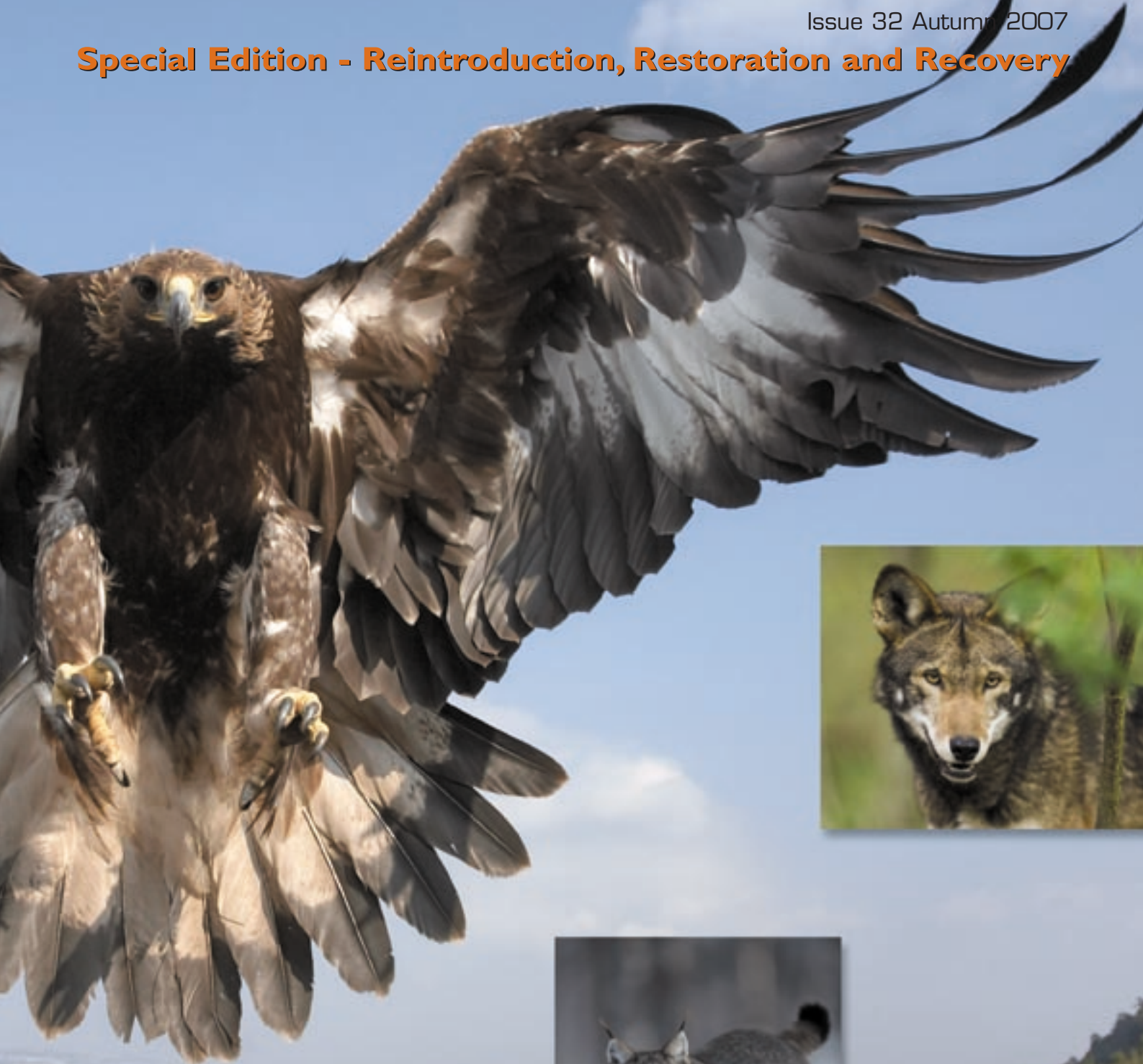


The magazine of The UK Wolf Conservation Trust, published quarterly

# WolfPrint

Issue 32 Autumn 2007

**Special Edition - Reintroduction, Restoration and Recovery**



# WolfPrint

Published by:  
The UK Wolf Conservation Trust  
Butlers Farm, Beenham,  
Reading RG7 5NT  
Tel & Fax: 0118 971 3330  
e-mail: [ukwct@ukwolf.org](mailto:ukwct@ukwolf.org)  
[www.ukwolf.org](http://www.ukwolf.org)

Editor  
Denise Taylor  
Tel: 01788 833232  
e-mail: [denise.taylor@btinternet.com](mailto:denise.taylor@btinternet.com)

Assistant Editor  
Chris Senior

Editorial Team  
Brian James, Eva Love, Gwynne Power

Contributors to this issue:  
Peter Cairns, Cornelia Hutt, Bill Lynn,  
Chris Senior, Denise Taylor

Design and Artwork: Phil Dee Tel: 01788 546565

Patrons  
Erich Klinghammer  
Desmond Morris  
Michelle Paver  
Christoph Promberger

The UK Wolf Conservation Trust Directors  
Nigel Bulmer  
Charles Hicks  
Tsa Palmer  
Denise Taylor

The UK Wolf Conservation Trust is a company  
limited by guarantee. Registered in England &  
Wales. Company No. 3686061

The opinions expressed in this magazine are not  
necessarily those of the publishers or The UK Wolf  
Conservation Trust.

All rights reserved through the world. Reproduction in any  
manner, in whole or in part, in English or other languages,  
prohibited. This work may not be photocopied or otherwise  
reproduced within the terms of any license granted by the  
Copyright Licensing Agency Ltd or the Publishers Licensing  
Society Ltd.

## Aims of The UK Wolf Conservation Trust

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

Cover Price - £2.50

4 issues - £14.00 incl P&P

Overseas subscriptions – £10.00 PLUS P&P. Please  
contact the UKWCT for overseas postage costs.

Online subscription £10.00 – PDF download only.  
Please visit [www.ukwolf.org](http://www.ukwolf.org)



## Inside this issue...



Reintroduction, Restoration, Recovery



ETHOS - Recovering Wolves



The Red Wolf - Celebrating 20 Years of Recovery



Predators, People and Problems

PICTURE CREDITS: Front Cover Pete Cairns &  
pgs 15, 18, 19 -  
Marc Bekoff pg 7



WolfPrint is printed on re-cycled paper. Printed by Colorco. Coventry (024) 7671 1005



# Reintroduction, Restoration, Recovery



*DTaylor*

*by Denise Taylor – Editor  
Chris Senior – Assistant Editor*

**W**elcome to a special edition of Wolf Print. We're going back to basics, and covering the 'Three Rs'; the Reintroduction, Restoration and Recovery of wolves!

This editorial forms a longer introduction to the topic, and gives background information about reintroduction programmes and natural wolf recovery through migration and recolonisation of former ranges.

Contributors to this issue include Professor Bill Lynn, who writes a regular column, *Ethos*, for this magazine on the practical ethics of wolf conservation. It is indicative of how far we have come in wolf conservation to be now seriously considering that ethics has a fundamental role to play. In this issue, Bill discusses the concepts and definitions of wolf recovery, and how ethics can inform the processes involved.

Cornelia 'Neil' Hutt is a director of the International Wolf Centre in Ely MN, USA, and is a founder and director of the Red Wolf Recovery Programme. Neil is presenting at the seminar to be held by the UKWCT on 30 September, with the same theme as this issue of Wolf Print. Neil's article on Page 10, provides a background to the Red Wolf Recovery Programme.

Pete Cairns is a renowned wildlife photographer and co-founder of Tooth and Claw, an organisation aimed at opening up the debates on our attitudes and actions towards Britain's predators. Although fundamentally an advocacy organisation concerned with the conservation of predators, Tooth and Claw also takes a balanced approach in realising that the stakeholders involved in wildlife conservation are not just the advocates of particular species: Landowners, farmers, hunting organisations, and policymakers all have a role to play in shaping the landscape, and the impacts this has on other species. Pete is also a presenter at the seminar. You can read his article on page 15.

## Recovering Wolves

For the past two hundred years, humans have used every method that they can to eradicate wolves from the landscape, and in many places they were successful. Wolves were pushed to the margins, and were forced to retreat to habitats that were not of any value to humans. It says a lot about the tenacity and adaptability of wolves that they managed to survive at all. But wolves are highly adaptable creatures, and throughout their holarctic range, historically they have occupied almost every type of habitat from desert to tundra.

In the noughties, the challenge facing us is how to truly co-exist with a large predator that, for centuries, we have persecuted unjustifiably. As competition for space increases, and humans continue to encroach on wildlife habitats, animals of all species are going to have to adapt to living in habitats that are used by us, whether for our own habitation, agriculture, recreation, or to provide us with transport networks. Many species do tend to adapt, and there is increasing evidence to support the fact that wolves also are adapting to human-dominated landscapes: Wolves cross cities in the dead of night to reach garbage dumps which are a good food source for their pups; they regularly enter towns and villages in rural areas, often without the human inhabitants knowing they have been there.

Sadly, many humans are still opposed to living alongside wolves, either through fear of attack, or because wolves might prey on livestock, domestic animals or game species.

It is encouraging, however, that the groups opposed to wolves are no longer in the majority, and for the past three decades, wolves have become a symbol for the fight for wildlife conservation. Wolf researchers and scientists have helped to increase our knowledge about wolves and their behaviours, and wolf advocates have built on this platform to bring about changes to

legislation that have allowed for the restoration and recovery of certain populations. The most noted of these are the Yellowstone, Mexican and Red Wolf Recovery Programmes in the USA. (The Red Wolf Recovery Project is covered in depth in an article by Neil Hutt on Page 10).

The programmes haven't been without their problems, but by and large, they can all be considered to be successful – wolves are now thriving, producing pups each year and adapting to the habitats they formerly roamed.

In other parts of the world, wolves are returning naturally to former ranges. In France in 1992, two wolves crossed over the border from Italy. Their numbers are now estimated to be between 50 and 55 wolves in 23 permanent installation zones according to the winter 2006/2007 counts. France was without wolves for several decades, and during that time farming practices were adapted. The return of wolves has therefore





not been without its problems. Livestock depredation has led to protests from farmers, which have been countered by protests from wolf advocacy groups and conservationists, leading to a lot of media attention. Despite the controversy, wolves are clearly recolonising in France

In Germany, wolves settled on a military base, affording them protection they had not previously enjoyed. These wolves have also thrived and reproduced. There are now four packs in Germany; three in Saxony comprising the Muskau Heath Pack (eastern part of the military training area, the oldest of the packs): two adults, at least four yearlings and four pups. The Neustadt Heath Pack (western part of the training area, the second oldest pack): two adults, one yearling and eight pups. The third – and newest – pack is located in the western part of the Muskau Heath, pretty much in between the old established packs. There are two adults, two yearlings and four pups living in this pack. It's yet unknown where they come from, and a DNA analysis is underway to determine this. The fourth pack is a little to the north, in Brandenburg (Zschorno Heath, consisting of two adult wolves and a yet unknown number of pups).

However, it's not all been plain sailing for the wolves. Recently, two female yearlings were found dead, one was apparently killed by a female wild boar, but the other one was illegally shot using hunting ammunition. The district attorney is investigating the case, and the hunting association offers a reward of 1,000 EUR for information leading to the arrest of the offender. To date, there is no trace other than the remains of the bullet, being analysed to try to find the weapon which fired it.

The wolves in both France and Germany have recolonised their former ranges naturally. Wolf populations in other parts of the world, however, have had some help through human intervention.

### Mexican wolf reintroduction

As regular readers with good memories will know, the Mexican wolf is one of the more contentious reintroduction programmes to have been undertaken in the USA. This subspecies of the gray wolf once roamed the mountains of Mexico, Texas, New Mexico and Arizona, with the last five individuals removed from the wild in the late seventies for a captive breeding programme, to avoid its extinction.

A recovery plan was completed in 1982, with the Wolf Action Group filing a lawsuit against the US Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) in 1990, for failing to implement it. The mid-90s saw the production of an Environmental Impact Statement, and wrangles over possible reintroduction sites, leading to the publishing of the Final Rule, Establishment of a Nonessential Experimental Population of the Mexican Gray Wolf in Arizona and New Mexico, on January 12, 1998. The Final Rule provides regulations for how the reintroduced population will be managed by responsible agencies, and further, spells out public rights with respect to human safety and protection of property from Mexican wolves on private, tribal, and public lands. Finally, that same year, the first captive-bred wolves were released into the wild, in an area straddling the Arizona-New Mexico border known as the Blue Range Wolf Recovery Area. This population is designated as 'nonessential', allowing for greater management flexibility to address conflict situations, such as livestock depredations or nuisance behaviour, than if wolves had retained the fully endangered status, hopefully helping to appease the neighbours. This did not stop the New Mexico Cattle Growers Association from (unsuccessfully) suing USFWS that same year for implementing the wolf recovery project!

A three year review of the project in 2001 produced recommendations for modifying the programme, from the wildlife biologists undertaking it, whose considered opinions were not sufficient to prevent Congress asking for an independent review of this three-year review! This resulted in restructuring of the programme to give greater control to both Arizona state and local tribes. As a result, 2002 saw White Mountain Apache Tribe enter into agreement with USFWS, to allow wolves to live on their reservation. This was followed by San Carlos Apache Tribe in 2003, a turnaround from their resolution the year before to have all Mexican wolves removed from their lands. The USFWS Memorandum of Understanding (MOU), finalised that year, restructured the recovery programme to allow the States and Tribes to implement the reintroduction project, while USFWS maintained responsibility for recovery. The MOU established an Adaptive Management Oversight Committee (AMOC) and an Adaptive Management Working Group.

The same year, the gray wolf was reclassified into three distinct population segments, with Mexican wolves part of the Southwestern Distinct Population Segment, but still classed as nonessential. The USFWS was kept busy, as a coalition of Arizona and New Mexico counties files a lawsuit against them for various alleged failings; Defenders of Wildlife also filed against them for reclassifying the grey wolf. Although the courts ruled in favour of USFWS for the first set of charges – which was appealed by the coalition in 2006 – they overturned the reclassification rule in 2005, negating the population segments, and bringing a temporary hold to the Mexican wolf recovery

planning. The same year saw the AMOC submit a five-year review to USFWS for consideration, including 37 recommendations, many requiring a change to the Final Rule.

With all of this political and legal wrangling, debate, what, then, of the wolves themselves? According to the latest 2007 data, 91 wolves have been released since 1998, with a minimum population of 59 individuals and seven breeding pairs present in the area, well below predictions from the 1996 Environmental Impact Statement, of 102 individuals and 18 breeding pairs. The main loss of wolves has, and continues to be, illegal shooting, which has claimed 23 individuals in total; vehicle collisions account for 10; natural deaths seven; other causes three; unknown, two. In addition to these totals, nine wolves have been subject to lethal control, as part of this nonessential population; 17 have been permanently removed, whilst 94 have been temporarily removed from the area.

These losses, whether illegal, accidental or due to management, will have had an affect upon the make-up of packs, which may even have exacerbated some of the problems and conflicts. The wolves are back, but are far from being allowed any natural existence due to the intensive nature of the management, and as we go to press, the USFWS has already announced that it is starting to undertake a scoping exercise to gather input on potential modifications to its Final Rule. This will be in the form of an Environmental Impact Statement and Socio-economic Assessment, and public consultation meetings will be held in November and December around the Southwestern USA. All comments received until year's end will go into draft versions of these documents. One hopes that the five ethical reasons for having wolves, which Bill Lynn writes of in his extended column in this issue, will also inform the process. Now that would be something.

### Yellowstone Wolf Recovery Programme

The last wild wolves in Yellowstone National Park were killed in 1924 by the federal government. At this time, it was the policy to exterminate wolves everywhere. After almost ten years of heated debate, the Yellowstone Wolf Recovery Programme finally got underway with the capture of fourteen wolves from the Rocky Mountains of western Alberta, Canada, which were then transported and released into the Park to great fanfare.

Legal challenges quickly followed, and early in the programme, there was some doubt about its future success. However, in terms of the numbers of wolves, the packs they have formed, and their dispersal throughout the Park and beyond, the Yellowstone Wolf Recovery Programme has flourished.

The Yellowstone Wolf Recovery Programme has probably been one of the most documented, which in part is due to the topography of the wider Yellowstone ecosystem: The wolves have been highly visible in a number of places throughout the Park as they go about their daily business of hunting, raising pups and generally doing what







wolves do. This has drawn in thousands of tourists every year to the park, who line the roads and watch the wolves' activities through long range spotting scopes, so as not to unduly disturb them.

The programme has also attracted research interest, not just on the biology and ethology of the wolves, but concerning the wider ecological impact their return has had. Terms such as 'trophic cascade' have become more widely used in relation to the effects that wolves have on their habitats, and how this affects other species they live alongside: Some researchers argue that the return of the wolves to Yellowstone has been hugely beneficial ecologically; the wolves having changed the feeding behaviour of elk herds, impacted on coyote numbers, and provided food for an increasing number of species not only through the carcasses they share, but also because the flora in many areas is now

recovering because it is no longer being overgrazed, providing habitats for numerous insects and smaller mammals.

Project leader Doug Smith takes every opportunity he can to publicise the recovery programme, and there are numerous websites and research papers available, as well as books which have been written about the wolves of Yellowstone. Previous seminars at the UKWCT have hosted speakers on the topic, including Monty Sloan and James Halfpenny.

Ralph Maughan, a specialist in natural resource and environmental politics and policies, has also dedicated a huge proportion of his time and energy to cataloguing and describing in minute detail the happenings and events of the Yellowstone Wolf Recovery Programme. His website provides details on the wolf packs; how they have formed, where they are located, and how they change over time. There is a mine of information on individual wolves, but their numbers have now become too high with some of the wolves no longer being radio-collared, making it difficult to continue with logging this data.

### Additional reading and information on Reintroduction, Recovery and Restoration

#### Books

*Decade of the Wolf: Returning the Wild to Yellowstone* by Douglas Smith and Gary Ferguson  
*Yellowstone Wolves in the Wild* by James C Halfpenny  
*Once A Wolf: How Wildlife Biologists Fought to Bring Back the Gray Wolf (Scientists in the Field)* by Stephen R Swinburne and Jim Brandenburg  
*The Wolves of Yellowstone* by Michael K Phillips and Douglas Smith  
*Wolf Wars: The Remarkable Inside Story of the Restoration of Wolves to Yellowstone* by Hank Fischer and Fischer  
*Return of the Mexican Gray Wolf: Back to the Blue* by Bobbie Holaday  
*The New Wolves: The Return of the Mexican Wolf to the American Southwest* by Rick Bass  
*El Lobo: Readings on the Mexican Gray Wolf* by Tom Lynch  
*Beyond Wolves: The Politics of Wolf Recovery and Management* by Martin A Nie  
*Journey of the Red Wolf* by Roland Smith  
*The Red Wolf (Endangered in America)* by Alvin Silverstein, Virginia B Silverstein and Robert Silverstein

#### Websites

<http://www.fws.gov/southwest/es/mexicanwolf/>  
[http://www.wolf.org/wolves/news/live\\_news\\_detail.asp?id=2380](http://www.wolf.org/wolves/news/live_news_detail.asp?id=2380)  
<http://www.forwolves.org/ralph/wolfrpt.html>  
<http://www.yellowstone-bearman.com/wolves.html>  
<http://www.ladywolf.com/wolf1.html>  
<http://www.yellowstonenationalpark.com/wolves.htm>

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

#### Trips

**Winter Wolf Discovery** Each year, in February, a small group heads out to Yellowstone National Park to watch the wolves and the wildlife, and to simply enjoy all the natural wonders of the Yellowstone ecosystem.

For the excursion in 2008, the tour operators, Kirsty and Alan Peake, have introduced a new element of excitement. As well as teaming up with George Bumann for wildlife watching, the trip will also include a day's dog sledding in the Absaroka Mountains, which will include lunch cooked on the trail.

Inclusive dates are 29th February to 10th March 2008.

Places on the trips fill up fast, so if you would like to know more about this exciting opportunity, please contact Kirsty and Alan Peake:

**wwd@kajpeake.ndo.co.uk** or call **01364 621287**.

#### The future of wolves in Great Britain

With so many examples of wolf reintroduction, restoration and recovery to be found around Europe and the USA, the question of having wolves back in Scotland is one which seems to rear its head every few years. With the recent study modelling the effects which wolves could have upon the red deer population there, which even received coverage in the Polish papers (see Issue 30), many people seem to be wondering whether we could see wolves roaming the Highlands again.

Well, the short answer is 'no': Although under Article 22 of the EU Habitat and Species Directive of 1992, and Recommendation 17 (1989) of the Bern Convention, the UK Government is required to consider the desirability of reintroducing such extinct species as the wolf, this 'consideration' can simply be taking a few moments to decide that it is not feasible. Given that Scottish Natural Heritage, the body with responsibility for this, is still only considering the implications of a trial site for beaver reintroductions to Scotland, it would be folly to hold out any realistic hopes for howls and growls echoing around the islands and highlands of Scotland in the foreseeable future.

#### Wolves and Humans Co-existing Globally

Wolves are recovering. There may still be legal wrangles, and groups still vociferously opposed to wolves and their conservation, but these tenacious creatures have survived against all the odds, and their numbers are rising in many parts of the world.

Ed Bangs, who played an instrumental role in the Yellowstone Wolf Recovery Programme, famously said: '**... the best wolf habitat resides in the human heart. You have to leave a little space for them to live.**'

We need to go one step further than this, and actually learn to share the spaces which wolves and humans both occupy.



# Ethos

## Recovering Wolves

When we talk about the recovery of wolves, what do we really mean? By reading the literature and listening to people talk, I hear several distinct meanings. You may have heard others as well.

To my ear, the first meaning has to do with *conservation*, by which is meant the government regulating whether and how people hunt, trap and kill wolves. The background idea here is that wolves are an agricultural crop to be culled, or a pest to be exterminated. Natural *recolonisation* is the second meaning. Here wolves recolonise an area of their former range by way of out-migration from the places they already inhabit. The idea here is that by successfully establish themselves in new habitats, wolves demonstrated the fitness of those landscapes for reinhabitation, and side-step political controversies over human intervention. Finally, there is *restoration*, a process where humans intervene to help a population of wolves take root and grow. This usually involves captive breeding, capture and release. In *restoration*, the idea is to help wolves over geographic hurdles so they can return to an area that they would recolonise if human development were not in the way.

Opponents of wolves often talk in public of their commitment to wolf recovery, by which they really mean 'conserving' the least number of wolves in the smallest possible area for the shortest period of time. Proponents of wolf recovery tend to focus on the recolonisation or restoration of wolves in areas outside their current haunts. Even so, both opponents and proponents often agree to restrict wolves within the borders of predefined recovery zones. These are not natural borders based on ecological criteria, but barriers to recovery imposed by partisan politics.

You can distinguish the various meanings of recovery by listening for the unarticulated moral sensibilities behind what advocates, scientists, bureaucrats and politicians are saying. If their sensibilities are hostile to wolves, then whatever the rhetoric, you can bet their idea of recovery has less to do with expanding the range of wolves, than it does with getting these canids within the range of a gun. If their ideas are benign, they often favour one kind of recovery over another depending on two factors – the prospects for recolonisation and the degree of political opposition to wolves.

For instance, there are many places in North America where wolves would thrive.

Geographic barriers and human depredation, however, prevent wolves from recolonising on their own. Examples include the northern forests of New York and New England, and the Grand Canyon eco-region in the southwest. Advocates, ethicists and scientists have proposed restoring wolves in these places. A vocal minority of residents, special interests and government officials have stymied such efforts.

Some of this opposition is rooted in a direct antipathy to wolves. The local bumper sticker, 'Wolves – Government-Sponsored Terrorists' encapsulates this view rather nicely. Other elements of the opposition are evasive. Special interests and politicians often 'support' recolonisation but not restoration. This allows them to have their cake and eat it too. They can speak as if they support recovery, but in practice they undermine it.

There is sometimes a strange moral argument made by the opposition as well. It runs something like this: Extinction for natural reasons has always occurred throughout history. Humanity is simply another force of local or complete extinction. If wolves cannot survive in human-dominated landscapes by adapting their way of life to ours, then

extinction is the natural result. We are under no moral obligation to help wolves, and further, it might even be immoral to help an evolutionarily 'unfit' species continue to survive.

This argument has two basic flaws. It assumes that humans are a 'natural' force of extinction, and fails to distinguish natural from anthropogenic sources of environmental change. Second, it justifies a moral claim with an uncritical appeal to humanity as a natural force of extinction. It is not an argument that holds water in the sense of corresponding to the facts, or making a reasoned claim. In this sense, it is really a set of ad hoc justifications for refusing to share the landscape with wolves.

Were we all to agree that recovery is a good idea in general, there are still a host of other questions to answer. Should we have wolves in our area? If so, where? Do wolves belong only in the most remote corners of a wilderness, or over that hill about half an hour's walk from here? Should wolves be kept away from people, pets and farm animals? Or should we adapt to the presence of wolves in our everyday lives? How might the predation of wolves alter the landscape or impact local





economies? Who will resolve the run of the mill conflicts between humans and wolves?

To answer these and other practical questions, we must address the ethical reasons, ecological impact and social aspects of wolf recovery. Others have discussed the ecological and social dimensions at some length. What they have to say generally boils down to a discussion of habitat suitability and human tolerance.

I want to address the ethical reasons by sharing five ideas to help guide our thinking. You can use these ideas to ferret out the moral assumptions behind the rhetoric of wolf recovery. You can also use them to evaluate whether current or proposed policies or management practices are justified. As you come across ethically problematic issues in wolf recovery, please do share them with us. If you have a question or concern, you can bet that someone else has something similar as well. And when we share these experience and thoughts, we deepen our collective understanding.

### **1. Ethics can help us heal our troubled world and our troubles with wolves.**

Make no mistake about it, ours is a troubled world. A partial list of our troubles includes war, poverty, injustice, the neglect of children, and the abuse of animals. Globalisation makes these problems increasingly complex. Terrorism – especially the prospect of bioterrorism – adds yet another illness to burden our social and environmental health.

What some have called the 'war against wolves' is one symptom of this troubled world. What are we to do about all this?

One answer is to look to our deepest moral values, which is to say, the ethics that guide our individual and collective lives. In the words of Socrates, ethics envisions 'how we ought to live'. Put into practice, ethics outlines moral principles to guide our thought and action. When used properly, ethics can help improve the well-being of ourselves and others – human and non-human. By clarifying what our world ought to be like, ethics helps us make better personal and social decisions, distinguish better from worse interpretations and actions, and reveal the values that are at stake – or should be at stake – in debates over nature and society, animals and people, wolves and humanity.

Using ethics to help us make better policy choices is at the heart of wolf recovery. The political hackles that talk of wolf recovery can raise are symptoms of a moral conflict over whether or not to coexist with large predators. And this is related to our coexistence with the natural world, and whether we see ourselves apart from or part of a wider fellowship of life.

This moral conflict is akin to humanity's struggle for human rights and justice. Our societies have and continue to struggle with questions of race, class, gender and ethnicity in the political and social spheres. While we have made much progress, there remains

much to be done. Yet the basic idea that there are morally right and wrong ways in which to treat people and their communities is beyond dispute. So too, we are struggling with questions of species, and what moral responsibilities we owe the non-human world.

The natural and social sciences cannot answer these questions for us, for moral conflicts cannot be understood or solved by gathering empirical data, or developing a better quantitative model, or practicing an innovative management technique. To solve our moral conflicts we need to face them for what they are – differences over ethical values and worldviews. Only then can we reveal the values at stake, and sort out better from worse ideas about wolf recovery.

### **2. Wolves have moral value.**

When people say wolves have moral value, what does this mean? Generally it means that wolves have intrinsic value in and of themselves, and should have moral standing in our community. This does not mean that wolves *are* human beings. Rather it emphasizes that both people and wolves are creatures worthy of care and respect. We can see how this thinking works by using an analogy between people and wolves.

Human beings are intelligent and social creatures – we think, we feel, we relate. We are aware of ourselves, of others and our environment. This kind of awareness is why we are termed *Homo sapiens*, literally the 'wise earthly ones'. Because of our self-awareness, we have an individual worth independent of the use anyone has for us. Ethicists term this 'intrinsic value'. Intrinsic value is the core reason why we should treat people with care and respect. It is also why love and friendship and democracy and justice are so important. They are ethical principles, dispositions and practices that help us 'do right' by individuals and communities. Because of our intrinsic value, humans are therefore part of a moral community.

Wolves are intelligent and social creatures too. Like us, they think, feel and relate. Not in exactly the same manner as we, but in a way appropriate to their kind. So like human beings, wolves have a well-being of their own to care about. Such ideas about the moral value of wolves are part of a larger sensibility that animals are not simply property. Wolves and other animals have their own intrinsic value, quite apart from the instrumental purposes that humans may have for them. This does not mean that we treat people and wolves in the same way. For instance, wolves have no political right to vote, nor should they; they are not the kinds of creatures who can do so. But what it does mean is that we ought to take the welfare of wolves into account whether in the outback or in our backyard. Wolves are thus part of the moral community along with human beings.

### **3. Wolf management is an ethical concern.**

If wolves have moral value, then our choices in wolf management are moral decisions.



Biologists have noted time and again that the recovery of wolves is not so much an ecological as it is a social issue. We have only to keep the human killers of wolves at bay, and wolves will thrive wherever there is sufficient prey and habitat. This is an insightful point. It becomes more powerful when we recall how ethical norms condition our willingness to live with wolves.

The vilification of wolves in Europe and North America are cases in point. Historically, anti-wolf sentiment took on the form of a moral argument against wolves. Wolves were considered villains, varmints and vermin. They were criminals preying on innocent victims like deer, cattle and sheep. They were the spawn of Satan – even Satan himself – despoiling the landscape. Today, they are compared to terrorists threatening human communities. As a consequence of this reasoning, our societies killed wolves with a vengeance.

Over the last century, this caricature of wolves has been debunked. Ethicists have argued for the moral value of wolves. Scientists have demonstrated the importance of predation in the natural world. Environmentalists have mobilized broad public support for the conservation of biodiversity. These and other groups have upended the moral arguments against wolves.

In so doing, these groups have also cleared the way for a re-evaluation of wolves. We are beginning to ask ethical questions that go beyond biological suitability or social carrying capacity. We are asking how we 'ought' to live with wolves, and what our responsibilities are to wolves themselves. Please do not miss the significance of this. The ethics of wolf recovery has been ignored in public deliberation for decades. This has impoverished our policy options regarding wolf recovery. Attending to the ethical questions promises a better approach to wolf recovery in Europe, North America and elsewhere.

#### 4. A sound science requires a sound ethics.

In my travels and public speaking, I have said this time and again, but it bears repeating. A sound science requires a sound ethics.

When discussing predator management, we are likely to hear praises of 'sound science'. Sound science is supposed to be the evidence-based, theory-rich baseline for managing wolves. Yet as previously noted, humanity's trouble with wolves is really a moral conflict.

Science can provide us with important information about our ethical and social choices, but it cannot make those choices for us. So what we need is a sound ethics to complement the science of wolf recovery, and guide our policy choices. What would this ethic look like? To my mind, it must meet three criteria:

- A sound ethics must recognize the *moral value* of wolves;
- A sound ethics must highlight the *moral significance* of wildlife advocacy, management and science;

- A sound ethics must emphasize the *practical value* of ethics in the recovery of wolves.

Human action has always had a real and frequently tragic impact on the well-being of wolves. Whether intentional or not, wolf management is always laden with ethical motivations and consequences. Paying attention to the criteria above will help us identify the moral assumptions at work in diverse visions and practices of wolf recovery.

My sense is that wildlife professionals are beginning to appreciate the moral dimensions of their work. I have talked with hundreds of students, advocates, scientists, government officials and the like about the ethics of wolf recovery. Most of them care deeply about the well-being of people, animals and the places they inhabit. It is this caring that forms the foundation for their moral sensibilities, and their longing to bring ethical criteria into their work.

What I find tragic is how graduate education and professional training often beat these sensibilities into a submission to some illusory 'value-free' science. Equally heartbreaking is that many individuals are forbidden to express these moral sensibilities by the agencies, corporations or non-profits for which they work. I hope it is obvious by now that this silence must be broken.

#### 5. The recovery of wolves will help restore our relationship to nature.

Wolf recovery is important to the well-being of wolves. Arguably that is moral reason enough for our participation in robust recovery efforts. But it may also be important to us as a step in restoring our broken relationship with nature.

Just as our world is deeply troubled, our relationship to nature is broken. The scale of human-induced environmental problems is too massive to deny, eg, global warming, deforestation, desertification, extinction, invasive species, over-population, over-consumption, and pollution. Yet there is still time to acknowledge our responsibilities, space to restore the natural world, and a place for a nature-friendly culture. Wolves can help us in this regard.

Humanity has a special history and relationship with wolves. Despite the differences, *Canis lupus* and *Homo sapiens* readily communicate, so much so, that wolves were the first large mammal to co-evolve with humans. Some prehistoric peoples modelled their societies after wolf packs, and some wolves were domesticated to become the dogs of today. Indeed, wolves and dogs have been so important to the development of human culture that some scholars joke about reclassifying humanity as *Homo lupus*! This relationship is amongst the best places to redefine our place in the natural world.

The recovery of wolves across the world would be a major step forward. In the first place, it would require that we cultivate a respect for the intrinsic value and well-being of wolves and their habitats. This will have obvious benefits for other animals and

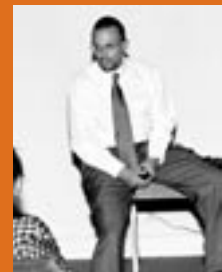
natural communities. In the second place, it would promote the ecological health of the landscape. Wolves are top carnivores that help maintain biodiversity and ecological function, with respect to everything from forest ground cover, to the incidence of song birds, to the control of deer populations, to the spread of Lyme's disease. In the third place, a broad recovery of wolves would be evidence of our moral health. If our societies can learn to live alongside wolves, we are one step closer to living in sympathy and sustainably with the rest of the natural world.

#### Conclusion

I have no doubt we will face hard choices about wolf recovery. While human interests should not trump the welfare of wolves, the needs of wolves do not automatically override the well-being of people. Remember that both people and wolves have moral value. There must be a dynamic synthesis of the two. This synthesis is best reached through win-win solutions that protect ethical, ecological and social values. Sometimes, however, we are faced with situations on the ground that require choosing the well-being of one over the other. These are the hard cases of ethics and policy. We should not deny they exist, nor should we overstate their importance.

If we want free-roaming wolves to survive this millennium, we will have to make better policy choices about 'how we ought to live' with predators and other wild animals. We will have to accept our moral responsibilities to a mixed community that includes both humanity and wolves. And if we proactively act with ethical concern for the wolves that can recolonise or be restored across the landscapes of this planet, we may even cultivate a culture that honours and celebrates people, animals and the rest of nature.

Cheers, Bill



Bill Lynn is the founder and Senior Ethics Advisor of Practical Ethics ([www.practicaletethics.net](http://www.practicaletethics.net)), and a professor at the Center for Animals and Public Policy at Tufts University ([www.tufts.edu/vet/cfa](http://www.tufts.edu/vet/cfa)). If you have a question you would like to address to Bill, or a comment on *Ethos*, please write him at [williamlynn@practicaletethics.net](mailto:williamlynn@practicaletethics.net).



# The Red Wolf Celebrating 20 Years of Recovery

by Neil Hutt

Photos by

US Fish and Wildlife Service

*"Can there be any higher calling than saving from oblivion a fellow passenger on spaceship Earth?"*

*Walter Medwid, Executive Director, International Wolf Center*



The saga of the red wolf – its decline, extinction in the wild, and its return to a portion of its historic range – is one of the most dramatic stories in all of wildlife conservation. The decision to save a keystone species from oblivion by capturing the last survivors, breeding them in captivity, reintroducing their offspring several generations removed from freedom, and nurturing their recovery on the ground, is surely a milestone worthy of celebration and reflection.

Just twenty-one years ago, there were no known red wolves left in the wild. They were gone, vanished from the landscape in the southeastern quarter of the United States where they historically roamed for at least 1,500 years before the first settlers arrived in what was called the New World. A separate species from the gray wolf (*Canis lupus*), the red wolf (*Canis rufus*) was driven to extinction by habitat destruction and a brutally effective extermination campaign waged by private citizens and the federal government, both of which endorsed the notion that the only good wolf was a dead wolf. The weapons in the war against the wolf were savagely cruel; wolf dens were burned, pups destroyed. Wolves everywhere in the U.S. were shot, trapped, tortured and poisoned, until by the mid-20th Century, only a remnant



The Red Wolf – Celebrating 20 Years of Recovery







population of 500 gray wolves remained in the lower 48 states – in far northern Minnesota. The red wolf, too, had all but disappeared.

Fortunately for the gray wolf, numerous healthy populations of this species lived in neighbouring Canada, thus making possible the reintroduction of wild wolves to Yellowstone National Park and to central Idaho in the mid-1990s. However, by the time it was discovered that the red wolf had been virtually eliminated from what remained of the eastern forests, it was almost too late. There were no reservoirs of red wolves anywhere else.

By the mid-1960s, the last red wolves, whose range once extended as far north as New England and as far west as Texas and Illinois, struggled to hang on in their last holdout – the mosquito-infested salt marshes of the highly industrialized and heavily populated western Louisiana and eastern Texas Gulf Coast. In this barely marginal wolf habitat, red wolves died of

hookworm, heartworm, mange and starvation. As wolves were eliminated, the ever-adaptable western coyote, which could withstand the poisoning and trapping better than the wolf, expanded its range eastward, filling the niche once occupied by its larger canid cousins.

With their numbers plummeting, the last red wolves began mating with invasive coyotes in a phenomenon known as ‘hybrid swarm’; the loss of a species through hybridization. Even though the federal Endangered Species Act did not become law until 1973, some biologists in the 1960s urged that immediate steps be taken to keep the red wolf from becoming extinct. The United States Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) responded by attempting to establish a coyote-free zone around the final habitat of the red wolf. The effort failed, however: Not only was there was no way to shield the red wolves from encroachment and dilution by coyotes, but it was often difficult to distinguish hybrid canids from the remnant pure red wolves. And there were very few uncompromised red wolves – far fewer than anyone had estimated.

The situation was critical. As packs were fractured, coyotes slipped quickly into red wolf territories. In a last-ditch effort to save the red wolf, wildlife managers decided to take a desperate risk. Their plan had no precedent. Moreover, it seemed to fly in the face of the 1973 Endangered Species Act (ESA) which mandated the USFWS to save endangered animals in the wild. But the ESA



also gave wildlife managers the hope and courage to move forward with a plan. Aware that they might be making an irreversible mistake, biologists live-trapped and removed the few remaining red wolves from the Gulf Coast in the hope that the animals would breed in captivity. In 1980, when that daunting job was done, the red wolf was declared officially extinct in the wild.

Among the first quiet heroes of red wolf recovery were the government trappers, who worked for several years under trying conditions to collect approximately 400 canids. Only 43 of these animals were selected to be sent to the Point Defiance Zoo and Aquarium in the Pacific Northwest region of the U.S. Located in the state of Washington, Point Defiance Zoo boldly stepped forward to take on the pioneering captive-breeding experiment.

Based on morphological evidence, just 17 of the 43 original candidates were found to be pure red wolves, a frighteningly low number to stand between possible recovery and obliteration of the species. The answers to so many questions hung in the balance: Would the wolves live in captivity? Would they breed and produce healthy offspring? Would those captive-born wolves survive in the wild? Fortunately, 14 of the wolves did breed successfully, and gradually over the years, the numbers of red wolves increased.

After generations of selective breeding at Point Defiance Zoo and Aquarium, and other special Species Survival Plan facilities, the first four pairs of captive-raised red wolves were reintroduced to the wild in 1987 on the Alligator River National Wildlife Refuge in northeastern North Carolina. This refuge, located on a thumb of land known as the Albemarle Peninsula, was coyote-free at that time, and the fact that it was surrounded on three sides by water would help the USFWS monitor and manage invasive coyotes.

No one could be certain that the wolves would survive outside the caged enclosures where they were born, the only home they knew. Again, there were more questions than answers. Would these wolves breed in the wild? Could they tolerate rain and wind, the raw cold of a coastal winter and the fierce heat of summer? Would they











hunt and kill enough prey to live and to reproduce? There were no historical guidelines for this great experiment in wildlife recovery. It was a first, and it was up to the USFWS Red Wolf Recovery Team biologists to monitor the wolves, to infuse more captive-bred animals into the region, and to hope some of them would survive.

And survive they did! Not all of them, but enough so that breeding pairs produced pups born in the wild, and they in turn formed new packs. New generations of wild-born wolves thrived on raccoons, nutria, marsh rabbits, rodents and white-tailed deer, and slowly their numbers increased.

Twenty years have passed since the first red wolves were released at Alligator River National Wildlife Refuge. Now, approximately 120 red wolves roam the five-county, 700,000 hectare recovery area. Many of them also roam free on the Pocosin Lakes National Wildlife Refuge, Mattamuskeet National Wildlife Refuge, and on private property.

The 20th anniversary of the Red Wolf Recovery Program marks a significant achievement in wildlife conservation. We have learned much over the years. We have learned that we can wipe out wolves, and we have learned that we can restore them. And we know that bringing a species back from virtual extinction comes at an enormous cost, not only in dollars but in terms of human dedication, skill and commitment. We also know that living with wolves and other major predators will become increasingly challenging in the 21st Century as wild lands disappear, and habitat for wildlife becomes more fragmented.

What will the future hold for the red wolf and its cousin, the gray wolf, as humans

encroach on the space needed by large carnivores and the prey upon which they depend? Should we make room for these animals? How can this be accomplished? What reasonable steps can be taken so that wolves and humans can coexist?

The Red Wolf Coalition, a non-profit organization working in partnership with the USFWS Red Wolf Recovery Team, has taken up this huge challenge. Northeastern North Carolina, with its rural landscape and unique beauty, is home to the only wild population of red wolves in existence. The Red Wolf Coalition encourages people, no matter where they live or what they do, to work together to ensure that these elusive and endangered animals are never again on the edge of extinction. At the same time,



the Coalition is working with local residents and businesses to find ways that red wolves can be of economic benefit to this rural region.

The Coalition is determined to expand its membership and base of support throughout the United States and abroad. The organization's long-term goal is to build an educational and interpretive Red Wolf Centre where visitors can view exhibits, participate in programs and field trips, and view a resident group of red wolves in a spacious natural enclosure. The Centre's educational mission will also focus on the biological diversity of the region, and on the myriad wildlife species native to the area's ecosystems.

Red wolf restoration will always be geographically limited, even if two additional reintroduction sites are found. However, thanks to visionary scientists, dedicated field biologists and partners, and effective modern management tools, the outlook for the red wolf is cautiously optimistic. But no matter what the future brings, the Red Wolf Recovery Program has accomplished a great deal. Two pivotal questions have been answered: Could captive-born wolves survive and breed in the wild? Would humans tolerate living in close proximity to wolves? The answer to both is 'yes': The wolves have succeeded in their return to the wild, and humans and wolves are coexisting, thanks to public education efforts and the quick response by managers to any incident that could cause antagonism and problems for the recovery program. The anniversary of the Red Wolf Recovery Program celebrates 20 years of daring and innovative wildlife management, and increasing public support for this rare and beautiful wolf.



***Cornelia Hutt is chair of the Red Wolf Coalition board of directors. She is also a member of the International Wolf Center board of directors, where she chairs the Education Committee. The author wishes to acknowledge the assistance of Diane Hendry, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Red Wolf Recovery Team Outreach Coordinator, in preparing this article.***



# Predators, People & Problems

*Article and photos by Peter Cairns*



It is difficult to pinpoint exactly what it is about a predator that draws us in. Somewhere deep inside us we are instinctively excited by their presence. Science cannot measure it and political policy is reluctant to acknowledge it, but it is undoubtedly real. Very few of us remain indifferent towards those animals that need to kill to survive.

Recent decades has seen the return of many predators to modern Britain. Red kites, buzzards, sea eagles and pine martens have clawed their way back, assisted by more stringent protection and a significant shift in society's attitudes. But this latter point has brought us to a crossroads. Our changing lifestyles and increased affluence have afforded us the opportunity of charity

towards erstwhile competitors. The discovery of 'predator sympathy' would have been alien to most land managers of the past and has met head-on with those who retain a more traditional outlook on wildlife management.

The result is that Britain's predators today mean vastly different things to different people. For some, they are symbolic of a wildness we once knew, they are key to the ecological integrity of our countryside. They embrace notions of nobility and power. They make us feel good. For others, they represent competition for our game interests and pose a threat to our domesticated animals. They are an inconvenient drain on resources and compromise our leisure pursuits. They have no place in our orderly lives where man has dominion over nature.

This clash of perceptions and priorities manifests itself in a battle between a wide spectrum of single-interest groups, all competing to influence the predator management process. Such groups have become highly-skilled in filtering 'factual' information to the public which best serves their agenda. Managing predators today is therefore rarely about the animal itself – it is about managing people's attitudes – what we believe, what we value and how we perceive our dependency on nature.

Throughout North America during the pioneer years, there was one question that no-one could answer: what good were wolves to anyone? Aldo Leopold, forester and spiritual leader, was the first to craft a





response to this question: 'the last word in ignorance is the man who says of an animal or plant: What good is it? If the land mechanism as a whole is good, then every part is good, whether we understand it or not. Who but a fool would discard seemingly useless parts?'

Leopold's innovative thinking came too late for America's wolves – the war was already won. But in 1995, the American public voted to restore the wolf to the Northern Rockies, an event that turned out to be not only ecologically significant, but socially symbolic. Ed Bangs, the man in charge of all wolf decisions in the Rocky Mountains has said: 'People don't hate wolves; they hate what wolves symbolise. People don't love wolves; they love what they symbolise. The reality is always somewhere in between.'

How much of what we all feel about the wolf – good and bad – is based on what we know of its biology? How many of us with an opinion can claim our views to be based on fact rather than anecdote? How easy is it therefore to make assumptions and generalisations which may nurture prejudice in others?

And so it is with all predators.

Here in Britain, we haven't had to answer difficult questions about wolves for three centuries but nevertheless, the issues surrounding today's predators are not so different. Whether we are willing to share our space with predators and to what extent, are questions that apply equally to the urban fox, the recolonising pine marten and the reintroduced sea eagle, as they do to the wolf.

In recent years, I have spoken to hundreds of individuals and organisations with an interest in predators. Whilst there are those who are able to adopt an ecology-driven, longer-term, objective outlook towards our relationship with other species, they are in the minority. A high proportion of the British public seems pre-occupied with the 'me-now' principle: 'I'm only interested if it affects me now'.

Predators are fine as long as they stick to our rules. Charity can be short-lived when our own economic or leisure pursuits are compromised. This principle applies to the pigeon fancier detesting peregrines for their predation on prize-birds to the householder advocating fox control for their tendency to dig up flower beds. And everything in between.





Throughout human history, we have managed and manipulated wildlife populations to our own ends, playing the God-like role of deciding which species are allowed to prosper and those that are not. Wild animals – predators in particular – continue to be hostages to our attitudes. Nowhere is this more apparent than in the hotly-contested debate over fox hunting.

The fox has become the epitome of confused attitudes towards Britain's predators, the ultimate symbol of predator schizophrenia. Britain has always been awash with fox stories and there is never a shortage of people willing to tell you, with the voice of authority, how the fox is cruel and ruthless on the one hand, or beautiful and benign on the other.

Hunting foxes with hounds became illegal throughout Britain in 2005. Amidst the celebrations amongst anti-hunting lobbyists, there were widespread claims that in the absence of hunting, foxes would proliferate causing extensive economic damage. Indeed, following the foot and mouth outbreak of 2001 when fox hunting was temporarily suspended, some farming magazines were

reporting a doubling of the fox population, something that research later found to be unfounded. Other research has found that neither hunting, snaring, shooting nor the death of 100,000 foxes on our roads each year, affects the overall fox population. So if foxes are unaffected by hunting at a species level, what's all the fuss about?

The Countryside Alliance consider the ban on hunting to be an attack on what is perceived as the rich and privileged, an issue of class warfare rather than fox welfare. I spoke to a huntsman in Quorn, Leicestershire who offered an insight into the root of this bitter divide. "What we hate is those bloody townies telling us what we can and cannot do," he told me. There was no mention of the fox in what is clearly a melting pot of social division.

Recent years have seen a transformation in what predators mean to people but there are many entrenched positions all hiding behind

their respective fences. The mud-slinging that then characterises predator discussions does nothing to further constructive dialogue. The secret surely lies in taking the fences away.

How easily this can be achieved will depend on the value that society places on the role of predators in our lives. This is different for everyone but in considering the longer-term view, should we not avoid the temptation to always measure other species in terms of what they can do for our balance sheets?

In a rapidly changing world, an increasing amount of evidence is mounting which suggests that nature is not only good for us but is an essential component of our future lives. If we accept this, then we must surely accept nature as a complete ecological package – we cannot pick and choose those bits that suit us and discard the rest. In Aldo Leopold's words, "If the land mechanism as a whole is good, then every part is good."

Science and legislation alone will not ensure a long-term coexistence with those species that in some cases, we took to the very brink of extinction and beyond. People will do that.

Tooth & Claw is an independent media education project which explores our complex and fascinating relationship with predators – past, present and future. Using powerful imagery and accessible storylines, the project examines how our attitudes towards predators and their management, are distorted by myth, culture, politics and economics.

Tooth & Claw provides a meeting place between anecdote and science and in doing so nurtures a better understanding of natural predator-prey mechanisms and encourages empathy with different points of view.

Ultimately, Tooth & Claw asks searching questions of all of us. It exposes our fears, our prejudices and our inconsistencies and affords us a window on our changing relationship with the natural world. We are reminded of our own place in nature – as the most powerful predator of all.

[www.toothandclaw.org.uk](http://www.toothandclaw.org.uk)

## Peter Cairns

Based in the heart of Scotland's Cairngorms National Park, Peter Cairns is a freelance nature photographer with a deep fascination for our relationship with the natural world. In addition to documenting Europe's high-profile wildlife species, his work focuses on a diverse range of issues such as wildlife management, ecological restoration, eco-tourism and evolving land-use regimes. In Tooth & Claw, the realisation that wildlife politics is not about wildlife but about us, comes to the fore.





