



The impact of the wolves' population on the environment and rural communities

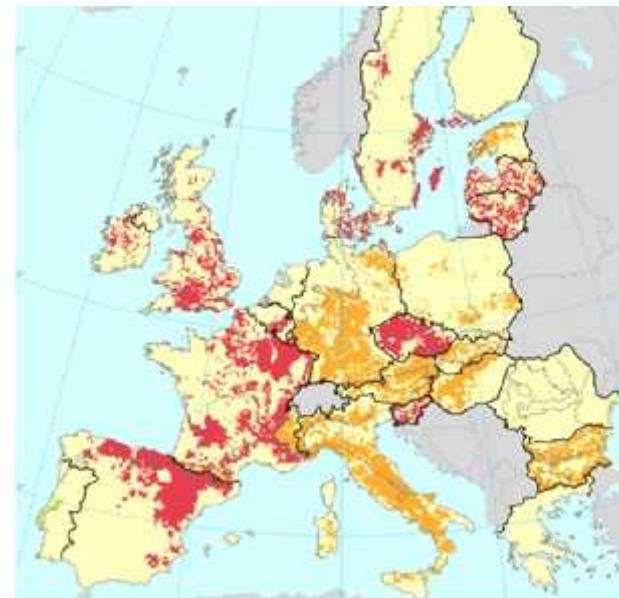
Michèle Boudoin, Chairwoman of the Copa-Cogeca
Working Party on Sheepmeat / December 2019

copa***cogeca**
european farmers european agri-cooperatives

Wolf population in the EU, their impact on the environment and rural communities



EU wolf population size is around **13 -14 000**. The trend is **increasing** and **EU status is Least Concern**.



Wolf population is overlapping with the important **protected habitat type of semi-natural dry grasslands** for which management **extensive farming systems** play a crucial role.



Wolf population in Europe

WOLVES IN GERMANY

German communities where wolves have been sighted — alone, in pairs or in packs.

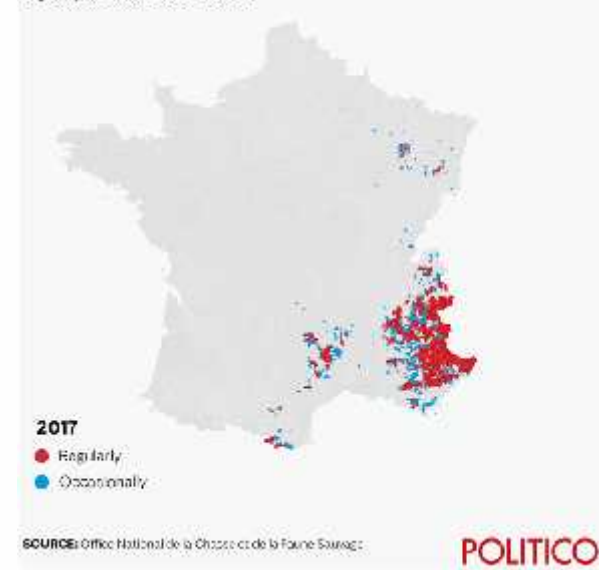


All different populations of wolf in Europe are either stable or increasing.

The IUCN estimates now put the upper range for Iberian (Spain) subpopulation at 2,880 wolves (2500 in 2016) and Karelian (Finland) subpopulation at 234 wolves (200 in 2016.).

WOLF SIGHTINGS IN FRANCE

French municipalities where wolves have been sighted, either occasionally or regularly, between 2003 and 2017.



In Western and Central Alps the total number wolves in 2015/2016 was estimated to be 420-550, and in 2017/18 it may be estimated to 550-700, **increasing on average by 10-20% per year.** (IUCN) In France, threshold of scientifically fixed viability of 500 wolves was reached by the end of the winter of 2018.

Damages by wolf and other large carnivores- Farmers' experience





Damage vs. Manage- Farmers' experience



*I woke up, **ran into the fence**, saw the sheep running towards me. It was dark, something was chasing them ... I could hear howling ...*

*When everything stopped, I visited the flock and it was immediately clear that the damage was big. In the morning **I counted 30 victims**, mostly lamb and several sheep."*

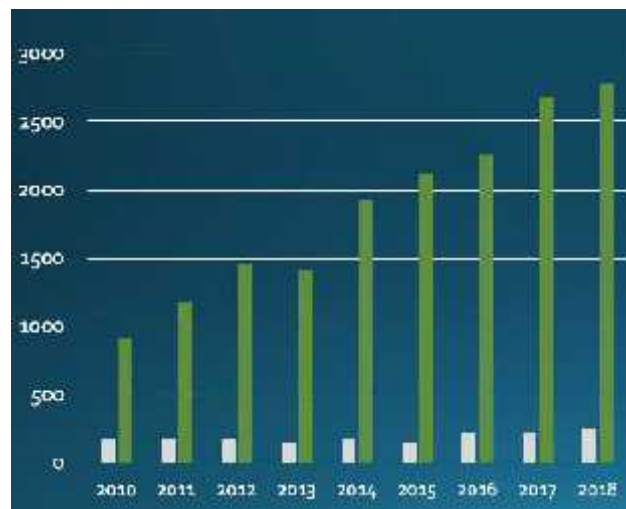
Croatian farmer, 2019



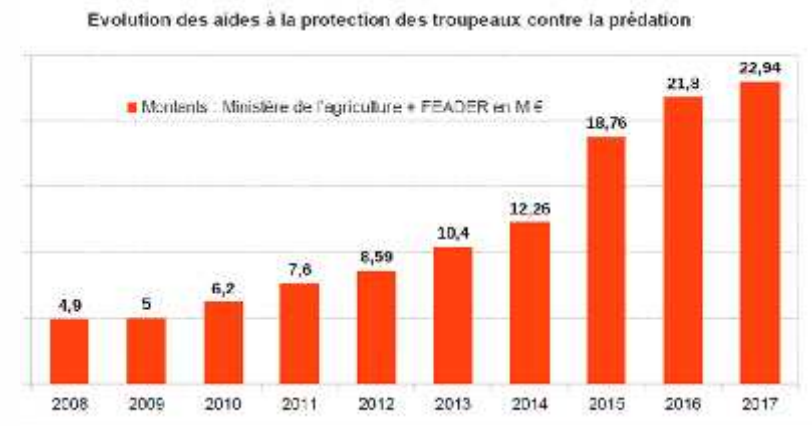
Damage vs. Manage - Impact in France

In 2018 **wolf** compensation amounted to **€3.44 million**. There were **3265 attacks** with **10 853 killed animals**.

In 2018, **€24.66 million were provided to finance flock protection measures** (compared to €4.9 million in 2004)



□ Unprotected ■ Protected

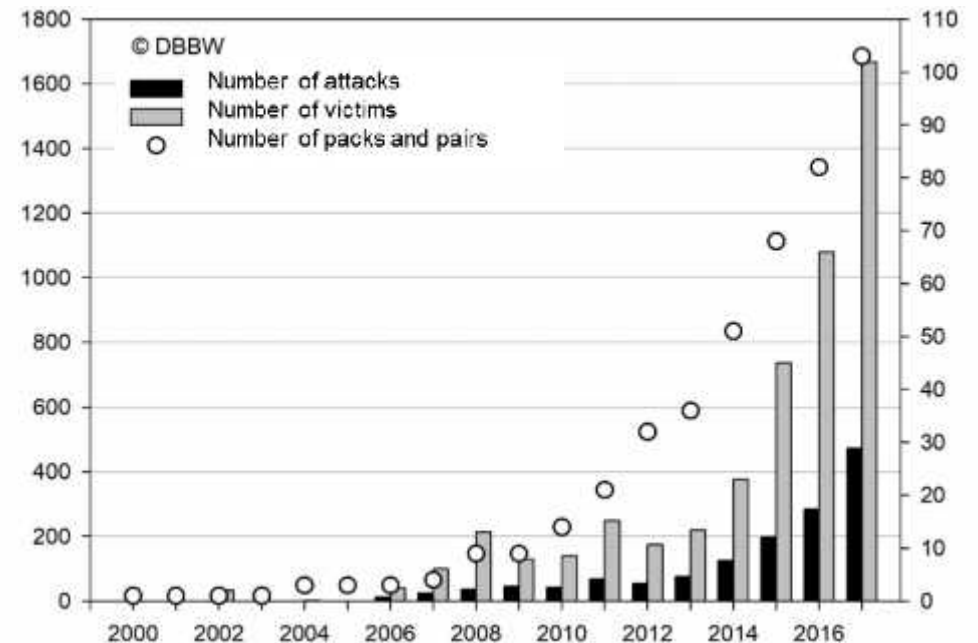




Damage vs. Manage – Impact in Germany

In Germany, **an average of 3.6 animals per wolf attack** were killed in 2017.

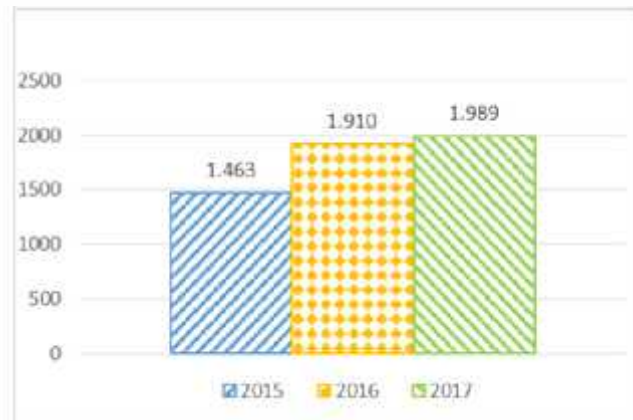
In 2017, expenditures for wolf-induced damage were highest in the three federal states with the most wolf territories.



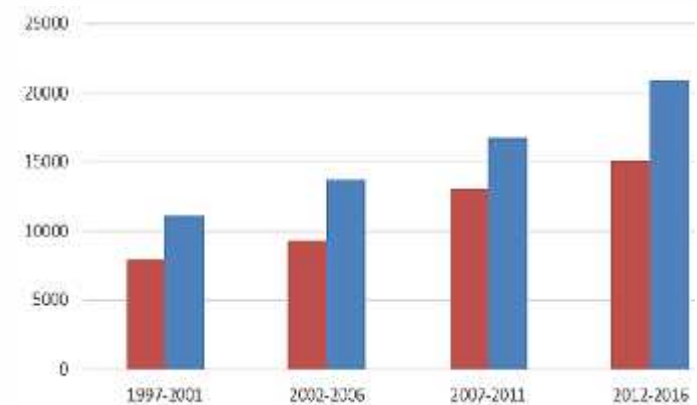


Damage vs. Manage – Impact in Spain (regional)

Castilla y León –
number of reported
attacks



Asturias –
number of claims / **number of affected individuals**





Protection measures

Expensive **protection measures which are no longer effective** have multiple limitations:

- * guarding dogs – costs (including feed and medical costs), number of dogs needed, can cause social conflicts and impact rural tourism etc.
- * fencing – high costs, landscape constrains, area to be covered, extra labour, time required to set it up and move it, etc.
- * shouting and gunfire are ineffective as the wolves return within hours or sometimes minutes, they are getting used to the presence of people etc.
- * housing - extra silage, extra labour and extra bedding, animal welfare concerns etc.

Keep financing these is questionable if they do not work, especially from the agricultural and rural development funds.



Communication on the issue – EU level

Conference ***Damage vs. Manage*** was held at the European Parliament on 18th March 2019 (supported by the Romanian Presidency and hosted by MEPs from EPP, ALDE and S&D political groups).

In October 2019, a **Joint declaration** of Denmark, Estonia, France, Italy and Latvia on wolf management was presented at the **AGRIFISH Council**:

*“REQUEST the Commission to take carefully into consideration the concerns presented by several Member States when making a new proposal to revise the Guidance on the strict protection of species of Community interest under the Habitats Directive, **taking into account this need for flexibility to sustainably manage wolf populations** in particular and as far as it is compatible with the Habitats Directive.”*



Conclusions – Farmers' perspective

Damages and ineffective and expensive measures, often only partially financed, have a negative impact on sustainability of farming activities.

Livestock grazing and pastoral farming play an essential role in preserving biodiversity and protecting species. It is in the interest of society and the economy to preserve pastoral farming through livestock.

In many regions, the **abandonment of pastures** resulting from the increased pressures from Large Carnivores is already leading to ecological succession, afforestation of land and less attractive landscapes.

Animal welfare and the physical integrity of livestock is a social and societal priority.



Our main messages

We need to act now!

- * **Better management of the population** of large carnivores;
- * Effective use of the **derogations** in all EU Member States;
- * **Revision of the Annexes** of the Nature Directives and Bern Convention;
- * Better **management of related damages**;
- * Maintaining the **viability of rural areas**.



THANK YOU FOR
YOUR ATTENTION!