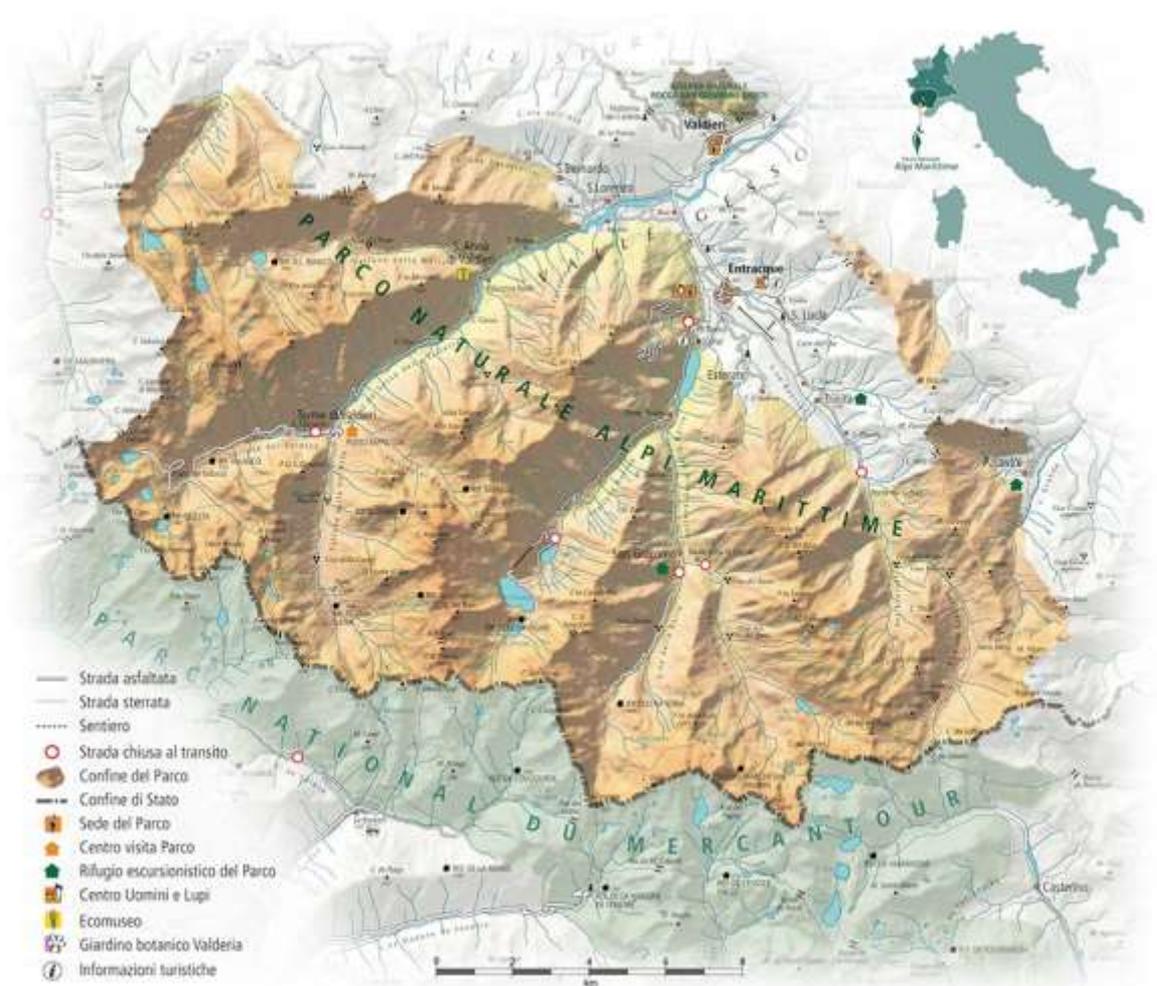


The return of the Wolf on the Alps: a study of the human dimension



Gianni Oppi - Parco naturale delle Alpi Marittime

Parco naturale delle Alpi Marittime



Surface:

27.945 hectares

Valleys:

Gesso, Stura, Vermenagna

Communities:

Aisone, Entracque, Roaschia, Valdieri, Vernante



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IBEX

Disappeared in 16th century – **reintroduced** in 1922



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BEARDED VULTURE

disappeared in 1930 - **reintroduced** in 1993



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WILD BOAR

Disappeared in 1820 – **returned** in 1920



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DEER and ROE DEER

Disappeared in 19° century – **returned** in 1990/2000



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MOUFLON

introduced (from Sardinia and Corse) in 1960



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CORMORANT

arrived in 1990's



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WOLF

Disappeared in 1923 – **returned** in 1992



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2004-2005: A STUDY OF HUMAN DIMENSION



THE STAKEHOLDERS INVOLVED



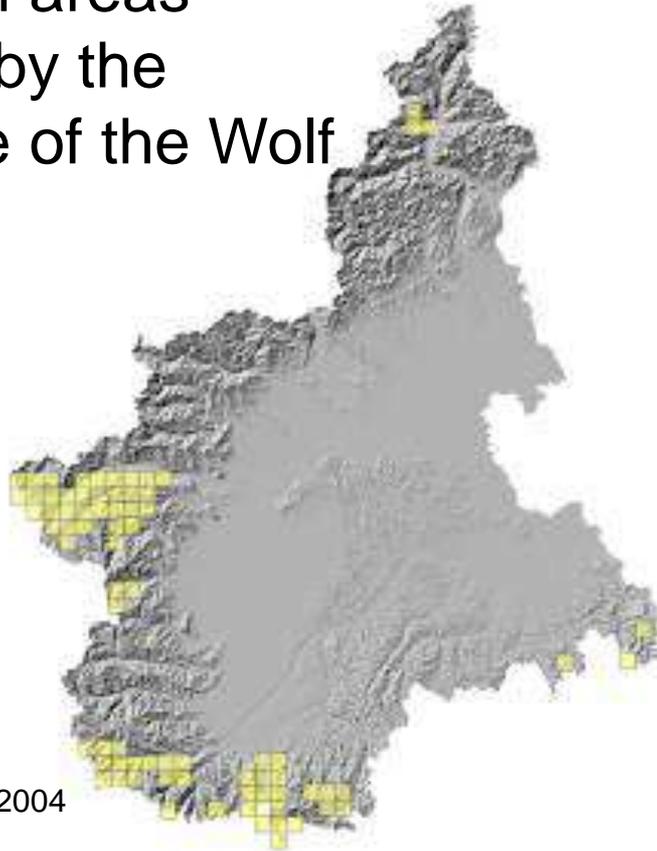
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THE AREAS OF THE SAMPLE

- The survey was carried out in the mountain areas affected by the presence of the Wolf



Wolf presence in 2004



THE QUESTIONNAIRE

- It was divided into different sections:
 - attitudes towards the wolf and its conservation;
 - perception of the impact of wolves on livestock and on wild ungulates;
 - danger of the wolf to man;
 - opinions on the different possibilities for management of the species;
 - knowledge of the biology of the species;
 - views on the question of compensation for damage to livestock;
 - socio-demographic information of the interviewee.

THE STATISTIC SAMPLE

- Resident people and students
 - in Cuneo province: 421 people and 133 students (6 Middle schools)
 - in Turin province: 431 people and 161 students (7 Middle schools)
 - in V.C.O. province: 207 people (102 in Domodossola town)
- Hunters and WWf members of the sample areas
- Cattlemen who bring in pasture their livestock in areas where the Wolf is present



THE INTERVIEWS

1693 interviews

- **220 hunters**
- **38 cattlemen**
- **80 WWF members**
- **1059 resident people**
- **294 students:**

“Confidence level”: 95%
(= *trust level*)



THE RESULTS: resident people



- over 60% in favor of the conservation of the wolf in their province
- 25% indifferent or in neutral positions
- about 55% in favor of the fact that the wolf remains a protected species;
- 35% in favor of numerical control of the wolf population.
- over 70% do not agree to the elimination of the wolf in their province.

THE RESULTS: resident people

- About wolf and wild ungulates:
 - 50% believe that wolves have a major impact on wild ungulates
 - 70% do not think that wolf predation reduces the populations of wild ungulates to unacceptable levels



THE RESULTS: resident people

- About Wolf and livestock:
 - the majority does not think that there is a drastic impact of wolves on livestock activities
 - more than 70% of respondents in the Cuneo and Turin, agreed or strongly agreed:
 - that farmers who suffer losses because of the wolf should receive a refund;
 - that all citizens should contribute to this refund.



IS THE WOLF DANGEROUS TO MAN?



- **question always at the centre of public attention**
- **high percentage of people feeling the wolf dangerous for people**
 - **very important to clarify this point**

THE RESULTS IN V.C.O. PROVINCE

- in VCO province there were only 1-2 wolves, and relatively small damages to livestock
- in Domodossola town, same results than in Turin and Cuneo province (urban people)
- but in the 6 little villages, (25% of people owners of livestock) emerges a position against the wolf decidedly hostile, like in hunters and cattlemen category.



THE RESULTS: hunters

- about 70% believe that wolf predation reduces populations of wild ungulates to unacceptable levels
- the vast majority think it is necessary to begin a numerical control of the species
- the vast majority believed that the wolf was reintroduced in Piedmont and that it is not true that the species has spontaneously recolonized the western Alps.
- in all categories, including even WWF members, **the majority did not believe that the wolf is back naturally in Piedmont.**
→ this point should be put at the center of every information campaign on the species!



THE RESULTS: farmers

- Their conflict against the Wolf depends on
 - problem of economic nature (damage suffered)
 - deep change in livestock management (surveillance)
- farmers believe that all energies are intended only for wolf conservation, not to solve their problems
- among farmers and hunters there is the **highest rate of correct answers** on the biology of the species



THE RESULTS: students and WWF members

- WWF members:
 - the wolf is a very positive factor, because of the important role for the balance of the populations of wild ungulates.
 - the wolf is not at all a problem for local farms
 - **low knowledge on the biology of the species**
- Students:
 - general positive opinion about wolf
 - **high disinterest on the subject:** they are the group less interested in receiving any information about the wolf in Piedmont.



RESULTS OF THE SURVEY

1. The attitudes towards the Wolf are not related either to the number of wolves, nor to damage caused to livestock.
2. the attitudes towards the Wolf are not related to a correct understanding of the biology of the animal
 - among breeders and hunters there is the highest rate of correct answers on the biology of the species, among the students and the WWF members the lower one.



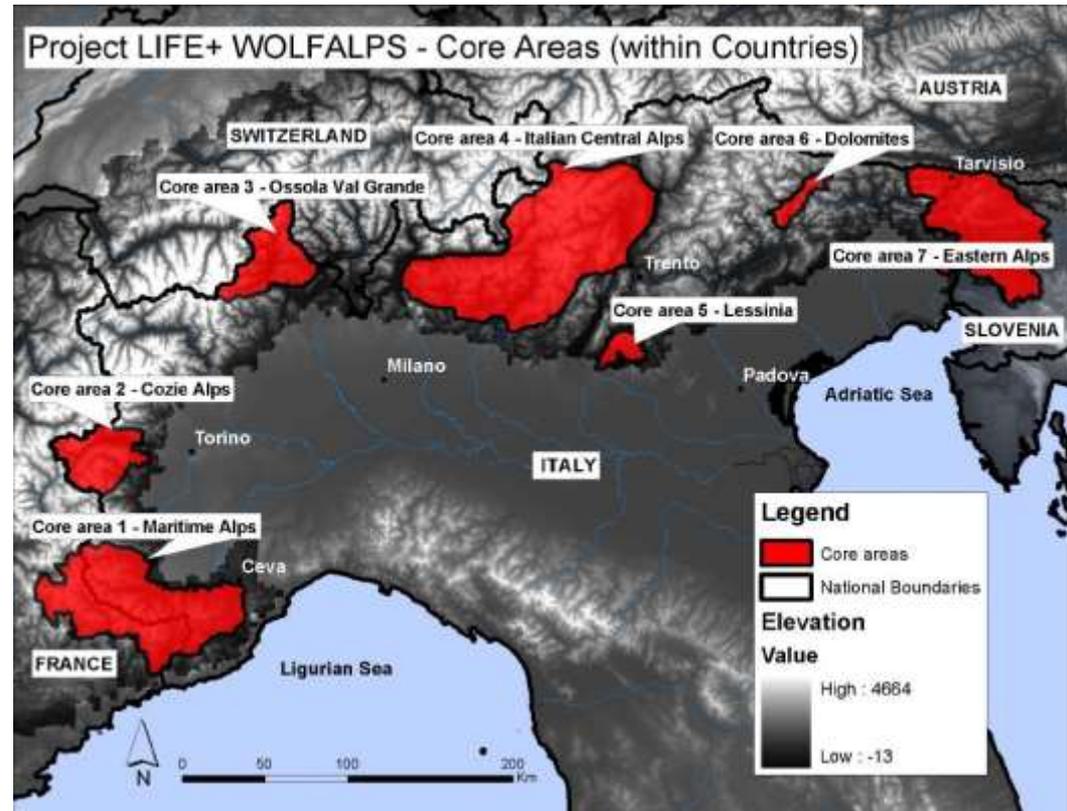
RESULTS OF THE SURVEY

3. the conflict with the Wolf is not tied to a correct understanding of the problem, but rather to the different values that are attributed to.
4. information and education is usually focused only on students and environmentalists, not for example on farmers and hunters.



10 YEARS LATER...

- In 2014, the project LIFE+ "WOLFALPS" has carried out a new survey to know the opinions of the resident population in some sample areas of the Alps, where the Wolf is present or we can predict its future arrival.
- The survey results are currently being processed, but we can anticipate some outcomes.



10 YEARS LATER...

1. the average level of knowledge of the species Wolf has not improved in 10 years;
2. opinion on the Wolf of the resident population and hunters and slightly improved but slightly decreased the percentage of those in favor to preserve them in Italy: in short, "the wolves are so beautiful, but I prefer them to stay away from my home";
3. opinion on Wolf of the breeders further deteriorated;
4. 35% of the residents
50% of the hunters
60% of the farmers
think that the Wolf attacks the people.
5. almost 50% of all respondents would be afraid to walk alone in a forest where there are the Wolves (but only 25% of the hunters: why they have the rifle with them?)



FINALLY, what should we do?

- to provide information and education to all stakeholders (breeders and hunters included) also if conflictual and difficult to reach (but very keen in these issues)
- to involve all stakeholders in the Wolf management
- to share solutions as much as possible, to build an effective policy for the management of the species



FINALLY, what should Rangers do?

- Basic tasks of rangers and ground staff are:
 - collect naturalistic data and information;
 - data will help the researchers to develop conservation strategies and information;



FINALLY, what should Rangers do?

- maintain and develop forms of personal communication clear, simple and direct with the local people, hunters and farmers
 - to convey confidence in the sincerity of the institutions in this controversial issue

FINALLY, what should we consider?



**The conflict between Wolf and Man is not strictly tied to the facts,
but to the individual perception
and the value attributed to the facts**

Special thanks to:



Regione Piemonte - Progetto "Il Lupo in Piemonte"

Studio di Human Dimension in Regione Piemonte

dr. Simone RICCI

dr. Federica GALVAGNO

2005



LIFE WOLFALPS



PROGETTO LIFE12 NAT/IT/000807

**"WOLF IN THE ALPS: IMPLEMENTATION OF COORDINATED WOLF
CONSERVATION ACTIONS IN CORE AREAS AND BEYOND"**

dr. Federica GALVAGNO

2015



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