



LIFE WOLFNET

LIFE WOLFNET is promoted by the National Park of Majella, National Park of Pollino, National Park of Casentino Forests - Mount Falterona and Campigna, Province of L'Aquila, Istituto Zooprofilattico Sperimentale di Lazio e Toscana, Legambiente. Eight public entities such as natural reserves, national and regional parks and Apennine provinces joined the project co-promoters, while all the regions interested by the activities have pledged their institutional support.

Project objectives

The main objective of the project is to develop and apply, in a co-ordinated way, ideal models for wolf protection and management within the Apennines context.

In particular, other project's significant aims are:

1. to reduce wolf-livestock conflict through the standardization, the co-ordination and the implementation of the damage-compensation-prevention-mitigation assessment system based on the specific environmental realities;
2. to fight back the phenomenon of illegal mortalities by means of actions aimed at the reduction and/or the suppression of direct persecution on wolves;
3. to reduce the sanitary risks able to affect negatively the wolf population dynamics;
4. to minimize the impact of human activities that can cause disturbance at the reproductive sites, during the reproductive periods and the other phases of the wolf biological cycle; Moreover, important aim of the project is to export a management model, long-term sustainable and adapted to the local, ecological and social-economical characteristics, to other protected areas and/or non protected territories of the APE network.

Actions and means involved:

The principal actions of the project are:

- creation of an Institutional Network for the unification of decision-making procedures concerning wolf management and in order to realize wolf conservation measures shared by the APE (Apennine Park of Europe) members (actions A2, A3, A4, A5, A6, A8, A9, A10, D2);
- implementation of the assessment procedures for damages caused by wolf to livestock (actions A3, C1). This action will be carried out through the application of the standardized assessment procedure arranged and utilized successfully by the PNM since 2002 and that will be adopted by the others partner protected areas (PNP, PNFC, PA).
- development of specific prevention strategies of the phenomenon of wolf predation on livestock, reduction of the wolf impact on breeding activities and improvement of the tolerance towards the species. These strategies will be adapted to the local realities and not developed upon general criteria. This target will be realized through the creation of a technical document to unify the prevention procedures used by the different partners and through the development of specific prevention measures and proper activities for the farmers and other stakeholders in order to minimize the wolf impact on human activities (actions A4, C2, D4)
- implementation of diagnostic, investigational and specialistic forensic activities contrasting the illegal persecution on wolves through the creation of specialistic investigation units, constituted by properly trained people, for the control and prevention of illegal wolf mortalities. This action will be coordinated by a series of operative protocols and plans on the retrieval of dead wolves and for the planning of surveillance and prevention activities on critical areas (actions A5, A6, A7, C3).
- reduction of the sanitary risks for the wolf through the evaluation and management of syntopic canine populations and their interactions with wolf. The action will be carried out through the execution of activities as: sanitary surveys on captured wolves or on wolves found wounded, captures of free ranging dogs, necropsies on wolves and dogs (actions A8, A9, C4).
- protection of wolf reproductive packs and precocious survey of risk situations throughout the
use of GPS telemetry (actions A10, A11, C5).

Expected results (outputs and quantified achievements)

1) Improvement of wolf damage compensation system (Action C.1) by standardised assessment, with:

- a reduction of the compensation time of 30% or at least all partners will obtain an adequate compensation time estimated in 2 months;
- a more adequate evaluation of the value of the heads killed by wolf;
- a decrease of direct persecution and resulting increase of survival rate and consistency of wolf packs/reproductive nuclei of 20%, in relation to the number of nuclei that will be monitored in the years of project.

2) Reduction of the wolf-livestock conflict consequent to the improvement of prevention systems: these systems will be able to reduce the wolf impact on human activities (action C.2), by the reduction of damages and consequent decrease of 20% claims, but proportionally with the increase of wolf population in study areas.

3) Institution of the specialist investigation units of emergency services and acquisition of specialistic methods and instruments for the repression of illegal wolf mortalities (action C.3): these mortality events will be repressed at least of 50%, instead it should be difficult to quantify absolutely these numbers, due to the probable improvement of carcasses detection in the wild, consequent to the institution of the investigation unit.

4) Realization of the sanitary surveillance system for the wolf. Limitation of mortality related to sanitary reasons (action C.4).

5) Well-time prevention and limitation of 100% predictable risks attributable to critical interaction with human activities in reproductive sites monitored by radiocollared wolves (action C.5).

6) Damage prevention by radiocollar monitoring of wolves: this kind of prevention measure can be applied above all in the most critical farming areas, with a reduction, for the involved farms, of 30% predation rate.

7) Institution of a permanent Network for the wolf in the APE (Apennine Park of Europe) territories (action D.2).

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