



LIFE18 NAT/IT/000972



## **LIFE WOLFALPS EU CONFERENCE 2022**

### **Is the grass always greener elsewhere?**

*Sharing management strategies for the coexistence of wolves and human activities in Europe*

After decades in a precarious state of conservation, the Alpine wolf population is currently growing and recolonizing all the mountain ranges of the Alpine arc. Population growth, geographic expansion and densification of the presence of the species, however, lead to many coexistence challenges for stakeholders in the management of the predator and its impact on human activities. Depredation on domestic herds, predation on wild prey, poaching, cross-border population monitoring, hybridization with dogs and habitat fragmentation are among the most pressing issues for managers and stakeholders in areas of wolf presence in the Alps and elsewhere.

Since the management of the wolf and its impact on human activities is essentially implemented at the national or regional level, its equivalent in neighboring countries is often little known. In this conference, speakers – specialists or managers of the species in each country represented – will detail the methods of wolf management in their respective geographical areas.

**The objective of the conference is to present the complexity of managing the impact of the wolf on human activities in various Alpine countries and elsewhere in Europe.**

## **PROGRAMME**

**December 05, 2022**

- 1. 14h-14h30** – Welcome and opening remarks
- 2. 14h30-14h45** – Introduction and functioning
- 3. 14h45-15h25** – Actions planned in France to facilitate the protection of the wolf while preserving outdoor livestock breeding
- 4. 15h25-16h05** – Wolf management in Italy: old and new challenges from the Apennines to the Alps
- 5. 16h05-16h20** – PAUSE
- 6. 16h20-17h00** – The Austrian Centre for Bear, Wolf and Lynx: working at the science-policy interface



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7. **17h00-17h40** – Good practices and challenges in wolf management in Slovenia
8. **17h40-17h50** – Closing remarks of the first day of the conference

### **December 06, 2022**

1. **09h00-09h40** – Latest attitudes and perceptions about wolves in the Alps
2. **09h40-10h20** – Wolf management in Germany
3. **10h20-11h00** – Wolf management in Spain: consequences of the recent wolf protection
4. **11h00-11h10** – PAUSE
5. **11h10-11h50** – Wolf management in Slovakia: consensus, compromise or constant conflict?
6. **11h50-12h30** – The return of the wolf in France: a 30-year retrospective of their presence in the Mercantour national park
7. **12h30-12h45** – Conclusions and closing remarks

## **PROGRAMME DETAILS**

### **December 05, 2022**

#### **1. 14h-14h30 – Welcome and opening remarks**

Francesca Marucco, Scientific coordinator - LIFE WOLFALPS EU  
Loic Obled, Deputy Director General of Police Knowledge Expertise – OFB  
Aline Comeau, Director- Parc National du Mercantour  
Sophie Vaginay-Ricourt - Barcelonnette Mayor  
Dahalani Mhoumadi, Subprefect - Alpes de Haute Provence 04 department

#### **2. 14h30-14h45 – Introduction and functioning of the conference**

By John THOMPSON, president of the scientific committee of the Mercantour national park, and  
Laure FILLON, journalist (moderators).



### **3. 14h45-15h25 – Actions planned in France to facilitate the protection of the wolf while preserving outdoor livestock breeding**

By Juliette BLIGNY, DREAL AuRA, and Mathieu METRAL, DRAAF AuRA

*In France, the balance between the protection of the wolf, an internationally protected species, and the preservation of the economy linked to outdoor livestock breeding is ensured by means of a National Action Plan which is based on three pillars: protection of livestock, compensation of damages, and derogation allowing for the lethal control of wolves in particular cases. The plan is characterized by governance giving great room to consultation and dialogue, which allows the plan to constantly evolve to reconcile a variety of issues. Knowledge (experiments and research) is also an important axis to inform political decisions and management, a communication strategy then crowning all these actions to explain and share them with stakeholders and the wider public. This presentation will provide an overview of the actions planned in France to facilitate the protection of the wolf while preserving outdoor livestock breeding.*

*This presentation will provide an overview of the key issues for the management of the wolf in Italy, in the different contexts of the country. It will describe the different roles and responsibilities under the Italian legal framework, and will provide a description about the main problems due to the presence of wolves in Italy, from impacts on livestock, to predation on domestic dogs, to the increasing problems caused by wolves in urban contexts, and to the management of hybrids. The presentation will also report on the solutions applied in the country and on the ongoing discussion for revising the national policies on the species.*

### **4. 15h25-16h05 – Wolf management in Italy: old and new challenges from the Apennines to the Alps**

By Piero GENOVESI and Paola ARAGNO, Institute for Environmental Protection and Research (ISPRA), and Francesca MARUCCO, University of Turin and LIFE WOLFALPS EU project

*This presentation will provide an overview of the key issues for the management of the wolf in Italy, in the different contexts of the country. It will describe the different roles and responsibilities under the Italian legal framework, and will provide a description about the main problems due to the presence of wolves in Italy, from impacts on livestock, to predation on domestic dogs, to the increasing problems caused by wolves in urban contexts, and to the management of hybrids. The presentation will also report on the solutions applied in the country and on the ongoing discussion for revising the national policies on the species.*

### **5. 16h05-16h20 – BREAK**



## 5. 16h20-17h00 – The Austrian Centre for Bear, Wolf and Lynx: working at the science-policy interface

By Klaus POGADL, Austrian Centre for Bear, Wolf and Lynx

*Like other countries in Central Europe, Austria is confronted with the return of large predators. In addition to the wolf, these also include the bear, lynx and golden jackal. Administrative borders, whether district, province or state, are no obstacles for these animals. This poses new challenges for administration, land users and tourism. The Austrian Centre for Bear, Wolf and Lynx is working towards a low-conflict coexistence between humans and large carnivores. It was founded by the provinces and the federal government in 2019. In Austria, the management of large carnivores is regulated at the federal state level, not at the national level. Therefore, the Austrian centre coordinates overarching tasks concerning the management of large carnivores in the country. Its members consist of representatives of the federal states, the ministry for agriculture, the ministry for climate action (responsible for environmental protection) and stakeholders from agriculture, land owners, forestry, nature conservation NGOs and science. A central result of the work of the Austria Centre is the revision of older, already existing recommendations for dealing with wolves. This presentation will detail the updated management recommendations that have been accepted by all members of the Centre and that provide the basis and framework for the preparation of management plans by the federal states in Austria.*

## 7. 17h00-17h40 – Good practices and challenges in wolf management in Slovenia

By Matej BARTOL and Rok ČERNE, Slovenia Forest Service

*Grey wolf population in Slovenia grew more than 160% in the last decade and has been spatially spreading towards the North and the West. This catalyses many challenges in the management of the wolf population, especially from the human-wolf conflict perspective. Besides that, wolf-dog hybridisation has become a challenge in recent years. Wildlife managers in Slovenia are trying to implement effective measures, aimed at the long-term conservation of the wolf. The most important measures are focused on public awareness, livestock protection, damage compensation and removal of conflict/hybrid individuals from the wolf population. Finally, efficient population monitoring is crucial for transparent and science-based decision making in wolf management and conservation. This presentation will provide details on the topics above.*

## 8. 17h40-17h50 – Closing remarks of the first day



## December 06, 2022

### **1. 09h00-09h40 – Latest attitudes and perceptions about wolves in the Alps**

By Bernarda BELE, Biology Department of the Biotechnical Faculty of the University of Ljubljana

*The existence of large carnivores depends on successful coexistence with humans. Large carnivore conservation is also influenced by how they are perceived by particular stakeholder groups. Especially in areas that are being recolonized by large carnivores, there is often a debate about how these animals and their impacts should be managed. To collect the opinions of stakeholders, we have carried out a survey on public attitudes and perceptions toward wolves and wolf conservation in the framework of the LIFE WOLFALPS EU project. In this presentation, we describe the results from sixteen previously identified core areas for wolf conservation across Austria, France, Italy and Slovenia.*

### **2. 09h40-10h20 – Wolf management in Germany**

By Ilka REINHARDT and Gesa KLUTH, German Institute for Wolf Monitoring and Research (LUPUS)

*In 2000 the first wolf pack after 150 years of absence was confirmed in Germany, close to the Polish border. This was the starting point for return of the wolf to the country. In 2021, more than 200 wolf*



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*territories were confirmed, most of them in the North-Eastern part of the country. Germany is a federal country consisting of 16 federal states (Bundesländer). Although the wolf is strictly protected by federal law, implementation and enforcement of nature conservation is the responsibility of the federal states. In consequence, wolf management is regulated at the federal state level. The main issue related to the return of wolves are wolf-livestock conflicts. All federal states have a funding system for damage prevention and damage compensation. However, the details for funding prevention and compensation differ from state to state. This is partly also true in respect to wolf monitoring. Wolf monitoring is conducted annually with the goal of obtaining reliable estimates of area of occurrence and population size at the national level. The data collection is funded, organized and conducted at the federal state level. Uniform data evaluation and interpretation across administrative borders is ensured by national monitoring standards. In 2016 the federal documentation and consultation centre on wolves (DBBW) was created. It is a scientific consortium that advises federal and state conservation agencies on all wolf-related issues upon request and compiles the state data annually at the national level. The results are published on the DBBW website (<https://www.dbb-wolf.de>), where current data on wolf monitoring can also be found. This presentation will provide further details about these aspects of wolf management in Germany.*

### **3. 10h20-11h00 – Wolf management in Spain: consequences of the recent wolf protection**

By Juan Carlos BLANCO, consultant in conservation biology in Madrid

*This presentation will talk about the wolf status, trends, damages to the livestock and other conflicts in Spain. According to the European Habitat, Fauna and Flora Directive, wolves north of the river Duero (most of the Spanish population) are in Annex V (not strictly protected), while wolves south of the Duero are fully protected under Annex IV. In addition, Spain is a very decentralized country, and almost all decisions on wolf management were taken by the autonomous regions. Before September 2021, the management of wolves in Spain was very diverse depending on the regions. Nevertheless, in September 2021, all Spanish wolves were included by the national government in the list of protected species (LESRPE). Since then, wolves cannot be hunted anymore; culling specific individuals in case of serious damage to livestock is in theory possible, but under very strict conditions. This rule has been appealed by the autonomous regions and has caused a serious conflict between the central and the regional administrations. We will analyse the consequences of this conflict.*

### **4. 11h00-11h10 – BREAK**



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## 6. 11h10-11h50 – Wolf management in Slovakia: consensus, compromise or constant conflict?

By Robin RIGG, Slovak Wildlife Society and University of Ljubljana, and Josef BUČKO, National Forest Centre in Slovakia

*This presentation will focus on predation on livestock and how to mitigate it; disparate standpoints of key interest groups; and disagreements around wolf population status, monitoring and hunting in Slovakia. A brief overview of the history of the wolf and its management in Slovakia will be provided to set the context; as well as an outline of national and international legislation; and a description of the various attempts to reconcile the positions of hunters, livestock breeders, environmental NGOs and state conservation authorities. In particular, this presentation will describe the preparation of a management plan for the wolf in Slovakia through a participatory approach with stakeholder engagement, shortcomings in its implementation and continuing controversies. The latter include the recent addition of the wolf to the list of strictly protected species in Slovakia and planned tightening of conditions for the payment of compensation for damage to livestock by wolves, both of which have provoked protests from hunters, farmers and rural communities, who feel that additional burdens and restrictions are being imposed on them without adequate consultation and support. The presentation will conclude with some suggestions for lessons that could be learned from the example of Slovakia.*

## 6. 11h50-12h30 – The return of the wolf in France: a 30-year retrospective of their presence in the Mercantour national park

By Nathalie SIEFERT, Science and Ecosystem Management Department at the Mercantour National Park, and Rachel BERZINS, LIFE WOLFALPS EU project at the Mercantour National Park

*Eradicated from France in the early 1930s, the wolf crossed the Italian border and officially reappeared in the country in 1992 in the Mercantour National Park. Declared a protected species as soon as it returned, several national action plans and LIFE programs followed one after the other with the objective of reconciling the conservation of the species with the maintenance of pastoralism. After a brief description of the Park and its particularities, this presentation will retrace the history of the measures and actions deployed by the Park since the first monitoring of the species until today. Emphasis will be given to the partnership set up with the agricultural profession in order to create the necessary room for dialogue about pastoral activity in the Mercantour.*

## 7. 12h30-12h45 – Conclusions and final remarks

By John THOMPSON, president of the scientific committee of the Mercantour national park, and Laure FILLON, journalist (moderators).