**Names:** Megan Galenski, Adam Orlando, Deandre Gutierrez, Kristen Bashen, Alex Zamojski, Jennifer Phelan

***Wolves in Europe:*** Why are there more wolves in Europe than the continental US, despite higher human density and fewer protected areas?

**Introduction with thesis statement**

Across the world, wolves have been seen through a negative lens based on human-wolf interactions and attacks on livestock which eventually led to them being hunted nearly to extinction. These factors, along with habitat loss, have created hurdles for the conservation and recovery of wolves. However, over the past decade we have seen an increase in the wolf population in Europe. Although populations are more dense and closer in proximity, their population is now double the wolf population of the US. Thesis: Since wolf populations hit a minimum in Europe, there has been a positive shift in the societal perceptions of wolves, which has allowed their populations to recover and remain protected.

**Background**

* Historically up until the first half of the twentieth century, people hunted wolves in Europe and it wasn’t until the second half of the twentieth century that people’s interactions changed and they initiated movements to protect wolves. The struggle for resources between people and wolves caused tension, more specifically livestock predation. With attitudes changing to more accepting, wolf populations have expanded. For example, in the Netherlands, a 2015 study by the country’s Ministry of Agriculture, Nature, and Food Quality showed that 54% of people think that the wolf deserves a place in the Netherlands and 76% do not see the wolf as a threat to humans. There are measures that have been taken to mitigate risk of wolf and livestock interactions such as electric fences, or governmental action.In Romania, a 2016 ban on wolf hunting was introduced, which led to the increase of the presence of wolves.In combination, the romanians use old traditions of sheepdogs to protect livestock, which may have aided in wolf survival.

The United States has had similar historical relationships with wolves. A 2014 survey from Colorado State University found that 61% of U.S residents that responded had positive attitudes towards wolves.It is important to note that this is due to the perceived positive impacts of wolves and their ability to restore balance and provide ecosystem services by improving the environment.

**3-5 main points**

1. Why wolf populations shrunk in the US and Europe

* Europe: unrestricted hunting, poaching, habitat loss, loss of prey species
* US: protection of livestock, decreased prey availability, habitat loss, predator control

1. Wolf population recovery in Europe
   1. 25% increase in range in Europe in the past 50 years, resulting from reforestation efforts and progressive abandonment of agricultural land.
2. Challenges with recovery in the US -Deandre
3. Under the ESA, small wolf populations are considered “unviable; second-class populations” to larger wolf populations in terms of their recovery.
4. Fear of predators in the United States, conflicts with farmers and the effects of wolf populations on livestock.
5. Worries of detrimental effects of recovering wolves, such as unintended increase in predation, interruption of recreation, and potential changes to biodiversity.
6. Effects of public perceptions of wolves
   1. US: Generally positive (Protected areas far away from population centers)
      1. Laws vary from state to state but federal law supersedes.
   2. Europe: Highly divisive (Higher population density/ fewer protected areas → more human-wolf interactions)
      1. Variances in policy from country to country

**Conclusion**

As a result of conservation efforts in both the US and Europe, wolf populations are finally increasing for the first time in decades. Differences in management systems and policy implementation, coupled with public perception, result in different challenges faced by both. In the US, management is able to be implemented at the state and/or national level, encompassing the wolves’ entire range, whereas in Europe the fragmentation and differences in policies between nations is the root cause of many challenges that European wildlife managers face. Impenetrable border fences, illegal hunting, poor monitoring, and wolf/dog hybridisation are all threats to wolf populations in Europe, and require unique solutions in order to ensure a balanced and sustainable future for wolves in an ever changing world.

**3 potential experts**

1. Dr. Jerrold Belant - mammalian ecology and conservation - jbelant@msu.edu
2. Gregory McGee - [ggmcgee@esf.edu](mailto:ggmcgee@esf.edu)
3. Jonathan Cohen - [jcohen14@esf.edu](mailto:jcohen14@esf.edu)

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**Planning and logistics**

**-Who is responsible for what**

Kristen: reach out to interviewee

Adam: Main points

Deandre: Main points, editing

Megan: Main points

Alex: Conclusion, main points

Jen: Background

**-How will we communicate**

-Text/Email/Google Docs

**-Schedule of when tasks will be done**

**-**Have presentation done by November 29th

-Weekly updates with group members