



Convention on the Conservation
of European Wildlife and Natural Habitats

Standing Committee

**Recommendation No. 17 (1989) of the standing committee on the protection of the wolf (*Canis lupus*)
in Europe**

(Adopted by the Standing Committee on 8 December 1989)

The Standing Committee of the Convention on the Conservation of European Wildlife and Natural Habitats, acting under the terms of Article 14 of the convention,

Having regard to the aims of the Convention for the Conservation of European Wildlife and Natural Habitats to conserve wild flora and fauna and their natural habitats ;

Considering that the grey wolf (*Canis lupus*) (hereinafter referred to as « wolf ») is a fundamental part of the European natural heritage for its symbolic, scientific, ecological, educational, cultural, recreational, aesthetic and intrinsic value ;

Recalling that Article 1, paragraph 2, of the convention requires that Contracting Parties give particular emphasis to the conservation of endangered and vulnerable species ;

Recalling that the wolf is listed in Appendix II to the convention as a strictly protected fauna species ;

Considering that the wolf is seriously threatened throughout Western Europe, having become extinct in the territory of many Contracting Parties and reduced to small populations in some others ;

Considering that habitat loss, prey shortage and human persecution have been the most significant causes of its extinction (or the drastic reduction of its populations) in Western Europe ;

Conscious that the wolf is a species that, in some circumstances, may come into conflict with human activities ;

Recalling that, out of the eight Contracting Parties that find wolves in their territories, three have made reservations under the terms of Article 22 of the convention, which in practice means that the most important populations of wolf in Western Europe do not benefit from the protection accorded by Article 6 of the convention ;

Recalling that in Greece and Turkey the wolf is classified as a pest ;

Referring to the report on the status and conservation needs of the wolf (*Canis lupus*) in the Council of Europe member states,

A. Recommends that Contracting Parties :

1. Draw up management plans for the species in view of assuring viable populations at appropriate levels ;
2. Favour, in order to avoid conflicts, the development of measures aimed at preventing wolf attacks on livestock, for instance by encouraging herdsmen to keep their cattle in at night, using electrical fences or dogs : encourage the maintenance and training of local races of shepherd dogs ;
3. Establish, wherever absent, compensation schemes for damage caused by wolves to cattle and farm animals, improving the payment of compensation where such schemes already function, for instance by simplifying and accelerating administrative procedures and increasing, if required, the amounts paid ;
4. Consider the development of general systems of insurance for wolf damage and the financing of works for the prevention of such damage ;
5. Promote the establishment of funds to be used for financing conservation work, payment of compensation for damage caused by wolves and the socio-economic development of important wolf areas ;
6. Consider, in important wolf areas, the reinforcement and eventual reintroduction of wild ungulates as alternative prey to livestock ; facilitate, if necessary, co-operation with other Contracting Parties for such reintroduction ;
7. Strengthen the enforcement of the ban on the use of poison, poisoned or anaesthetic baits, and any other indiscriminate methods of killing, for example by introducing appropriate vigilance, setting higher penalties for infraction and carrying out the required publicity on the effects of poison on wildlife ;
8. Take necessary measures for the marking and register of wolves reared in captivity ;
9. Elaborate and implement plans for the elimination of stray and feral dogs ; encourage research on the biology of these dogs ;
10. Assess the impact on wolf populations of projects for public works, reforestation, touristic uses or other developments in areas known to be of importance for wolves ;
11. Undertake the organisation of awareness campaigns, aimed at the rural populations in wolf areas and other target groups (hunters, schoolchildren, decision-makers), and support actively the voluntary groups that are already engaged in such campaigns ;
12. Encourage research on all aspects of the biology of the wolf that may permit a more efficient management of it ; carry out, in particular, the monitoring of the size, biological characteristics and geographical distribution and dispersal patterns of its populations ;
13. Consider the possibility of carrying out captive breeding and reintroduction programmes in areas where the species has been extinct or is endangered ; carry out the necessary genetic studies in order to avoid possible negative effects of introducing individuals from genetically different stocks ;
14. Consider, while drawing up their wolf management policies, the principles and suggestions contained in the Manifesto and Guidelines on Wolf Conservation prepared by the Wolf Specialist Group of the International Union for the Conservation of Nature and Natural Resources (IUCN), given as appendix to this recommendation ;
15. Develop, where appropriate for scientific or conservation purposes, bilateral or multilateral contacts with other states and conservation bodies and agencies, including those situated outside the present scope of the convention ;

B Recommends that Contracting Parties that made reservations concerning the species in the sense of Article 22 of the convention or make exemptions in the sense of Article 9 of the convention ;

1. Identify within their territories the areas with different potential value to wolf conservation, mainly of three kinds :

a. zones where the wolf would be fully protected,

b. zones from where selected wolves could be removed according to a management plan,

c. zones where the wolf could be hunted with only the limitations of the current hunting regulations ;

2. Give full legal protection or enforce existing protection of the wolf in zones referred to in paragraph 1.*a* above ;

C. Recommends that Finland, Norway and Sweden :

Continue and strengthen present efforts to co-ordinate conservation actions and research on the wolf, and consider the need and opportunity to co-ordinate, within the framework of the convention, management plans and strategies for the species in Finland, Norway and Sweden ;

D. Recommends that Greece :

1. Remove the wolf from the list of pest species,

2. Carry out, as a matter of priority, detailed inventories of the wolf population in Greece,

3. Draw up a national management plan for the species, and therefore establish adequate wolf protection measures,

4. Look for exchange of information on management plans for wolves within the Balkan Peninsula, wherever appropriate ;

E. Recommends that Italy :

1. Implement a national conservation strategy for the species,

2. Enforce the prohibition to possess in captivity individuals of all subspecies of *Canis lupus* and to release them in the wild,

3. Continue and improve the present captive breeding programme already started ;

F. Recommends that Portugal and Spain :

Examine the need and opportunity to draw up, within the framework of the convention, a joint management plan for the population of the Iberian wolf (*Canis lupus signatus*) ;

G. Recommends that Turkey :

1. Remove the wolf from the list of pest species,

2. Carry out, as a matter of priority, detailed inventories of the wolf populations in Turkey ;

H. Further recommends Contracting Parties where the wolf has disappeared to support actively the conservation of this species, particularly by promoting public awareness, encouraging research in its present distribution area, studying reintroduction possibilities, and collaborating with the states where wolves survive ;

I. Invites France to assure the strict legal protection of the wolf, especially for individuals that might migrate from neighbouring states ;

J Resolves to encourage Contracting Parties to communicate regularly to the secretariat of the convention the information on their wolf populations and/or their research programmes on the species with a view to reassessing the status of the wolf in Europe in 1992 at a second meeting of the group of experts.

Appendix to the recommendation

Manifesto and Guidelines on Wolf Conservation of the Wolf Specialist Group of the International Union for the Conservation of Nature and Natural Resources

Manifesto

Declaration of Principles for Wolf Conservation

1. Wolves, like all other wildlife, have a right to exist in a wild state. This right is in no way related to their known value to mankind. Instead, it derives from the right of all living creatures to co-exist with man as part of natural ecosystems.
2. The wolf pack is a highly developed and unique social organisation. The wolf is one of the most adaptable and important mammalian predators. It has one of the widest natural geographical distributions of any mammal. It has been, and in some cases still is, the most important predator of big-game animals in the northern hemisphere. In this role, it has undoubtedly played an important part in the evolution of such species and, in particular, of those characteristics which have made many of them desirable game animals.
3. It is recognised that wolf populations have differentiated into sub-species which are genetically adapted to particular environments. It is of first importance that these local populations be maintained in their natural environments in a wild state. Maintenance of genetic purity of locally adapted races is a responsibility of agencies which plan to reintroduce wolves into the wild as well as zoological gardens that may provide a source for such reintroductions.
4. Throughout recorded history man has regarded the wolf as undesirable and has sought to exterminate it. In more than half of the countries of the world where the wolf existed, man has either succeeded, or is one the verge of succeeding, in exterminating the wolf.
5. This harsh judgement on the wolf has been based, first, on fear of the wolf as a predator of man and, second, on hatred because of its predation on domestic livestock and on large wild animals. Historical perspectives suggest that to a considerable extent the first fear has been based on myth rather than on fact. It is now evident that the wolf can no longer be considered a serious threat to man. It is true, however, that the wolf has been, and in some cases still is, a predator of some consequence on domestic livestock and wildlife.
6. The response of man, as reflected by the actions of individuals or governments, has been to try to exterminate the wolf. This is an unfortunate situation because the possibility now exists for the development of management programmes which would mitigate serious problems, while at the same time permitting the wolf to live in many areas of the world where its presence would be acceptable.
7. Where wolf control measures are necessary, they should be imposed under strict scientific management, and the methods used must be selective, highly discriminatory, of limited time duration and have minimum side-effects on other animals in the ecosystem.
8. The effect of major alterations of the environment through economic development may have serious consequences for the survival of wolves and their prey species in areas where wolves now exist. Recognition of the importance and status of wolves should be taken into account by legislation and in planning for the future of any region.

9. Scientific knowledge of the role of the wolf in ecosystems is inadequate in most countries in which the wolf still exists. Management should be established only on a firm scientific basis, having regard for international, national and regional situations. However, existing knowledge is at least adequate to develop preliminary programmes to conserve and manage the wolf throughout its range.

10. The maintenance of wolves in some areas may require that society at large bear the cost, e.g. by giving compensation for the loss of domestic stock ; conversely there are areas having high agricultural value where it is not desirable to maintain wolves and where their introduction would not be feasible.

11. In some areas there has been a marked change in public attitudes towards the wolf. This change in attitudes has influenced governments to revise and even to eliminate archaic laws. There is a continuing need to inform the public about the place of the wolf in nature.

12. Socio-economic, ecological and political factors must be considered and resolved prior to reintroduction of the wolf into biologically suitable areas from which it has been extirpated.

Guidelines

The following guidelines are recommended for action of wolf conservation.

A. General

1. Where wolves are endangered regionally, nationally or internationally, full protection should be accorded to the surviving population. (Such endangered status is signalled by inclusion in the Red Data Book or by a declaration of the Government concerned).

2. Each country should define areas suitable for the existence of wolves and enact suitable legislation to perpetuate existing wolf populations or to facilitate reintroduction. These areas would include zones in which wolves would be given full legal protection e.g. as in national parks, reserves or special conservation areas, and additionally zones within which wolf populations would be regulated according to ecological principles to minimise conflicts with other forms of land use.

3. Sound ecological conditions for wolves should be restored in such areas through the rebuilding of suitable habitats and the reintroduction of large herbivores.

4. In specifically designated wolf conservation areas, extensive economic development likely to be detrimental to the wolf and its habitat should be excluded.

5. In wolf management programmes, poisons, bounty systems and sport hunting using mechanised vehicles should be prohibited.

6. Consideration should be given to the payment of compensation for damage caused by wolves.

7. Legislation should be enacted in every country to require the registration of each wolf killed.

B. Education

A dynamic educational campaign should be promoted to obtain the support of all sectors of the population through a better understanding of the values of wolves and the significance of their rational management. In particular the following actions are advocated :

a. Press and broadcast campaigns ;

b. Publication and wide distribution of information and educational material ; and

c. Promotion of exhibitions, demonstrations and relevant extension techniques.

C. Tourism

Where appropriate, general public interest in wolf conservation should be stimulated by promoting wolf-related tourist activities. (Canada already has such activities in some of its national and provincial parks.)

D. Research

Research on wolves should be intensified, with particular reference to :

- a.* Surveys on status and distribution of wolf populations ;
- b.* Studies on feeding habits, including especially interactions of wolves with game animals and livestock ;
- c.* Investigations into social structure, population dynamics, general behaviour and ecology of wolves ;
- d.* Taxonomic work, including studies of possible hybridisation with other canids ;
- e.* Research into the methods of reintroduction of wolves and/or their natural prey ; and
- f.* Studies into human attitudes about wolves and on economic effects of wolves.

E International co-operation

A programme of international co-operation should be planned to include :

- a.* Periodical official meetings of the countries concerned for the joint planning of programmes, study of legislation, and exchanging of experiences ;
- b.* A rapid exchange of publications and other research information including new techniques and equipment ;
- c.* Loaning or exchanging of personnel between countries to help carry out research activities ; and
- d.* Joint conservation programmes in frontier areas where wolves are endangered.