined by Dr Eloy Rodriguez in 1993; a biochemist and professor at Cornell University. He described the process by which animals select and use specific plants that contain medicinal properties for the treatment and prevention of disease.

Is it possible that our human ancestors learnt to use plants for their medicinal properties from

watching the animals that lived around them?

Studies have shown that primates will use certain plant species to aid control of parasite infection as well as provide relief from gastrointestinal upsets; it was found that chimpanzees, gorillas and bonobos all choose the same plant species or species from the same genera for similar illnesses, suggesting common criteria in medicinal plant selection. With the exception of these few observations no research has been specifically carried out into the possibility of self-medication by wolves or any other large carnivores.

Scientists from various disciplines are currently exploring the possibility that many species use plants, soils, insects and fungi as 'medicines' in ways that guard against future illness (preventative medicine) and/or relieve unpleasant symptoms caused by illness (curative/therapeutic medicine). The study of self-medication is not based on

**...a range of strategies exist which enable all living organisms to cope with the range of health threats.**

the assumption that animals possess an innate ability to know what's good for them. In most cases self-medication could be motivated by a desire to reduce unpleasant sensations that could be caused by illness.

Plants synthesise defensive compounds to protect themselves from disease and predators; these compounds are bioactive and can be medicinal, toxic or intoxicating depending on

# dicate?

## f self-medication using common herbs in captive wolves (*Canis lupus*)

...many species use plants, soils, insects and fungi as 'medicines'.

the circumstances. Medicinal herbs have played a vital role in the development of modern medicine (Fisher et al, 1999). With the current popularity of traditional herbal supplements, coupled with recent scientific legitimacy in the use of some herbs, more people are returning to herbal treatments for both themselves and their animals. Medicinal herbs with anti-inflammatory, anti-microbial, immunomodulatory and/or analgesic properties are used in a therapeutic way to treat inflammatory conditions and acute infections (Hart, 2004).

This study looked at the possibility of captive wolves using provided medicinal herbs for the purpose of self-medication. The medicinal herbs chosen have specific properties which are known to have potential benefit to humans and included rosemary, thyme, spearmint and fennel.

All three wolf packs living at the UK Wolf Conservation Trust were involved in this study. Wolf-proof planters were constructed to protect the herbs so that they could be accurately measured whilst allowing the wolves' access to a proportion of the plant. The herbs were placed in each enclosure for one week, one at a time, in a random order. Over a period of 10 weeks the wolves were exposed to each herb twice. The dimensions were taken when planted and again at the end of the week before the plants were changed, the differences in these measurements were used to gauge the consumption of each herb by each pack of wolves. These measurements allowed for comparisons between herb species and preferences between wolf packs. The wolves

live in three, natural enclosures measuring approximately 2 acres in size; each enclosure is laid to grass with a range of native trees and bushes, including apple and pear trees. Wild flowers are also encouraged to grow in the enclosures which allow them to be as natural as possible.

The results showed that there was a significant level of interest in the herbs provided with the greatest interest shown in rosemary. Each of the packs took an equal interest overall, and the interest shown on the first occasion was equal to the interest shown on the second.

It was the older wolves (North American Pack) that showed the most interest in the breadth of herbs offered which was interesting as, because of age and health problems; they potentially had the most to gain. This result was unexpected as it could be considered more usual for younger animals to be more adventurous in what they try; this study has shown the opposite with the youngest (Canadian) pack taking least interest in the herbs. The European pack showed a greater interest in mint than the North American pack but an equal amount of interest in fennel. The Canadian pack only showed interest in rosemary and thyme.

Having no significant difference in interest between the packs could link to the idea behind zoopharmacognosy, as suggested by Rodriguez and Wrangham in 1993, that animals will experiment with different plants, motivated by the desire to reduce symptoms of disease or injury that they may possess. The wolves could, in the course of this experiment, have been sampling the herbs provided, possibly motivated by scent, to



Checking rosemary dimensions

better understand the new additions to their enclosures. This is enforced by observations made by staff and volunteers from the UK Wolf Conservation Trust as the wolves were only seen interacting with the herbs during the first two days after they were planted in the enclosure; no observations were made during the latter half of the week.

Unfortunately, due to the lack of previous research on self-medication in wolves or any other large carnivore; or research into the use of the medicinal herbs given to the wolves during this study, on animals in general, it is not possible to link the wolves' preferences for the herbs with their current medical conditions. This study, on the whole, achieved its main aim providing original evidence that it may be possible that large carnivores such as wolves do use medicinal plants in self-medication. The methodology adopted is unique to this study and has proven to be an effective way of measuring the consumption of each herb by the three wolf packs.

This was a relatively small study, on a small sample of captive wolves, over a short period of time, using only a tiny selection of the world's medicinal plants.

A long term study would provide the opportunity to investigate these findings further; it is only through such a study that evidence can be gathered to confirm whether there is a connection between the plants provided and the wolves that choose to consume them.

With further research this could change the way that carnivores, particularly non-obligate carnivores, are kept in captivity; these studies could impact on the types of enrichment provided for such animals, encouraging zoos and other animal collections to provide specific plants on the basis that the animals will use them in self-medication when needed.

Bibliography - full details of all publications referenced can be found in the full version at [www.ukwolf.org](http://www.ukwolf.org) along with a full version of the dissertation paper.

*Victoria J. Allison-Hughes  
BSc Upper 2nd Honours  
Animal Science & Management  
(Royal Agricultural College,  
Cirencester)*

*Victoria is currently applying for funding in preparation for starting her MSc in Wildlife Biology and Conservation in September 2010.*

# 15 YEARS AT THE UK

This year, the UK Wolf Conservation Trust celebrates 15 amazing years. Tsa Palmer, founding director, takes a look at the challenges faced by the Trust, ongoing project support, and plans for the future.



## NEW WEBSITE LAUNCHED

In order to mark the celebration of 15 years since the founding of the UK Wolf Conservation Trust in May 1995, we are launching a new website at the end of May. The Trust is truly indebted to the hard work of the volunteers on the website committee, Darren Prescott and Clive Longbottom who, with their expertise and tireless efforts, have made this possible. Under the direction of Anne Carter this website has been completely written in-house and therefore has cost the Trust very little. We know that it has been long overdue and we hope that you all enjoy the new layout and photos of the wolves and the new video clips, as well as finding the site easier to search for wolf events and news at the Trust. In addition, there will be a lot of wolf information on the site.

## BIRTHDAY CAKE AT TRUST OPEN DAY

We are also planning to celebrate our 15th anniversary year with the wolves on our Open Day on 31st May. We shall have a large birthday cake which will be edible for wolves. As many of them have their birthdays in May we think this will be particularly appropriate! Please do come along and see them eat their cake if you can. We are lucky enough to have Marco Musiani at the Trust on the 31st May launching the second book in the series of A New Era for Wolves and People which is called The World of Wolves: New perspectives on Ecology, Behaviour and Management (see a review of the book on page 18). Marco will be here most of the day to talk to people and to sign books, as will Sue Shimeld the talented artist who is responsible for the wonderful illustrations of wolves in the book. We will also have huskies, birds of prey, pond-dipping and reptiles, as well as many other nature-based activities for children to do.

## 15 YEARS OF ACHIEVEMENTS

The Trust has much to be proud of in its first 15 years. Having built the three new large enclosures a number of years ago, the volunteers have worked tirelessly in planting trees, making ponds, mounds, platforms and many features for the wolves to have a high standard of living!

Our current six wolves are very relaxed and happy in these enclosures and have really benefited from the extra space, shade and stimulation that they provide.

The revamping of the former volunteer building and its transformation into an Education Centre in 2007, then the building of the lower observation platform, have realised most of our ambitions.

With the acquisition of a further 23 acres of adjacent farmland in 2005 the Trust now has 50 acres for the wolves to walk on and enjoy. The surrounding fields are home to breeding kites, buzzards, pheasants and owls as well as hare, deer, foxes and badgers. The wolves are never short of smells on their walks and on many occasions one of these animals is startled by the wolves and the handlers have to hang on tight! Visitor walks with the wolves now take place on site. We have opened up nature trails and have dug a pond in which children can pond-dip. All of this extra land has made our open days possible and we have been able to open our doors to the general public. In 2004 we were able to have about 4,000 people on site per year - in 2010 we had over 10,000.

## WOLF BREEDING SUCCESS

Of course our biggest achievement was in 1999 breeding Lunca, Latea and Alba, and their sister Luana who went to Paradise Park. These are the first European wolves to have been born in the UK since wolves were extirpated in the 1500s and it means that we have both North American and European wolves to show our visitors. Our current six wolves are a credit to the Trust and the Canadian pack, Torak, Mosi and Mai are undertaking most of the ambassadorial work, as well as Duma who is as charismatic as ever.

Another major highlight for the Trust was the production of a DVD with young Mosi, Mai and Torak as the stars, called Ambassadors of the Wild, which showed the Trust's work, especially in Europe with the projects we support. Since 2005 we have managed to send over £80,000 to support wolf projects in Armenia, Greece,

# KWCT

Bulgaria, Croatia, Ethiopia, South Kazakhstan, Latvia, USA, France and Russia as well as building up funds should the wolves ever have to leave their site in Beenham.

## EDUCATION AT THE TRUST

Our education programme has come on in leaps and bounds - in 2006 Toni Shelbourne was appointed Education Officer and raised the profile of our education activities. She has delivered exciting and innovative education initiatives for children and adults alike. When the new education room opened she soon welcomed schools, colleges, dog trainers and other such interested groups to well-presented talks and lectures on all aspects of wolves and their behaviour. This programme is now assisted by Vicky Hughes who joined the team as assistant education officer in 2008.

## OVERSEAS PROJECTS

Vicky piloted the student exchange scheme in September 2007 as she was then a student who volunteered at the Trust. The Trust has been sponsoring the Balkani Wildlife Society for many years and the newly built Large Carnivore Education Centre at Vlahi, in the Pirin Mountains, now accepts students on a regular basis. Eight students sponsored by the Trust have been there, experiencing at first hand the wolf research as well as the day to day work in looking after and tending animals at the centre which include wolves, a bear and Karakachan Herd Protection Dogs.

## WOLF PRINT KEEPS YOU ENTERTAINED

Wolf Print, the Trust's flagship magazine, is up-to-date and informative with wolf experts from around the world contributing alongside news from the Trust. It is probably the most widely-read wolf magazine in Europe, if not the world and we hope to sell this in the public domain in the near future.

## THE FUTURE

Wolf conservation is as important today as it was 20 or 30 years ago. Wolves continue to face a harsh life in many parts of the world and the battle is not yet



won for human/wolf co-existence and tolerance. Education is the key tool in helping to change attitudes and behaviours towards wolves and other large carnivores. The UKWCT will continue to develop its education programmes and reach out to as many people as possible through our own education initiatives and supporting other programmes throughout Europe and the rest of the world. We hope to achieve this and more in the next 15 years.

Tsa Palmer  
Director

### Pictures

This page from top:

- The Trust's nine wolves in 2006
- Kenai
- Roger Palmer with Alba, Lunca, Latea, Duma and Dakota, in the days when these wolves lived as one pack
- Torak, Mosi and Mai
- Children's author Michelle Paver with fans, Trust volunteers and Duma at the new pool © Newbury Weekly News

Opposite:

- Denali

Background picture:

- Duma, by Darren Prescott



# Conservation in practice: a portrait of the reality

## UKWCT EXCHANGE STUDENT PETE HASWELL REPORTS

**W**hen we think of conservation work in the field, we tend to imagine it being rather straightforward. We imagine government and local support of such moral efforts to help protect endangered species, with legislation put in place to aid this process. We imagine that a team of biologists are given funding and support in order to go about their research making a positive difference to the animals or habitats they aim to conserve. Unfortunately in practice it is not so simple.

**D**uring late 2009 I spent three months in the mountain village of Vlahi in Bulgaria volunteering on a large carnivore conservation project run singlehandedly by biologist Elena Sedefchevi (except for the help of occasional volunteers and workers on her husband Sider's rare livestock breeds project). I went out as part of the UK Wolf Conservation Trust's student exchange project to learn about the reality of working in the field. Elena, although having colleagues (Balkani Wildlife Society) working with other large carnivores, is currently the only biologist in Bulgaria conducting field research with wolves. The government have refused numerous applications to protect the wolf in Bulgaria; they are seen by most as plentiful pests. Forestry estimates of the wolf population range at over double the figures thought to

be more accurate by biologists (approx 700-900 Wolves). The lack of support from the government makes conservation very difficult. The project in recent years had funding from "LIFE", but this was cut due to a lack of government support which is ludicrous considering they require funding to gather evidence in order to change government policies. During my time in Bulgaria a member of the Swiss government contacted Elena to find out her views of his idea to export Swiss wolves to Bulgaria as they were becoming too numerous. I think this summarises the lack of knowledge regarding wolves in some governments nicely.

### A lack of government support leaves wolves unprotected in Bulgaria.

A lack of government support and appropriate legislation leaves wolves unprotected in Bulgaria. Although restricted to rifles as the sole method of termination, many wolves suffer other fates and the policing of such incidents is very lax. Very early on in my stay we received a tip-off from Elena's friend who happens to be mayor of a town called Oshtavo. Two adult wolves, a male and female, were retrieved from hunters by Elena and myself for data collection. This was a difficult situation which Elena handled in a relaxed manner and managed to retrieve the bodies, explaining that this saves the hunter disposing of them as the law requires at a special facility; this,



Herd protection dog



Education building showing slingshot marks on left side

however, rarely happens in practice. Elena had her suspicions as to the methods of the wolves' deaths with stories of their demise seeming far-fetched with slip-ups by the tellers, known hunters in the area. The stomach contents of the wolves was taken and analysed. It turned out that the wolves were illegally poisoned. Elena reported her findings to the mayor expecting him to deal with the problem on a local level without her losing future chances of retrieving wolves from hunters for analysis. The mayor, however, responded very angrily and was unhappy that we had conducted post mortems; he now refuses to give Elena

## It turned out the wolves were illegally poisoned.

future information about wolves brought in that could potentially be analysed. Although the wolves had been culled using an illegal method, the lack of support from local authorities and solidarity of local people makes it difficult for prosecutions to actually take place.

The two adult wolves were thought to be of the Rabish pack, local to the Pirin Mountains surrounding Vlahi. A few weeks later a dead wolf cub, less than a year old, still with milk teeth and weighing only 13kg, was brought to the centre by our shepherds. It transpired that the cub had attempted to attack the livestock and the Karakachan guarding dogs had done their job and killed the cub. We strongly suspect that it was the offspring of the two poisoned adults. Left with no parents to help guide in decisions of when, where and which prey to hunt, the cub made a fatal error in attacking the livestock. The guard dogs since introduced have not lost a single sheep or goat to carnivores when the dogs have stayed with the herd. Although the loss of the wolf cub was sad it shows the effectiveness of the dogs as a method for the coexistence of large carnivores and livestock herders. Another cub from the Rabish pack was reportedly trapped by hunters in the local area only to have escaped upon their return to the trapping site. Wolf scats were found by Elena and me in the Rabish pack's territory which either indicates dispersing wolves, or possibly wolves locating to the area to fill the void left by the removal of the adults, so wolves have not been completely eradicated from the area.

Interestingly livestock such as cattle and horses are often left to graze unprotected by dogs or shepherds. In general most of

## The large carnivore centre provides employment and revenue for the local area.

the farmers I have encountered neither hate nor like the wolf; they simply accept its existence. They accept that they will lose animals to large carnivores, it's just the way it has always been. Many don't even bother to collect compensation from various schemes put in place by conservation charities. The main opposition that the conservation project faces on a local scale is from hunters. During my stay the centre's carnivore building suffered vandalism by slingshot (imitating bullet holes). This is suspected to have been carried out by local hunters who had previously illegally killed a bear in the area and who oppose the involvement of the centre in the legal protection of the bear in Bulgaria. A fox tail trimmed of its red hairs to appear like a wolf tail was also found by me hung outside the captive wolves' enclosure. Many of the guard dogs have also been killed by hunters and one disappeared the same day the fox tail appeared and this is suspected to have been the action of hunters. These are all tactics used by the local hunting group in an attempt to bully Elena and Sider into abandoning their work which opposes the unscrupulous behaviour of the hunters who are known to be very trigger happy. Fortunately, the large carnivore centre and Sider's rare breed projects (Semperviva) provide a lot of employment and revenue for the local area; he and Elena are very popular figures amongst the rest of the local population.

My main conservation activities in Bulgaria centred on the radio tracking of a wild wolf named Tipik who had migrated away from the Pirin Mountains, and settled in a neighbouring range. After tracking Tipik for almost three months he disappeared. After trying for over a week to locate him we got a mortality signal, signifying his death. After much tracking we retrieved his radio collar which was found dumped in the Strumyani River, south west of Vlahi. After tip-offs and inquiring with local people we also managed to retrieve his discarded body lacking skin and head, clearly taken for the £50 bounty the forestry commission dispenses. Days previously we had also retrieved a female skin which had been dumped in a garbage container outside the Strumyani forestry agency after the bounty had been collected. We suspect this to have been Tipik's mate. Tipik, a very healthy wolf

estimated to weigh 43kg, with highly developed testes, was becoming ready for the breeding season; unfortunately he and his mate were denied the opportunity to raise a family of what would surely have been very healthy cubs.

Although this article paints a gloomy picture it is important to realise the difficulty of conservation work especially involving a species as persecuted as the wolf. It is to the credit of biologists like Elena who constantly work against such opposition and tragic incidents such as those detailed in this article. I am overwhelmed by their commitment to such causes and am inspired by how much they are willing to deal with and yet still do not give in and keep fighting. It is people such as these who we have to thank for the current and continued existence of many vulnerable species.

*Peter Haswell - Bsc Upper 2nd Honours Environmental Science (Biodiversity and Conservation) from University of Southampton.*

Pete is currently working towards his Masters and will hopefully be working with Josip Kusak in Croatia, a project which the UKWCT also supports. See pages 15 & 26 for more information on Croatia.



# Making Tracks

wolves in the media and the arts

## NICK MACKMAN

was born in 1972 in Beverley, Yorkshire. After taking a foundation course in art and design at York College of Art and Technology, she went on to study ceramics at Carmarthenshire College of Technology and Art, for which she was awarded a distinction and achieved 'Student of the Year 1993'. Her study of ceramics continued at the University of Wales Institute in Cardiff. During her formative years she developed a great love for animals, especially dogs. She began by expressing this love on canvas until she discovered the wonders of clay and began specialising in animal modelling, during which time she worked



as a rhino keeper in Chester Zoo. This inspirational experience allowed her to get involved with a wide variety of species and to watch, touch and study the nature of animals intimately.

Nick now concentrates on both domestic and wild animals. She details the mannerisms and character of animals through sketches and photography with reference to, and research from, books, magazines and wildlife documentaries. She enjoys exploring the day-to-day life of an animal, from scratching, sniffing and stretching to subtle courtships and intimate gestures between mother and child. Nick Mackman says of her work: "When making an animal, I first consider the character of the animal, such as the pride and grace in the giraffe, and try to emulate this through its stance, movement and expression. Some of my animals are relatively unknown or highly endangered. It is with these animals that I try to bridge the gap in current public perception. I aim to enlighten people to the beauty, humour and tenderness of those animals that are largely seen or represented as purely aggressive, dangerous or ugly. Above all, I hope that humankind will feel the individuality of each animal and appreciate its intrinsic beauty. The passion which powers my work has evolved from my



awareness, awe and wonder of the strangeness of the animal kingdom and its complex survival structures and systems. I hope that my pieces will encourage understanding and compassion from the human individual which in turn will result in a deeper level of enjoyment, respect and admiration for the beauty in the beast." The material for Nick Mackman's pieces is T-material, the strongest clay type, with paper pulp which gives a strong but lightweight result. Occasionally she uses papier-mâché on delicate extremities as it lends itself well to clay and has the great advantage of being unbreakable.

Collectors of her work include: Dame Judi Dench, John Cleese, John Nettles, Chris Packham, June Whitfield and Sir John Mills.

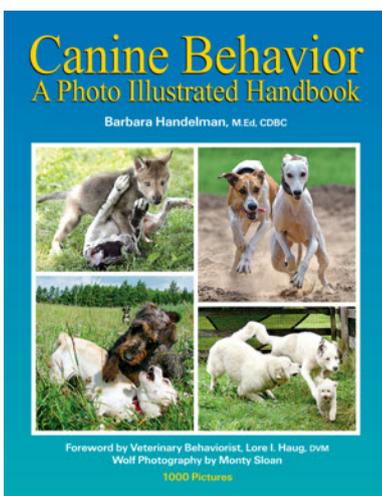
Nick is based near Okehampton in Devon; for more information about her and her work visit her website: [www.nickmackman.com](http://www.nickmackman.com)

## CANINE BEHAVIOR

### A Photo Illustrated Handbook

Barbara Handelman, M.Ed, CDBC

Paperback, 345pp, £25.00, 21.5cm x 28cm  
ISBN 978-1-55238-269-1



This is an immensely interesting and informative book packed full of mainly black and white photos of dogs, wolves, and other animals, in action. In some ways it bears a resemblance to the Ethology handbooks showing body positions of wolves to indicate their mood. However, this book goes much deeper and the photos of actual animals demonstrating innumerable behaviours are not only educational but fascinating to dog owners, trainers, breeders and aficionados of wolves alike. The comparison of wolf and dog behaviour patterns is strikingly similar.

The beautiful photos draw you into the book and then, intrigued as to what an animal's behaviour signifies you will find yourself engrossed in the explanation and eager to read more. Also included are photos of wolves from Wolf Park by renowned photographer Monty Sloan (who is also featured opposite).

The author has been a clinical mental health counsellor for forty years, much of her early work focusing on relationship therapy with non-verbal children and leading her to become a careful observer of human body language. This led to studying the ways that dogs use their bodies to communicate and many of the photos in the book are of her own dogs.

The author is a Certified Dog Behaviour Consultant and for the last twenty years has had a second career as a professional photographer.

The book is a great read, an education, a joy to look at, and is well worth buying. There is even a quiz at the back so that you can test your knowledge of 'Canine Behavior'! It is available from the [www.ukwolf.org](http://www.ukwolf.org) on line shop.

Angela Barrow

# MONTY SLOAN

**IMAGES OF WOLVES** have been captured on film and digitally by wildlife photographer - make that Wolf photographer - Monty Sloan. Monty has been photographing wolves since 1984 and has worked professionally as staff photographer at Wolf Park in Indiana, USA since 1988. However, he has been taking photographs nearly his entire life. His website [www.wolfphotography.com](http://www.wolfphotography.com) provides the ultimate resource for images of the wolf. The good selection of images on the wolfphotography website include true-to-life images in both colour and artistic black and white; photographic prints are available that depict everything from beautiful portraits to hunting, howling, numerous social interactions and even pups, as well as artistically created images using a number of original photos. Although the site is mostly wolves, Monty has started posting images of other animals and future plans are to include some of landscapes, sunsets and other nature photographs. For the camera enthusiasts Monty currently uses a 16MP Canon EOS 1Ds Mark II digital camera. Before he went digital in autumn 2001, he used a Nikon F5 and before that a Nikon F4. Some of his early work was done with a number of different Nikon cameras and lenses.



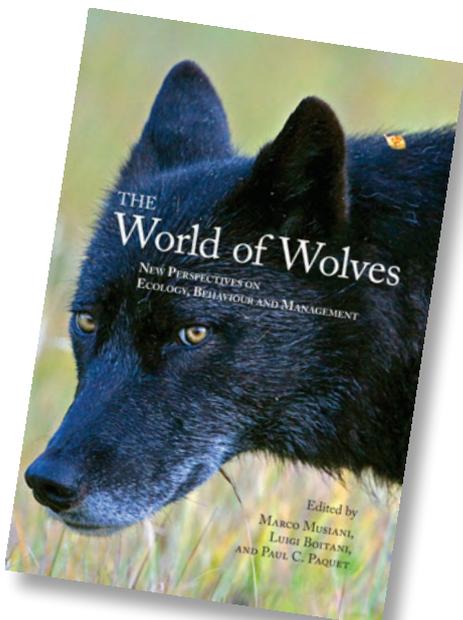
Monty also runs photo seminars at Wolf Park in March, April and in the autumn when the wolves look their best; for most of the seminars participants have Wolf Park to themselves. Monty has been photographing the wolves at Wolf Park since they were pups, so they are experienced models as well as being well socialised. For further information: [http://www.wolfpark.org/photo\\_seminar.html](http://www.wolfpark.org/photo_seminar.html)



## THE WORLD OF WOLVES New Perspectives on Ecology, Behaviour and Management

Edited by Marco Musiani, Luigi Boitani  
and Paul Paquet

Paperback, 352pp, 15.3cm x 22.8cm  
ISBN 978-1-55238-269-1



**T**he grey wolf is one of the world's most polarizing and charismatic species. Respected, adored, or held in awe by many as an icon of wilderness, wolves have also sparked fear and hatred when they have come into conflict with human presence. Not surprisingly, they are one of the most intensively studied mammalian species in the wild.

*The World of Wolves* offers a fresh and provocative look at current trends in wolf and wildlife management. Representative case studies, from geographically and culturally diverse areas of the world, highlight the existing interconnections between wolves, their prey, their habitat, their ecosystems and people, and the role of science in policy formation and wolf management. In addition, the studies involve many issues, for example population genetics and livestock husbandry practices, that are entry points into larger aspects of ecology and evolution. This book will appeal to conservationists, scientists, wildlife managers, and anyone seeking a better understanding of wolves and their co-existence with us.

This is the second book in the New Era for Wolves and People series which the UK Wolf Conservation Trust has contributed to.

It is available, along with the first book, from the [www.ukwolf.org](http://www.ukwolf.org) on line shop.

**Marco Musiani**, PhD, is an assistant professor of landscape ecology at the University of Calgary and is also affiliated with the University of Montana. He was born in Rome, the city of the famous she-wolf, and has conducted research and published internationally on wolf management.

**Luigi Boitani** is the head of the Department of Animal and Human Biology at the University of Rome, and a leading authority on wolves. He has conducted an extended series of research and conservation projects on the Italian wolf population, which has recovered dramatically in the last thirty years. He has authored more than two hundred peer-reviewed scientific publications and eight books.

**Paul Paquet**, PhD, is an adjunct professor with the Faculties of Biology and of Environmental Design at the University of Calgary. He has studied wolves for more than thirty-five years, is considered an authority on carnivore ecology, and was the founder and director of the Central Rockies Wolf Project in Canmore, Alberta.

Three European  
wolves from the  
UK Wolf  
Conservation  
Trust joined  
Wildwood Centre,  
now Wildwood  
Trust, in 1999.  
This is their story.

# The Wolves

*Wolves must be the most iconic  
and charismatic of all the  
lost animals of Britain.*

People who see them for the first time often use the word 'spiritual' to describe them and, if you are trying to tell the story of the wildlife of this tiny island, wolves are a key part of it.

This is why we were so keen to see wolves return to our Kentish woodland, both to try to show people what we have lost through our ancestors' actions, and also as a terrible example of how much more we stand to lose if we continue to destroy wild places and the animals that live there.

The three UKWCT European wolves - male Apollo with females Luna and Athena - came to the then Wildwood Centre, an innovative project set up in 1999 to tell the story of a Kentish woodland and the animals and people that had inhabited it over the last 1,000 years. This became Wildwood Trust - a British wildlife conservation charity - in 2002 and is now home to most native mammal species past and present, reptiles, amphibians and many birds. It is a visitor centre for the public, a centre for the conservation and captive breeding of UK endangered species, is pioneering the use of wild horses in habitat management schemes across Kent and developing a growing reputation in wildlife education and research.

*The three wolves settled in quickly,  
enjoying the cover offered by mature  
sweet chestnut coppice.*

The three wolves settled in quickly, enjoying the cover offered by mature sweet chestnut coppice, silver birch and oak trees which dominate our site in the Blean Forest, (one of the largest woodlands left in southern England), and digging dens and surface scrapes in the woodland floor. My first impression on seeing them was that this must have been what people long ago would have seen - just a shadowy movement between the trees before you realised you were being watched, one half of a wolf's wary face just visible behind the tree, one paw, one shoulder showing - nothing more to give it away. Wonderful!

Winter 1999/2000 was exceptionally wet in southern England and the woodland was often waterlogged or flooded. We built houses on stilts for the wolves and filled

Luna

them with fresh straw, which they resolutely ignored, preferring to be out in the open in their scrapes.

In spring 2000 Luna, the dominant female, became pregnant and, as the weather improved, she dug an underground den where she gave birth to pups in early May. Unfortunately, two days later torrential overnight thunderstorms flooded the still sodden ground. When staff came in the next morning, the whole woodland was awash. Animal rescues were being mounted everywhere - newborn wild boar piglets were floating in their enclosure, hazel dormice, still hibernating in nests on the woodland floor, had to be scooped up from the muddy floodwaters, dried out and re-housed, and the only sign of the wolf pups was one limp body in Luna's mouth as she paddled through the floodwater.

*One of the newest keepers found herself being unceremoniously turned upside down by the rest of the team, held by her ankles*

Unable to accept the potential outcome of these dreadful conditions, we looked for someone small enough to negotiate a wolf den and tough enough to do so in dark, muddy floodwater. One of the newest keepers was volunteered and found herself being unceremoniously turned upside down by the rest of the team, held by her ankles and dunked in the floods like a biscuit in a cup of tea. We knew roughly where the den was - it just took a little time to find it exactly - and we eventually thrust her into the den mouth with instructions to kick her feet when she needed to breathe. After frustrated attempts to reach the end of the den, it became clear that Luna had prepared for rain and had dug a V-shaped den - we had been ramming our keeper unsuccessfully into the bottom of the V. When she stretched her arms up over her head, she found the other arm of the den continuing and was able to reach along and feel something at the end of it. Grabbing all she could find, she kicked to come out.

Smothered in mud, it was hardly possible to make out the shapes in her arms but these turned out to be pups - two females. Cold, wet, suffering from hypothermia and dehydration, it seems they had huddled in a small air pocket at the far end of the den. Luna must have pulled out one of the pups before the water defeated her, but it had sadly died. The two girls were barely alive.

They were rushed to the vet in the hope that they could be stabilised and rapidly returned to Luna but unfortunately they were very poorly and still being cared for at the surgery when their eyes opened. So, instead of bonding with a grey, shadowy wolf mother in the dark security of the den, they bonded under fluorescent lights with the vet, one of the few men that they still welcome eagerly today. By the time they were well enough to rejoin us, they were thoroughly imprinted and uninterested in their parents, who in turn would have nothing to do with them. After several attempts to reunite them, we were advised to abandon any hopes of putting them back together and to hand rear the two girls. They were sent initially to a wolf expert who'd hand-reared pups previously - as a new organisation we had no pup rearing experience and these were far too precious to practise on - before coming back to us at about six weeks old.

Nadja and Michka, given Romanian girls' names in deference to their Eastern European ancestry, now became Wildwood celebrities. Visitors still remember them walking round the park on little red leads, meeting everyone, playing tug o' war with their succession of teddy bears and generally delighting and charming everyone with their inquisitiveness and exuberance,

*Walking the girls was a military exercise*

while leaving everyone in their wake covered in increasingly large muddy prints and slobber. As they grew bigger and stronger, they went for walks in the woods outside, hunting bank voles along the rides and stripping bramble bushes of their fruit. Walking the girls was a military exercise - one keeper per wolf plus scouts to watch out for potential incidents, asking walkers to put their dogs on a lead as we went past - Nadja and Michka showed a deep interest in toy breeds - and asking cyclists to dismount until we had passed by. There is nothing a wolf likes more than the sight of a man in white cycling shorts pedalling furiously ahead - if your dog likes chasing cars, you'll appreciate the wolves' reaction to those legs trundling round and round! Several times we'd get towed through nettle stands and over log piles by an enthusiastic wolf hunting a bicycle as its red-faced owner ignored calls to stop and let the wolves go past! Sadly, all this came to an end once the girls turned three years old. They'd always had favourite keepers and others that they knew less well. They now started to reject people

who had not been with them regularly since they were pups and we could no longer bring them out to meet the public. So an enclosure was built for them, next to the main wolf pack, and here they have remained, wonderful ambassadors for their wild cousins, friendly, tails waving and ears crinkled, banishing all thoughts of Little Red Riding Hood.

Next door are the rest of their family. We still have Apollo, a grizzled and arthritic father of the pack, his son Akela (born to Athena a few weeks after Nadja and Michka), daughter Amber (born 2002) and son Io (2004). Athena, who was always picked on, went to Norfolk Wildlife Park with two offspring in 2005. Luna sadly died the same year. For nights afterwards, the pack's individual lilting calls to her, one wolf after another, stopping and listening for her reply, were heartbreaking.

Midwinter this year at the full moon I ran a guided night tour of the park and it is now that the sense of wildness and history between human and wolf really makes itself

*'The earth's moving',  
one girl whispered, as she  
watched the silent shapes  
melting in and out of the trees.*

felt. In between the dark trees and the silver moonlit ground, the pack slipped from black shadow to shadow. 'The earth's moving,' one girl whispered, as she watched the silent dark shapes melting in and out of the trees. Then Nadja's long, low voice flowed out over the frosty air, Michka chimed in with her higher yip-yipping and every pack member gradually joined in the song. 'How many wolves can you hear?' I asked. Twenty to thirty was the answer. If just six wolves, singing in one small corner of an English woodland, can make people appreciate with a pang just a little of what we have lost and want to take care of what we have left, then our wolves have done an amazing job in converting humans to conservation.

Anne Riddell

*Wildwood Trust is on the A291 between Canterbury and Herne Bay in East Kent. It is open year round (closed for three days over Christmas). Check the website [www.wildwoodtrust.org](http://www.wildwoodtrust.org) for more information.*

*Note from the Editor: Wildwood is well worth a visit. There are great plans afoot to increase the size of the wolves' enclosure in the near future.*

# New wolf merchandise: gifts and souv



## FLEECE GILETS £21.99

Dense, compact pile fleece for improved wearer warmth. Two zipped pockets and elastic draw tie. Embroidered with the UKWCT logo. 100% polyester anti-pill fleece.

Colours: Bright Royal and Classic Red  
 Sizes: XS (34/36"), S (36/38"), M (38/40"), L (40/42"), XL (42/44"), 2XL (44/46")



## UKWCT TEE-SHIRTS £16.00

Cotton crew-neck tee-shirts embroidered with the UKWCT logo to the front and printed with a set of wolf paw prints on the reverse. 100% cotton.

Colours: Slate Grey, Kiwi, Honey, Irish Green  
 Sizes: S (34/36"), M (38/40"), L (42/44"), XL (46/48"), 2XL (50/52")



## THE MOUNTAIN® TEE-SHIRTS £18.00

Cotton crew-neck tee-shirts from the Heart of New England. Pre-washed, pre-shrunk, hand-dyed with eco-friendly water-based dyes. 100% cotton.

Sizes: M (38"), L (40"), XL (45"), 2XL (47")



## UKWCT JUTE SHOPPING BAG £4.25

Stop using those plastic carrier bags and support the UKWCT! Size: 17½ x 14"/45 x 35cm with 4" / 10cm gusset.



## 15TH ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATION MUG £6.50

Porcelain mug to celebrate the 15th anniversary of the founding of the UK Wolf Conservation Trust.

# Souvenirs for family, friends and you.



## UKWCT CANDLES

£8.50

Featuring each of the UKWCT's Canadian pack members Mosi, Mai and Torak with the Trust's name and website on the reverse. Unscented. Gift-wrapped in cellophane with red ribbon bow. Approximately 50 hours burning time. Size: 4 x 3" / 90 x 75mm.

Please state choice of wolf when ordering.



**WOLF COASTERS £2.65 each** Wipe clean coasters Featuring UKWCT wolves. Size: 10cm/4" square. Assorted.



## WOLF CARDS BY LYNDSEY SELLEY

£2.00 each

Beautiful wolf paintings by Lyndsey Selley. The cards are blank inside for your own messages. Size: 20cm x 14.2cm/8x5½". Supplied with envelope.

## PICTISH WOLF £5.50

Pewter pictish wolf pendant 35mm x 30mm with cord (not shown).



## LAPEL PIN £5.00

Pewter howling wolf lapel pin. 30mm x 25mm



## UKWCT LANYARD £2.95

Ideal for your conferences or security cards.



# Les Loup Du Gevaudan

## Darren Prescott visits a French wolf centre



stone-built buildings which have been converted into gîtes, a quintessentially French form of self-catering. This proved an ideal (and cheap) way of seeing the wolf centre, for you can buy a pass allowing unlimited access to the wolf centre for the duration of your stay.

Several years ago Darren Prescott, wolf handler at the UKWCT, came across a brochure in a French tourist office advertising a large wolf centre in the south of France. This year he decided to pay a visit, with a view to seeing how a wolf centre works in an area that's just started seeing wild wolves for the first time in decades.

**THE WOLF CENTRE** advertises itself as having over 100 wolves in "semi liberty", set over 50 acres. By my reckoning that makes it one of the biggest wolf centres in the world.

The first thing of note is that the site is in the middle of nowhere, albeit not far from a (newly-built) motorway that bisects the département. The wolf centre sits halfway up a mountain, around 1100m above sea-level. This affords excellent views across the surrounding countryside and it's not hard to imagine wild wolves slinking amongst the wooded mountainside.

The wolf centre is based around the hamlet of Saint-Lucie, which consists of several

Very little English was spoken in the whole area, thus it was a bit of an adventure! My GCSE French was pushed to its limits as I worked around the deposit and various "house rules" - but a few minutes later I was in the Gîte de Grand Vincent, unpacking.

It was late in the day and the wolf centre itself was about to close, so I postponed my first visit until the following day. I woke a few times in the night and indeed I heard howling - sadly, only the wind!

**AFTER A LONG NIGHT** it was time to enter the wolf centre itself. Beyond a large set of gates surmounted by iron wolves was a modern, airy building with a reception desk, café, shop and wooden decking viewing platform, overlooking their Polish wolf pack. There was also a side exit to their (deserted) museum, which rivals the International Wolf Center in terms of size and scope. Amongst dozens (if not hundreds) of photos, there are information boards giving all sorts of facts and figures about wolves, a small cinema, a separate video area, viewing windows and a special "wolf den" for children.

Back out into the light of day and the first wolves you'll see are the Polish wolves, a massive pack with around 27 animals in an enclosure of a few acres in size. Just up from there are the new arrivals for 2009, a small pack of five Arctic wolves. These, like all their wolves, aren't socialised, but if you crouch down by the fence I found they'll come right up and observe you - wolves are curious creatures, after all!

Further along the (hilly) path are Siberian wolves, again in a long enclosure. I'm not sure how many of these they had as they





were very elusive, making good use of the heavily wooded hillside to hide from view. The Mongolian wolves were similarly hard to spot; they were in the largest enclosure in the park. Next up were the North American wolves, a mixed pack containing everything from black to light grey wolves, all of the c. *I. occidentalis* subspecies - the same as the UKWCT's North American wolves. These wolves seemed the friendliest around people, with one of the workers feeding them treats through the fence during one of their guided tours. The route ended with a children's play area and (opposite) a large area of decking overlooking the Polish wolves.

I spent most of the rest of that day in Marvejols, the nearby fortified town. It's a quaint and compact town (reminding me very much of Canterbury for some reason) and wolves feature prominently. There was a fountain with wolves spurting water from their mouths, a variety of shops including the P'tit Loup Pizza restaurant and a large (stuffed) wolf mounted in their tourism office. In the centre of the town is a large iron statue of a wolf, commemorating the legendary "Beast of Gévaudan" - an especially ferocious wolf that caused much damage hundreds of years ago. Refreshingly, wolves are seen in a positive light in the area, a marked change from the eastern area of Lozère where wolves are intensely disliked by many in the rural areas. I managed to get back in time for a whirlwind second visit of the wolf centre, just prior to their closing.

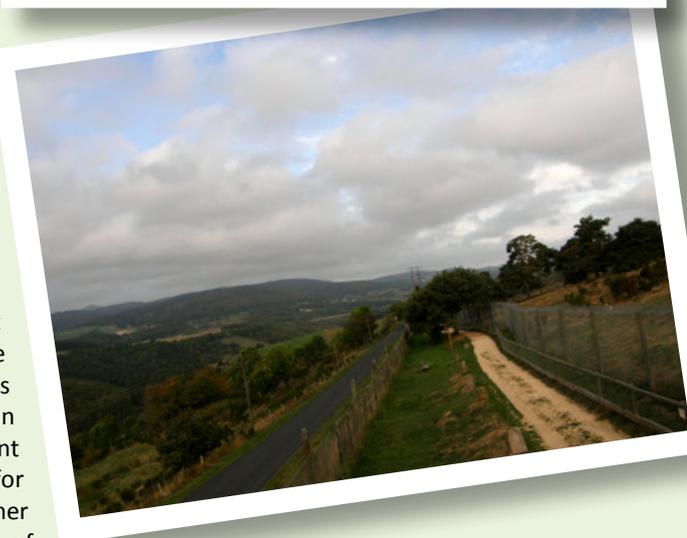
That night I woke around 1am and, on a whim, opened the window and pulled back the heavy shutters. I was rewarded by a moonlit vista, the wind whipping around the stone house and - yes - a low, mournful howling. It was shortly joined by more wolves and I spent a surreal ten minutes or so listening to the howling and rallying. Despite the massive number of wolves on site, it sounded like only a dozen or so howling (and in reality, probably less than that due to the way harmonics work with

wolf howls). It turns out that the wolves seldom howl, maybe once or twice a night at most and usually during the winter half of the year. It seems the UKWCT wolves are much noisier in comparison!

**THE FOLLOWING DAY** I headed out to explore the rest of the local area (there are lots of caves nearby, along with the picturesque Tarn Gorge). In the afternoon I arrived back and to my delight it was feeding time. This consisted of the keepers driving around on a flat-bed truck and hurling large chunks of meat over the fences to the wolves. It seems in France the keepers can't enter enclosures - it was made illegal in 1998. It was fascinating to see the behaviour of the wolves, as there's far more competition than with ours; there was a dominant male in the Polish pack, for example, who kept chasing other wolves from the biggest chunks of meat even though he was satiated and had no use for them.

**ALL TOO SOON** though closing time came around and it was time to leave. The following morning dawned with torrential rain and as the "check out" time of the gîte was an hour before the park opened I decided to get a head start on my journey to Lyon, the second part of the break.

Overall the park seemed excellent; the wolves looked happy and contented and I saw no pacing on any of the three visits there. It was also interesting seeing the different types of Eurasian wolf, as they're quite distinct from each other. Unsurprisingly, our European wolves seem closest to the Polish pack in terms of appearance, no surprise given their mother Luna's eastern European heritage.



I'd highly recommend a visit but if you plan to visit I'd suggest brushing up on your French - it's a world away from areas such as Calais!

<http://www.loupsdugevaudan.com/>

Darren Prescott

All photos by Darren Prescott

Opposite:  
Top: Polish wolves  
Bottom: entrance to the park

This page from top:  
Polish wolf  
Polish wolf  
Arctic wolf  
Local countryside

# RECENT UKWCT DONATIONS TO WOLF PROJECTS

## GREECE: £6500

*Human Dimensions: Working with rural people toward conservation of wolves and brown bears in the trans-border area of Greece, Bulgaria and Albania*



*Alistair Bath in Greece, looking at bear fencing*

An initial research trip funded by UKWCT (£2000) organised in September 2009 began the process of listening to the various interest groups about their concerns regarding wolves and brown bears in northern Greece. Meetings with local politicians, shepherds, biologists and one of the key conservation groups in the area, Callisto, were conducted. The objective was to share with groups the nature of what a human dimensions project could offer and to explore interest amongst the various

groups in possibly working together, the first step in any human dimension effort. One of the key issues is the loss of carnivores, particularly brown bears more so than wolves, because of new highway infrastructure through large carnivore habitat. While efforts have been made to build green bridges (areas where large carnivores can safely cross the highway), there have still been bear-vehicle collisions due to inadequate fencing on parts of the highway. This initial visit provided opportunities to view the habitat, become familiar with the key issues, meet some of the key players and gauge interest in working together toward solutions. Charilaos Pilidis, a representative of Callisto accompanied Alistair Bath acting as driver, translator and colleague during this initial exploratory research trip. The positive news is a willingness to develop a cooperative project that will help better engage local people in conservation efforts toward wolves and brown bears.

In March 2010, the UKWCT contributed an additional 7000 euros to this initiative to begin the data collection, support travel expenses and local salaries to understand and address the key issues of the local people in northern Greece in this trans-border area near Bulgaria and Albania. These funds will further assist Callisto in its

conservation efforts in the region. Alistair is going to begin to explore attitudes and beliefs of rural Greek residents toward wolves in an area of a proposed trans-boundary park between Bulgaria, Albania and Greece. The area close to the border has bears and wolves, and further south below the 39th parallel wolves do exist but are subject to different management based on EU regulations. The objective would be to better understand the attitudes of local residents so to identify potential "hot spots" of conflict and target these areas with extra conservation efforts (e.g. educational efforts, law enforcement, guardian programs, livestock preventative techniques, etc).

In addition, these monies from the UKWCT will support a different project in Greece focused on evaluating the effectiveness of a new wolf CD produced recently. This would be done using an experimental research design in a variety of schools so to truly assess whether the program has increased knowledge and influenced attitudes. The purpose is not only to evaluate the existing CD but be able to refine messages and produce even better educational efforts that would target messages most directly linked to attitude, and thus more likely to influence positive conservation behaviour.

## CROATIA: £4000



*Setting up sand traps and detectors to monitor the use of the green highways.*

The UKWCT has provided funding to the Croatian Wolf Research Project since 2006. Each year the funding is spent on field work. Radio telemetry is one of most powerful means to reveal the relevant biological features of wolves and lynx, and their prey; roe and red deer. The project also continues to gather data from all other available data sources: dead animals, genetics, fresh scats, prey species situation, and contacts with local inhabitants.

The 2010 action plan for the project is to:

- Continue the radio-tracking of marked wolves and lynx.

- Capture and mark two or three wolves, and one lynx.
- Continue the survey of mortality of both species, as well as their food habits.
- Continue to actively contribute to implementation of lynx and wolf management plans.
- Monitor and implement additional transparency mitigation structures on all transportation routes that cause direct mortality or contribute to habitat fragmentation.
- Continue to track the remaining five (out of initial 10) radio-collared roe deer and red-deer.
- Begin the use of trap cameras to individually distinguish and count lynx. The intention is to introduce this method as official for monitoring lynx distribution and density in the whole lynx range in Croatia.

## ETHIOPIA: £4000



With the support of the UKWCT, the Ethiopian Wolf Conservation Programme has seven wolf monitors in the field at all times, following the wolves and collecting data on their behaviour, breeding success and health. The monitors are the first to spot signs of disease in the various wolf packs, and are able to alert the scientific crew in time for them to take preventative actions. In addition, two vet teams work to vaccinate over 6000 domestic dogs each year in villages surrounding wolf populations. This helps to prevent the spread of rabies to the wolves. The ongoing education programme works with local school children, teaching them the value of conservation and instilling in them a sense of pride and ownership in the afro-alpine in general, and the Ethiopian wolves in particular. They conduct outreach work within the local communities to teach about the dangers of rabies, and encourage locals to vaccinate their dogs.

# Forthcoming events at the UK Wolf Conservation Trust

## Mobility Walk

Thursday, 1st September, 2pm

For those unable to come on our full two hour walks due to mobility issues, we offer special mobility walks at the Wolf Centre. These take place a couple of times a year, usually in the summer half of the year when the ground is firm.

The event starts with a PowerPoint presentation in the education centre and then a short walk around the site, with the chance to meet the wolves up close. There is a large area of gravelled path around the enclosures which allows good viewing of all the wolves.

The wolves are happy around wheelchairs and the events offer an ideal opportunity to see wolves firsthand.

**Cost £75 for two people.** Comes with a year's membership to the UK Wolf Conservation Trust. **Booking essential.**

## Adult Wolf Keeper & Enrichment Days

Thursdays: 21st October, 4th & 11th November, 10am-4pm

If you or someone you know is a wolf lover, then this is a unique experience:

- Accompanied by the wolf keeper you will get up close and personal to the wolves and meet one.
- During the day you will see behind the scenes at the Wolf Trust and shadow the keeper in tasks such as cleaning out the wolf enclosures, preparing and giving medication, and get involved in our wolf enrichment programme.
- All wolf keeper participants receive a souvenir certificate.
- It's a unique opportunity to see the usually unseen parts of life at the Wolf Centre.

Please bring your own packed lunch. Tea, coffee, squash and biscuits are available.

Spaces are limited to make the day really special, so please book early.

**Cost £60 per person (age 16+ only)**

## Predator to Pet Workshop

or Wolf to Woof!

Saturdays\* 26th June, 18th September, 13th November



Join us for an exciting and fast-moving workshop developed in association with Wolf Park of Indiana. You will:

- examine the genetic evidence of the relationship between dogs and wolves
- look at domestication vs socialisation
- learn about the taxonomy of canids
- walk with ambassador wolves, seeing firsthand the ancestor of today's dogs
- receive a gift as a memento of the day

This hands-on workshop will chart the domestication of dogs from their wild roots to the present day... and much more besides.

**Walking with wolves included!**

**£50 per person - places limited - booking essential**

**Tel: 0118 971 3330 Email: ukwct@ukwolf.org**

NEW! Kids' Wolf to Woof Workshop - see below...

\*all workshops start at 10am

## Children's events at Trust

### Kids' Wolf to Woof Workshop

Tuesday, 3rd August, 10am-1pm, 8 years+

Ever wondered how the wild wolf turned into the dog in your living room? Join us on this exciting workshop to find out more. Event includes a wolf walk. **£30 for 1 child and 1 adult** (children must be accompanied). Booking essential.



### Children's Wolf Walks

27th July & 26th August -11am-1pm

Take a walk with the UKWCT wolves. This event includes a short talk and tour of the centre. **£13 per person, 6 years +** Booking essential; limited parent spaces.

### Wolf it Down Picnic

5th August

11am-1pm, 6 years+



How long does it take for a wolf to eat a water melon or savoury ice lolly? Come for a walk with the wolves, bring a picnic to eat, then make some summer treats for the wolves to enjoy, then watch them wolf them all down. It will be lots of fun!

**£15 per person**  
**Booking essential.**

### Children's Wolf Keeper Days

9th & 24th August, 10am-3pm,  
10 years+

Come dressed to get mucky and see what the wolves and their keepers get up to during the day. Take over the job of the Wolf Keeper looking after the wolves. Don't be fooled - it's hard work, but lots of fun!

**£25 per child**  
Spaces are limited to make the day really special.  
**Booking essential.**

### Children's Photo Day

Thursday, 12th August, 10am-1pm, 8 years+

Wolves are charismatic animals, so why not come along to the Trust and learn how to get the best from your camera, as well as having the chance to photograph all six of our wonderful wolves? You will have a talk from photographer Dave Chaplin, followed by photo sessions with each of the wolf packs, where you will receive help and instruction as need to make sure you take away your own photos to remind you of the day.

**£25 for one child accompanied by one adult.**

# WOLF CENTRE OPEN DAYS

and 15th Anniversary Celebrations - Mondays 31st May and 30th August

Look around the Trust and see:

11am-5pm

Latea - by Alvin Yap



- The Trust's Wolves
- *World of Wolves* Book Launch (May)
- Wolves' birthdays & 15th Anniversary Cake
- Reptiles Display (May)
- Creepy Crawlies (August)
- Birds of Prey
- Hug a Husky
- Nature Trail & Quiz
- Pond Dipping
- *CBBC's Sarah Jane Honeywell* (May)
- Children's Activities
- Face Painting
- Bouncy Castle
- BBQ and Ice Creams
- Picnic Tables

Sorry - no dogs allowed on site

ADMISSION: £7 adults (non-members); £5 members, children under 12 & senior citizens; children under 3 FREE.

## Friday Night is Howl Night!

23rd July, 17th September, 29th October,  
19th November and 17th December  
at 7.00pm

If you've ever dreamt of standing near a wolf and hearing it howl, then this is a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to feel your backbone tingle and your ears vibrate with the sound. Learn about wolf communication, howl to the wolves, listen to them howl back.

For information and to book call 0118 971 3330

£10 per person  
Booking required

The UK Wolf  
Conservation Trust  
Butlers Farm, Beenham  
Reading, RG7 5NT  
ukwct@ukwct.org  
www.ukwct.org

Sunday 3rd October

## World Animal Day British Wildlife: lost & living

at the UK Wolf Conservation Trust

11am-5pm

### MARTIN 'WOLFIE' ADAMS

(World Darts Champion)  
Judging the 'Howling  
Competition'

- Collection of taxidermy: British birds & mammals
- Hedge laying demonstration
- British Deer Society
- Secret World wildlife rescue talks and animal display
- Mole catcher talk
- Labrador Lifeline
- Chiltern Hills Falconry demonstration

### MICHELLE PAVER

(Children's author  
and UKWCT Patron)

- Reindeer
- Wild Boar
- Otter talks
- Hug a Husky
- Archery
- Pond Dipping
- Bouncy castle
- Face painting
- BBQ and ice creams
- Refreshments
- Picnic tables

Sorry - no dogs  
allowed on site



### ADMISSION

Family Ticket (2 adults & 2 children up to age 12):

Advanced - £18, on the day - £25;

Adult Ticket: Advanced - £8, on the day - £10;

Child (age 3-12) and Senior Citizens: Advanced - £3, on the day - £5;

Children under 3: Free