



UNIVERSITY OF HELSINKI

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# The wolf debate in Finland

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Expectations and objectives for the management  
of the wolf population at regional and national level

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## Foreword

The wolf has returned to the Finnish countryside and once again there is no avoiding the fact that the interaction of man and wolf is an extremely painful one. Attitudes to the wolf divide Finns, and the wolf itself causes opinion to change fast once it has arrived in new areas. The wolf is a perpetual problem environmentally, something people have to live with on a daily basis. But what is the importance of social sustainability and how can protection of the wolf be reconciled with what local people see as a decline in the quality of life? How should the wolf issue be managed and who should act in what situation? These are the questions which have to be addressed in preparations for a national policy on wolves.

Studies relating to policy on large carnivores for the University of Helsinki's Institute for Rural Research and Training (Ruralia) represent a breakthrough, yet people in rural communities have always been at the centre of research. The sustainable use of natural resources is becoming more and more about socio-economic issues, with ecology obviously imposing its own set of conditions. An interdisciplinary approach to environmental questions is the only way really to try and understand phenomena.

This study focuses on the views and remarks of those whose life is tangibly affected by the wolf's return. The aim of the study is to construct a basis on which policies relating to the management of the wolf population can be built in the future. If we want to create solutions we need to make a thorough analysis of the background to the conflicts and disagreements and try to understand them. The wolf will never stop being a problem, but aggravating the issue is in no-one's interest, not least the wolf's.

The documented material in the study data is based on the considered views and opinions of some 2,000 people and the expression of their wish to be involved in the management of the wolf problem. But for the input of numerous organisations and individuals, there would have been very little to write about in this report.

The research project was sponsored by the Finnish Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry. Key partners in the collection and practical implementation of data were the Finnish Game Management Districts, the Finnish Game and Fisheries Research Institute, the Finnish Hunters' Central Organisation, Metsähallitus (the Finnish national board of forestry) and the Finnish Ministry of the Environment. The layout and final revision of the report were the responsibility of Communications Manager Jari Eloranta, Publication Secretary Jaana Huhtala and Office Secretary Tiina Jakonen. Marko Svensberg provided invaluable assistance in the storing and documenting of the data and proved to be an expert in Excel databases. Mari Pohja-Mykrä's and Sakari Mykrä's expertise in the history of policy on large carnivores was of immense help. The University of Helsinki would sincerely like to thank the sponsors and all the partners involved.

Seinäjoki 20.1.2005

Jukka Bisi and Sami Kurki



# Contents

<b>Abstract</b> .....	7
<b>1 Introduction</b> .....	9
1.1 Background to the study .....	9
1.2 Status of the wolf population in Finland .....	11
1.3 The wolf in current legislation – favourable conservation status .....	15
1.4 Some history regarding Finland’s policy on wolves and attitudes to them ..	18
1.5 Attitudes of the Finnish people to wolves and large carnivores – previous surveys .....	20
<b>2 Background to the management of the wolf population –     purpose and objectives of the study</b> .....	27
<b>3 Data and methodology</b> .....	28
<b>4 Results</b> .....	33
4.1 Written responses received from stakeholders .....	33
4.1.1 Regional distribution of the data presented .....	33
4.1.2 Stakeholders’ replies .....	34
4.1.3 Positive and negative views of the wolf and the wolf population ...	36
4.1.4 Views on maintaining interaction between man and wolf .....	42
4.1.5 Opinions on the size of the wolf population .....	45
4.1.6 Ways of controlling the wolf population .....	48
4.1.7 Problem wolves: how to define the notion and ways to deal with the problem .....	51
4.1.8 Recognition of conflicts in the management of the wolf population .....	51
4.1.9 Meetings between stakeholders and their contribution .....	52
4.2 The wolf debate – public hearings and their contribution .....	53
4.2.1 Meetings and participants .....	53
4.2.2 Areas for criticism in the wolf debate .....	55
4.2.3 The existence of the wolf, the growth in the wolf population and the problems that causes .....	57
4.2.4 Opinions on the size of the wolf population .....	59
4.2.5 Demands .....	61

<b>5</b>	<b>Written replies and speeches and remarks broken down by Game Management District</b>	63
5.1	The area with an established population in eastern Finland	63
5.1.1	The Game Management District of North Karelia	63
5.1.2	The Game Management District of Kainuu	69
5.1.3	The Game Management District of Kymi	75
5.1.4	The Game Management District of South Savo	81
5.1.5	The Game Management District of North Savo	85
5.2	The area with a developing population	91
5.2.1	The Game Management District of Central Finland	91
5.2.2	The Game Management District of Oulu	96
5.2.3	The Game Management District of Ostrobothnia	99
5.2.4	The Game Management District of Swedish-speaking Ostrobothnia	103
5.2.5	The Game Management District of Satakunta	107
5.2.6	The Game Management District of North Häme	110
5.3	The area where wolves are encountered occasionally	112
5.3.1	The Game Management District of South Häme	112
5.3.2	The Game Management District of Southwestern Finland	115
5.3.3	The Game Management District of Uusimaa	117
5.3.4	The Game Management District of Lapland	119
5.4	Synopsis of the replies at national level	122
<b>6</b>	<b>Discussion</b>	126
6.1	Summary of the main results	126
6.2	Barriers to consensus on wolves and their background	129
6.3	A socio-economically sustainable wolf policy	134
6.4	Epilogue	137
	<b>Sources</b>	139
	<b>Appendix 1. The questionnaire in the preparing of wolf management plan</b>	143

## **The wolf debate in Finland**

Expectations and objectives for the management of the wolf population at regional and national level

### **Abstract**

Over the past few years, the wolf population has increased and spread to new areas in Finland. These developments have highlighted people's conflicting attitudes to wolves and the different objectives for managing the wolf population. The wolf debate has been particularly heated in eastern Finland, where the wolf population and its growth are mainly concentrated. The supranational conservation objectives imposed by Finland's membership of the EU and the practical application of policy on wolves at regional level have led to conflict.

The aim of this study is to identify the objectives and expectations related to the growth in the wolf population, to examine their regional and national differences, to position the various interest groups in relation to the objectives and, in particular, to present the views of those who live in the areas where wolves occur and who interact with them. This was thought important, because it was assumed that the attitudes of these people are a determining factor in the successful management of the wolf population.

This study is qualitative in nature, and two main methods were used to collect its data. At regional level, all the key actors involved in wildlife, the use of nature and the monitoring of that use (generally referred to as stakeholders here) were asked to complete a written questionnaire on wolves. An estimated 1,000 people representing various interest groups were asked for their views. A forum for debate was also organised with these actors in each of the 15 game management districts. There their replies were heard and debated with the aim of fostering cooperation. The same process also took place with similar agencies at national level. In addition, 30 public hearings were held in collaboration with the Game Management Districts; each of these was attended by about 1,600 people, there to discuss wolves and the management of wolf populations. The meetings were recorded, the recordings were transcribed and the transcriptions were classified according to their contents, which were then analysed. There were some 2,000 such contributions at the hearings.

Attitudes towards wolves are generally negative and the wolf is seen essentially as a problem. Fear of wolves is common, and its roots may be attributed to such phenomena as wolves eating humans in the 19<sup>th</sup> century and related stories and myths about them. Fear of wolves provokes more discussion in western and southern Finland than in northern Finland. Wolves are believed to cause serious problems for reindeer husbandry, cattle and sheep farming and the use of hunting dogs. It is not only the damage which occurs which is thought to be a problem: the protection of animals, the prevention of damage and the constant concern for the safety of animals also influence attitudes.

The study identified some conflicts between different agencies and different regions concerning objectives for managing the wolf population. Most of the respondents and local people feel that the wolf population in eastern Finland has grown too large. At national level, many

would like to see the wolf population included among those species which are hunted in a regulated way with licences and the social impact of population growth taken into consideration in the management of the population. Those involved in hunting with dogs and reindeer husbandry are the most vociferous in their demands to reduce the wolf population and they also have the most negative attitudes towards wolves. In contrast to the other agencies, many conservationists and environmental authorities aim to expand the wolf population and find it difficult to accept hunting as a means of managing the population. These agencies see increased levels of knowledge and awareness-raising as the main way to maintain interaction between man and wolf, and they stress the importance of ecological sustainability. However, there is some conflict of opinion among conservationists.

The tolerance of the local population in some parts of eastern Finland has been stretched beyond breaking point. People living in areas where wolves occur feel that they can no longer influence decision-making which affects them and that the authorities, conservationists and the EU do not listen to what they have to say. Almost all respondents would like the wolf population to be more evenly distributed across the country, but those who dwell in the countryside outside eastern Finland are not keen to accommodate a growing wolf population. The difficulties of reconciling reindeer husbandry farming with wolf management are also generally recognised. Those most willing to expand the wolf population are from southernmost Finland.

There are markedly conflicting expectations from the national game authority, the Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry, and the Game Management Districts. Under immense pressure, the Ministry implemented a wolf policy which has been criticised by almost everyone. Likewise, the research into wolves conducted by the Game and Fisheries Research Institute has been hampered by conflicting objectives. The lack of trust between the various agencies is hindering efforts.

If consensus is to be reached on the issue of wolves there will need to be willingness on the part of the various agencies to compromise on their objectives. There has also been a number of calls for changes to legislation and its interpretation, concessions to which would promote consensus and tolerance with respect to wolves. They include reforming the system of compensation for damage and a clearer interpretation of the conservation status of wolves.

However, it seems unlikely that a policy on wolves could be established that would be endorsed by everyone. The range of interpretations made possible by the EU's species-specific legislation on conservation is in itself a major source of conflict. For example, the concepts of favourable conservation status and social sustainability are interpreted by each agency according to its own interests. Given the nature of wolves and the fears associated with them, there needs to be consensus on the management of the wolf population. As this issue is currently a bone of contention in the area of environmental policy, the conservation of wolves and the management of their populations are being made more difficult and this is also harming cooperation between various stakeholders.

**Keywords:** wolf, wolf debate, population management, favourable conservation status, social sustainability, consensus

# 1 Introduction

## 1.1 Background to the study

Finland had a relatively large wolf population up until the 1880s (Pulliainen 1974), but their systematic persecution virtually wiped them out for a long time. Later the population gradually recovered and in recent years there has been more significant growth.

The birth rate among wolves has developed particularly favourably. Whilst in 1996 just four wolf litters were discovered in the country, by 2003 that number had risen to 13. At the end of 2003 the Game and Fisheries Research Institute put the number of wolves in Finland at 150–165 (Game and Fisheries Research Institute, 2004). In 2004 the population strengthened once again: there were an estimated 16–17 litters. In addition, there are litters in Russia on the border with Finland which also come over to the Finnish side (Ilpo Kojola, personal communication).

The growth in the wolf population and the spread of wolves into new areas have brought with it very real challenges with regard to the management of the population. The last few years have witnessed hugely conflicting objectives concerning the wolf. There are powerful actors in the wildlife sector in Finland who have called for greater protection for large carnivores and criticised the solutions proposed or implemented by the game authorities and the police. At the same time, people in sparsely inhabited areas have insisted that there should be a stop put to the increase in large carnivore populations and that populations should be reduced. The European Commission has received complaints that Finland's policy on carnivores is both too lax and too strict. Just before this publication went to press the situation had led to the Commission taking Finland to the European Court of Justice over how laws pertaining to the hunting of wolves are applied in Finland.

Developments in the situation regarding large carnivores and dissatisfaction with the way populations are managed have even led to phenomena akin to a popular movement, such as the organisation of petitions. In 2003 and 2004, for example, 20,179 names were collected in a petition in eastern Finland to relax the current policy on carnivores and provide more opportunities for local people to have their say. The petition with its list of names was handed to the Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry (Leo Väisänen, personal communication).

Finland is not alone in bringing the wolf issue to a head. The same thing is happening almost everywhere in the world where wolves are encountered close to human activity. The wolf divides people pro and anti, and 'selling' the truth about the wolf has proven difficult (Mech & Boitani 2003).

The wolf and man share a long history. Occasionally they have derived benefit one from the other, but their interaction has mainly been marred by clear conflicts of interest and attitudes to wolves have reflected these. Notions of nature conservation and animal protection were first formulated in Finland towards the end of the 19th century, though for a long time those who spoke up for such principles took an altogether simplistic view of certain carnivores

– wolves included (Mela 1902, Renvall 1912, Palmgren 1913, Kivirikko 1940). It was not until the emergence of current thinking on nature conservation that the debate became more pluralistic in nature and conceded that wolves too had a right to life.

In Finland the wolf is classified as a game species and it is the Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry which is responsible for the management of its population. At regional level, the management of the populations of game species is the responsibility of the Game Management Districts, which are the administrative units of the Finnish Game Administration and, at the same time, of the Statutory Hunters' Organisation. They are coordinated at national level by the Finnish Hunters' Central Organisation. The Ministry of the Environment also has an authoritative role in this area. It determines the status of endangered species and thus has a significant influence on the treatment of wolves in Finland.

With its accession to the EU in 1995 and the guidelines handed it under the Habitats Directive, Finland has phased in amendments to its legislation on the wolf (Finnish Acts 666/1993, 1374/1996, 869/1998). The wolf is included in Annex IV of the Habitats Directive, in accordance with which the species is strictly protected and there can be no infringement of this unless it is under certain and closely regulated conditions.

In March 2000 the European Commission drew up a programme for the management of the populations of large land carnivores (Mission Statement: The Large Carnivore Initiative for Europe, 2000). Its aim was for Finland and a number of other countries to produce management plans for all large land carnivores. The Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry began drafting its management plan in 2002.

Towards the end of 2003 it asked the the University of Helsinki's Institute for Rural Research and Training (Ruralia) to design a research project to examine and clarify the socio-economic questions relating to management of the Finnish wolf population. This resulted in a project called 'Criteria for the Management of the Wolf Population in Finland', which would last 18 months. The aim of its first phase was to discover the views, expectations and demands of people in each region of the country with respect to the wolf and wolf policy.

This report presents the written responses and the discussions which were compiled from more than 200 stakeholders variously active in the regions in the area of nature and wildlife and their representatives as well as the remarks made on the wolf situation at 30 public hearings and by the 1,600 people or more who attended them. The topics include: what irritates people about the wolf, what they find charming, what they think about the action of the authorities, whether the wolf has a right to exist, what needs to be done about the management of the wolf populations, who should do it and when. These are the questions this report seeks answers to. The purpose is to give the views and state the objectives relating to the management of the wolf population in Finland with reference to the comments made by the thousands of people involved in this venture.

As a background to the report, first there is a description of the current status of the wolf population and that population's history in Finland. A previous survey undertaken in Finland is also examined, and the legal and protective status of the wolf is discussed. After that the

data and results of the study are presented and their significance (expressed as weighted values) is assessed mainly from the point of view of the management of the wolf populations. The aim is to establish a basis for dealing with the socio-economic questions relating to management of the wolf populations.

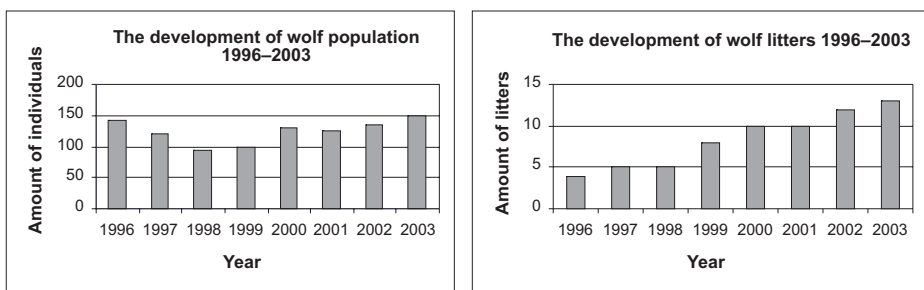
The focus of the discussions of the significance of the study's findings is concrete issues which are crucial for any future population plan. The data also provides a sound basis for a more theoretical analysis in terms of environment policy, although that is not as yet the purpose of this report. The data collected will nevertheless be used later on with this aspect of the issue in mind.

## 1.2 Status of the wolf population in Finland

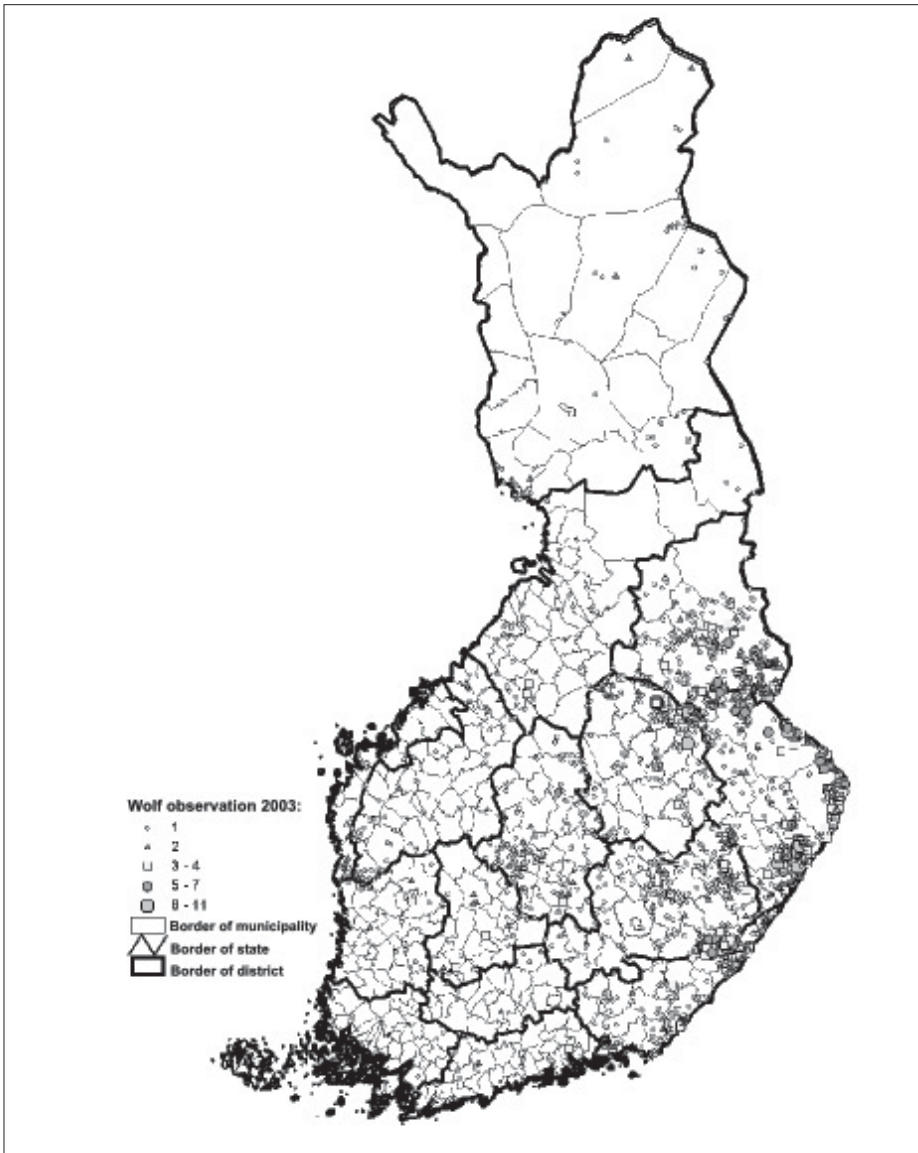
### Increasing population

At the end of 2003 the Finnish wolf population was 150-165, according to estimates by the Game and Fisheries Research Institute (Figure 1). In 2004 the population continued to grow slightly. The population was concentrated mainly in eastern Finland; around 70% of the wolf population lived in eastern and central Finland. It was in this area too that all the sightings of wolf litters confirmed in 2003 occurred (Figure 2). Besides the litters born and living in Finland every year a few packs occur in the Finnish-Russian border area. These use the border areas of both countries as their territory (Game and Fisheries Research Institute 2004, Kojola et al 2004).

Although statistics on the monitoring of populations do not suggest that the increase in wolf numbers has been in any way significant since 1996, the number of wolf lairs and litters of cubs born has clearly grown. While in 1996 the Game and Fisheries Research Institute reported the births of 4 litters of cubs in Finland, that had grown to 13 litters by 2003. In practice this has meant that the number of reproducing pairs has increased and permanent territories for wolf pairs have become established in Finland.



**Figure 1.** Growth in the wolf population and wolf litters in Finland 1996–2003 (Game and Fisheries Research Institute 2004).



**Figure 2.** *Distribution of wolf sightings reported by large carnivore community liaison officers in Finland 2002 (Game and Fisheries Research Institute 2004, Ilpo Kojola).*

## Spread of the population

A wolf pair and its offspring form a basic social unit in the wolf's life. In practice a wolf litter thus constitutes a whole pack. When a pair of wolves is preparing to mate once again they normally drive the previous year's cubs away from the pack. A pack led by a pair known as an alpha pair may thus be regarded as a kind of 'wolf pump', which sends out young wolves in search of their own habitats (Mech & Nelson 1990, Fuller et al 2003). In Finland the territory in which the wolf pack roams averages around 1,000 square kilometres in size (Kojola et

al 2004). In other areas of the world where wolves occur the territory varies greatly in size, depending on such factors as food, snow, etc. (Fuller et al 2003).

The increase in the number of young wolves in Finland has promoted their mobility, evident from the larger number of wolf sightings elsewhere in the country (Kojola et al 2004). The fact that young wolves are banished from the pack and wander in search of their own territories ('dispersal') has led to an increase in wolf sightings which have now taken place on the west coast of the country as well as southern Finland.

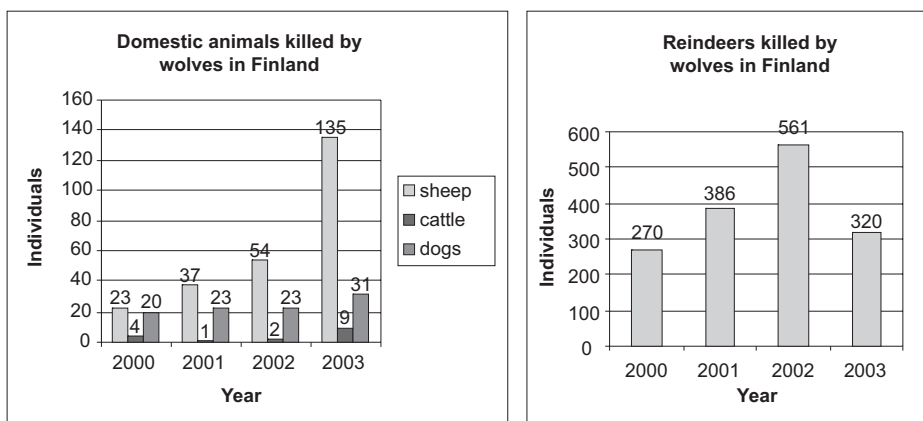
The monitoring of wolves with radio and satellite transmitters fitted to their collars has also shown that the routes which wolves take when banished from the pack are fairly random and are in no way predictable or conventional (Kojola et al 2004).

### Damage caused by wolves

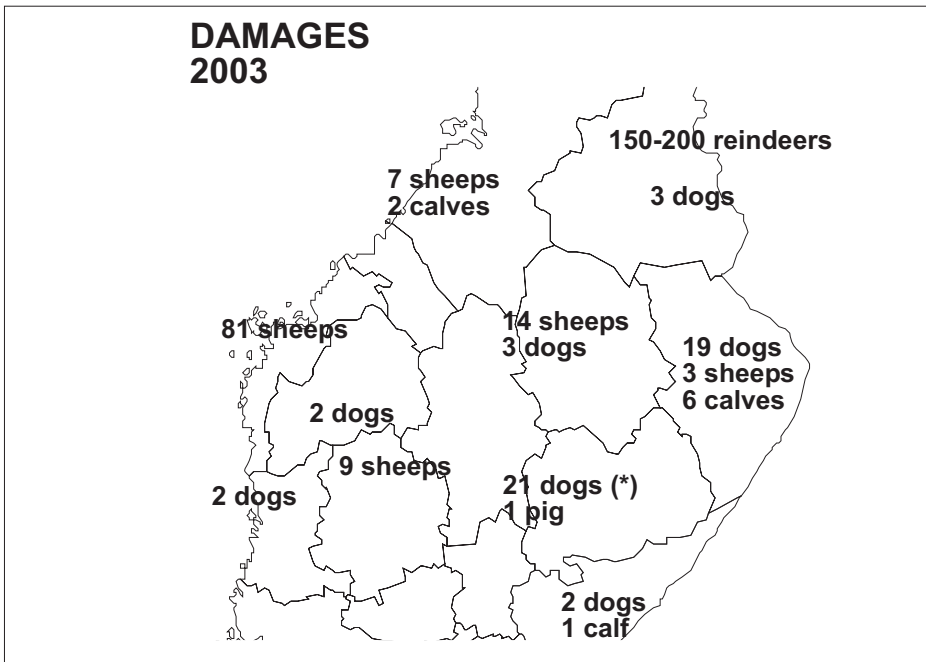
People's attitudes to wolves are shaped by such matters as how they act and, in particular, the damage they cause. Damage by wolves is compensated for under the Finnish Decree on Compensation for Damage caused by Carnivore Animals (277/2000). Each claimant has to pay an excess of 250€ for all damage occurring in one calendar year.

The largest category of loss or damage is that caused to reindeer by wolves, measured in terms of the number of animals which are lost. In recent years the number of reindeer killed by wolves has varied from fewer than 50 in 1995 to almost 600 in 2002. Damage by wolves has been on the up very recently (Association of Reindeer Herding Cooperatives). Investigations into damage to reindeer need to take account of the fact that not all reindeer killed by wolves are found.

Sheep are likely prey for the wolf, owing to their size, and the tendency of sheep to flock together and remain still when disturbed makes them easy prey for the wolf. There is some damage to sheep every year, and some cattle too end up as prey for the wolf (Figures 3 and 4).



**Figure 3.** The number of damages by wolves, known and compensated by authorities in Finland in 2000–2003.



**Figure 4 .** Regional distribution of damage caused by wolves in Finland in 2003. The data only includes reported damage for which compensation was paid, excluding 21 cases of damage to dogs in South Savo (\*). This information is based on data gathered by the South Savo Game Management District. Other information comes from data on the official monitoring of damage (Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry).

Attacks on dogs and dog losses are one of the biggest problems for establishing tolerance of a wolf population (Palviainen 2000). On average wolves in Finland have killed 15-25 dogs a year in recent years, according to 'official monitoring' statistics (Committee on Damage caused by Large Carnivores 2003, unpublished). A closer analysis of damage to dogs in eastern Finland has shown that around half the dogs were taken out of their yards or gardens, and the rest of the damage occurred on hunts (Kojola & Kuittinen 2002). However, not all dogs killed by wolves find their way into the official statistics because not all the dogs taken off by wolves are found and reports are not filed in all cases either.

No cases of wolf attacks on humans have come to the attention of the authorities in the last few decades in Finland.

## The reintroduction of large carnivores in Finland

From time to time there has been a fierce debate in Finland over the reintroduction of large carnivores. It is believed that wolves have also been introduced in areas too. This has not been carried out by national institutions, however. What follows is a summing up of the situation by Ilpo Kojola, large carnivore researcher with the Game and Fisheries Research Institute, of the reintroductions of large carnivores which have taken place in Finland, to be found at [www.suurpeto.fi](http://www.suurpeto.fi):

*“In Finland the Game and Fisheries Institute has reintroduced some 20 wolverines and five lynxes and bears in new territories. No wolves have been transferred this way. The reintroductions took place in the period 1984–1998. The wolverines were taken from the reindeer husbandry area mainly to central and western Finland. The bears and lynxes were reintroduced in North Häme. The aim was to restore populations in central and western Finland.*

*The established wolverine population in Ostrobothnia and the northern parts of central Finland is very much the result of the reintroductions. In all, eight fairly young wolverines, five males and three females, were moved from the reindeer husbandry area into this region in the period 1996–1998. At that time six wolverines caught in the far northwest of Lapland (five males and a female) were taken to Lestijärvi and two (females) to Kivijärvi.”*

### **1.3 The wolf in current legislation – favourable conservation status**

Since joining the European Union, Finland has phased in amendments to its legislation to correspond to what is laid down in EU directives. The Bern Convention (19.9.1979) includes the wolf among those species requiring strict protection. When it was ratifying the Convention, however, Finland negotiated a proviso with regard to the wolf (Christian Krogell, personal communication).

In the section on species conservation in the Habitats Directive the wolf comes under Annex IV. The species here are those in need of strict protection. Basically, with regard to the treatment of species included in this Annex, “Member States shall take the requisite measures to establish a system of strict protection in their natural range, prohibiting deliberate capture or killing of specimens of these species”. Annex IV does not apply to the wolf population in the reindeer husbandry area of Finland, however, as Finland obtained a derogation for this. As far as the reindeer husbandry area is concerned the wolf comes under Annex V, which allows control of its populations there.

Elsewhere in Finland there may only be an exception made to full protection of the wolf if the provisions of Article 16 apply. The conditions for derogation are that there is no satisfactory alternative and that the derogation is not detrimental to the maintenance of a favourable conservation status for the species.

The criteria for derogation mentioned in Article 16 of the Habitats Directive apply:

- a) in the interest of protecting wild fauna and flora and conserving natural habitats
- b) to prevent serious damage, in particular to crops, livestock, forests, fisheries and water and other types of property
- c) in the interests of public health and public safety, for other imperative reasons of overriding public interest, including those of a social or economic nature and beneficial consequences of primary importance for the environment

- d) for the purpose of research and education, of repopulating and re-introducing these species and for the breeding operations necessary for these purposes, including the artificial propagation of plants
- e) to allow, under strictly supervised conditions, on a selective basis and to a limited extent, the taking or keeping of certain specimens of the species listed in Annex IV in limited numbers specified by the competent national authorities.

This directive has been applied in Finnish legislation. It is taken account of in section 28 of the Finnish Hunting Decree. It states that if no other satisfactory solution exists and hunting does not jeopardise the maintenance of a favourable conservation status, exceptions to the general closed season for the wolf as laid down in section 24(2) may be made:

- 1) in order to conserve natural wild fauna or flora
- 2) in order to prevent particularly significant damage to agriculture, forestry, fishing, animal husbandry or other property
- 3) for compelling reasons of public health, general safety or other particularly important reasons in respect of public interest, including financial and social reasons, and when the exception yields benefits of primary importance for the environment
- 4) in carefully supervised circumstances selectively and to a restricted extent in order to take certain individual animals.

The wolf may be hunted with these purposes in mind between 1 November and 31 March. A hunting licence must be obtained. Licenses are issued by the Game Management District with reference to a separately set quota by the ministry of Agriculture and Forestry, which also lays down more detailed regulations.

For this decree to apply generally, it therefore has to be possible to decide what constitutes a favourable conservation status for the wolf. That has not been determined separately in Finland, not even in connection with the Red List of threatened species. There is no direct reference to it in any scientific literature or publications either, although various agencies have looked into the matter of a minimum viable wolf population.

## **A viable wolf population – favourable conservation status?**

Conservation status is defined as favourable when a species is maintaining itself on a long-term basis in its natural surroundings and its natural range is not becoming smaller. In addition, the species' habitats should be sufficiently large to maintain its population in the long term (Ministry of the Environment 2004).

In Finland there tend to be views on a viable wolf population rather than a favourable conservation status. The subject of a viable Finnish wolf population has been discussed by Lumiaro

(1997) and Pulliainen (1999), among others. Lumiario suggests that 25 pairs (a population of around 250 specimens) would be sufficient to maintain genetic biodiversity. Pulliainen believes that around 150 wolves would be an acceptable minimum figure in Finland and would mean, for example, that wolves could start to be hunted.

Wolf population management plans produced elsewhere, which also take a view of a viable wolf population (e.g. the Idaho Wolf Conservation and Management Plan 2002, Lohmus 2002, Oregon Wolf Conservation... 2004, Sammanhållens rovdjurspolitik 2000, the Wisconsin Wolf Management Plan 2003) suggest that, conditions being what they are in Finland, a figure of 100-200 wolves would be sufficient to ensure genetic biodiversity in respect of the wolf and would at the same time be the smallest possible viable wolf population. Crucial to this estimate is the condition that the population has contact with Russian wolf populations. The wolf population in Russia is thought to be between 25,000 and 30,000, and the population trend is thought to be increasing/stable (Boitani 2003: 323).

One way of examining favourable conservation status would be to look at trends in population development. Researcher Ilpo Kojola (personal communication 2004) also considers it to be an additional criterion when trying to establish the risks of maintaining the wolf population in any one area.

Fundamental to such an examination is the recent development in the population and the foreseeable trends based on it. A reasonably large wolf population could be under threat owing to factors to do with the environment, persecution, etc., while a smaller but increasing and environmentally stable population could be a safer scenario in terms of maintenance of the population. All of this depends, for example, on existing legislation and the status of the wolf in it, social circumstances, wolf habitats and, in particular, the status of populations of the species on which it preys.

In his consideration of the risks of a small population, Boitani (2003: 330) states, with reference to various studies, that a small, isolated population is theoretically prone to risk. Nevertheless, he says that there are no examples of loss of genetic biodiversity among wolf populations in the wild. He concedes that they might exist, but there is no evidence. Accordingly, he believes caution is appropriate when it comes to the management of the wolf population.

The definition of a minimum viable population and its application have aroused controversy amongst researchers into wolves. Boitani (2003) refers to Fritts and Carby (1995), who propose that the relevant theoretical models do not take account of the complexity of local conditions. In their opinion, theoretical models for a minimum viable population, such as PVAs (population viability analyses), do not help protect the wolf but instead can lead to arguments in attempts to maintain populations. Moreover, the Oregon population plan working group say that targets set too high would result in both social and biological conflicts (Oregon Wolf Conservation... 2004).

Although the notion of favourable conservation status was approached via a definition of a minimum viable population, the two notions are not fully comparable. That of favourable conservation status entails consideration of natural range and the state of wolf habitats,

but probably also requires a certain attitude. A view has emerged in the public forum that areas where people live, for example, should not be included the wolf's natural range (Kokko 2004).

Because favourable conservation status in practice remains undefined, it continues to provide the opportunity to come up with various quantitative aims from a number of points of view (e.g. natural range, regional population distribution, population mortality), which never fail to sow the seeds of permanent conflict.

## **1.4 Some history regarding Finland's policy on wolves and attitudes to them**

The relationship between man and wolf has been one of conflict since the dawn of time. On the one hand, people have been fascinated by wolves and their habits in close proximity to man. They form pairs, form a pack from a family circle and work closely together to catch their prey. On the other hand, wolves have competed with man, killed domestic animals, and the way they catch their prey has been felt to be nothing less than savage. There are aboriginal cultures in the world where the wolf is highly esteemed and it has achieved almost divine status among animals. But the wolf is also loathed and considered to be an outlaw in the animal kingdom (for more on this subject see Mech and Boitani 2003). What follows is a brief description by Sakari Mykrä and Mari Pohja-Mykrä of the wolf's status in Finland and Finnish legislation over the last few centuries. The writers' research at the University of Turku is linked to the history of policy on large carnivores in Finland.

*In the Middle Ages in Finland, then part of Sweden, game was mainly the property of the crown, but the land laws passed by Mannu Eerikinpoika (Magnus Eriksson) in 1347 and King Kristoffer in 1442 (translated into Finnish as from 1584) state that every citizen may kill a wolf, bear or fox wherever such animals are encountered without fear of punishment. The wolf held a special position among these carnivores; it was decreed a civic duty to hunt them down, with only "priests, parish clerks and landless women" exempt. Under threat of a fine, every man had to own a wolf net of a certain length and take part in hunts whenever called on to do so.*

*The royal decrees on hunting from 1647 and 1664 revised the former legislation on wolves, laying greater emphasis on organising systematic hunting. The hunts were led by hunt masters, local governors and their underlings. For the first time there was an attempt to promote the killing of wolves in Finland by paying statutory bounties. A reward of two daler (thaler) out of city and district funds was promised for an adult wolf and one daler for a cub. These laws remained in force in the Swedish Code of 1734.*

### **Intensive hunting in the 19th century**

*The decree on hunting of 1868 under Russian rule did away with the obligation of citizens to take part in wolf hunts. The decree did not specify any exact bounty sums; instead, it emphasised the responsibility of the municipalities to set aside sufficiently large bounties in order to wipe out problem wolves. According to the Statistical Yearbooks, a total of 5,598*

wolves were killed in Finland between 1866 and 1890, while the number killed for the ensuing period, 1891-1898, is just 105. The average annual figure for wolf deaths in the closing years of the 19th century had therefore fallen to less than a tenth of what it was before.

There were several reasons for the dramatic pruning of the wolf population. Although the nation had been urged to pursue the wolf for centuries, the creature had been seen as more of an uncontrollable force of nature, whose occurrence and profuseness humans were barely able to influence (Teperi 1977). At the end of the 19th century, however, people's perceptions of nature began to change (Franklin 1999), and as knowledge accumulated, local animal populations started to be seen as controllable entities. After children were killed in the period 1880-1881 in southwestern Finland, people's resentment of wolves had, moreover, risen to a pitch never witnessed before, and the authorities were obliged to take action to reduce the wolf population. Official help was available in the form of military personnel and professional hunters from as far away as Russia. As well as the new hunting methods which the professional hunters introduced, hunting also benefited in terms of its efficiency from the additional bounties paid by the state which were granted owing to the gravity of the situation. Other factors that made a solid contribution to the success of the hunt were the organisation of hunting associations which began in the 1860s, more effective dissemination of information and developments in weapon technology.

## **Wolf extermination urged by the press**

Not only legal texts, but also articles in old newspapers, show the very special attitude the Finns had to wolves, among all the carnivores. Historical press archives contain more than 900 articles from the 19th century on carnivores and birds of prey and their annihilation (<http://digi.lib.helsinki.fi/>). As many as two in three (68%) deal exclusively with wolf sightings and wolf extermination. And even the other third frequently mention wolves along with other carnivores.

Understandably, articles in the press on the subject of wolves clearly peaked at the time the children were killed in southwestern Finland. But it is hardly worth making any long-term analyses of the numbers of news reports on wolves at the time. Communications and the media were going through a revolution at the time, and newspapers were becoming more and more common in the latter half of the century. It is telling, however, that during the period 1878-1883 the news specifically on the subject of wolves varied from one year to the next. Before the child killings the number of news articles on wolves was exactly 30 in the two-year period 1878-1879, but that rose to 180 during the years in which the deaths occurred. Wolves which had caused damage and a large number of wolves which had caused no harm were killed, but even in the ensuing two-year period 1882-1883 another 79 articles on wolves were published.

Despite the successful thinning out of the population towards the end of the century, persecution of the wolf was stepped up with the decree on hunting passed in 1898, and a bounty of 100 Finnish marks was placed on the wolf. That was four times as much as the sum for a bear, for example.

Motivated by bounties, and with the improved hunting methods, the persecution led to the eventual extermination of the wolf in practice. During the period 1926-1932 and again at the start of the 1970s, the annual wolf catch shrank to less than five (Nyholm 1996; Statisti-

cal Yearbooks 1926-1932), and in 1973 the wolf finally became a protected species, except in the reindeer husbandry area. Bounty payments on wolves also ceased entirely that year. Since then the hunting of wolves in different parts of the country has been regulated more closely, as and when required, through legislation.

## **Damage leading to persecution**

*From the time of the land laws of the Middle Ages right up to the 1970s some dozen or so more wide-ranging laws regulating the hunting of mammal game species were passed in Finland. An examination of these reveals the intense persecution that underlay the relationship between past generations of Finns and wolves. The wolf was totally unprotected under the law, and this attitude was very much based on the damage that wolves caused, or were thought to cause, in game areas, and, more commonly, livestock grazing areas, plus the threat the wolf was perceived by some to pose to human life and safety.*

*Although the reputation of large carnivores has always been overshadowed by smaller carnivores in the plundering of game, the colossal amount of damage they caused to livestock and reindeer husbandry more than exceeded people's tolerance threshold. The losses were staggering. In the four years from 1877 to 1880 alone, and just prior to the reduction in the wolf population, large carnivores killed 40,198 sheep, 6,972 cattle, 14,189 reindeer and 4,436 other kinds of livestock throughout the country (Official Statistics for Finland 1876-1880). Although other large carnivores played their part in this slaughter, most of the damage caused to domestic animals was believed to be the work of the wolf. People too, mainly children, were eaten by wolves in the 19<sup>th</sup> century (Pousette 2000, Linnell et al. 2002), which explains people's attitude to them and the endeavours of the state to be rid of them.*

## **1.5 Attitudes of the Finnish people to wolves and large carnivores – previous surveys**

The Finnish people's attitude to large carnivores has been surveyed in several national studies and academic dissertations in recent years. The next section is a background view of other earlier surveys designed to discover the attitude or opinion Finns have with regard to large carnivores, and their main findings. The results can be taken as portraying the most common attitudes the Finnish people have to these creatures.

The most recent studies are those by Lumiaro (1997), Vikström (2000), Palviainen (2000) and Taloustutkimus Oy (2004), which shed light on people's opinions, attitudes or goals in respect of wolves or other large carnivores, using slightly different methods and ways of framing questions. The response data in the studies by Lumiaro (1997) and Vikström (2000) is based on a sample, as is the new study by Taloustutkimus Oy (2004) entitled "Finnish Attitudes to Hunting", which mainly describes Finnish views on the control of large carnivore populations. The study on the situation in North Karelia by Palviainen (2000) may also be interpreted as a survey of views on carnivores in that part of the country.

Included too is the qualitative study by Ratamäki (2001), in which people's relationship with carnivores is surveyed, using modern trends in society and reports on carnivores in hunting magazines as a frame of reference.

## **Just myths?**

Riku Lumiaro's master's thesis in 1997 dealt with the attitude of Finns to wolves (Lumiaro 1997). A survey was conducted on a random sample of 900 people from the population register, with 502 replies received. 52% of the respondents had a positive opinion of the wolf, and 27% a negative one. When asked about trends in the wolf population, which was 100-150 at the time, 27% replied that they hoped the population would remain as it was, 28% hoped for a slight increase, 11% hoped for a clear increase, 7% did not want any wolves at all and 17% wanted to see the population decline. 10% were unable to give an opinion.

In Lumiaro's study, women took a slightly more negative view of wolves than men. Furthermore, the better educated had a more positive view than the less educated. According to Lumiaro, age was an important factor in attitudes to wolves: the over 50s had a clearly more negative opinion than younger people. Similarly, opinions were patently more negative in sparsely populated areas than in cities.

A fear of wolves, on the other hand, was equally evident in both cities and sparsely populated areas. Roughly a third of those interviewed in Lumiaro's survey data said they were afraid of wolves. Lumiaro deduces that this fear is a result of the myth that large carnivores are dangerous, and opines that tales like Little Red Riding Hood, for example, lie behind the fear.

Using the data gathered, Lumiaro also examined more closely the attitudes to wolves of inhabitants of sparsely populated areas. The deduction was that most of these people surveyed, whom wolves might cause some kind of harm to, view them negatively. Apparently, 35% were cattle and sheep breeders and 44% were woodsmen.

## **Worries about wolves and bears in North Karelia**

In autumn 1999 the Regional Council of North Karelia conducted an extensive survey, which was sent to 1,700 users of the countryside in the Region and a total of 923 people replied (Palviainen 2000). The survey examined the opinions and impressions among different groups of people who used the countryside regarding bears and wolves.

34.7% of the respondents were worried about the threat wolves posed to children, though just 17% feared for their own safety. Most concern (42.6% of respondents) was felt for the safety of hunting dogs. About a third of respondents also felt concern for other domestic animals.

When the levels of concern were compared to the different groups of users of the countryside, it was city-dwellers who were most concerned about their own safety (31%), with hunters the least worried. Those who expressed most concern for the safety of children were hikers and campers, with members of nature organisations/conservation groups the least bothered. It was also this last group that felt the least concern about the safety of dogs.

Overall it was the bear that was seen to be a bigger danger to human safety than the wolf. A similar picture emerged when the study examined the danger of encountering a wolf or a bear. The bear was thought to be rather more dangerous than the wolf. It was felt to be quite dangerous to encounter a wolf in the wild by around 40% of hikers and campers, city-dwellers, people residing in rural locations and those out picking berries, mushrooms, etc., by 30% of members of nature organisations/conservation groups and by 25% of hunters.

When the survey examined the opinions of North Karelians on the size of the wolf population, it emerged that 67% of respondents were in favour of a smaller population. According to Palviainen, opinions regarding the wolf were more radical than those regarding the bear. Whilst the survey was under way, the wolf population in North Karelia was estimated at around 50 (Palviainen 2000:71).

Palviainen (2000) believes that the main findings of the study show that carnivores cause concern among people, they are thought to be dangerous, and there is often the desire to see their numbers reduced, irrespective of whether such creatures have ever been encountered, whether they come close to areas of human settlement, or whether the respondents reside in areas where carnivores live.

## **The wolf viewed the most negatively of all the large carnivores**

A master's thesis completed at the University of Oulu examined Finnish attitudes to large carnivores outside the reindeer husbandry area (Vikström 2000). The study was in part the latest addition to Korhonen's 1996 briefer survey of such attitudes in the same area. A questionnaire was sent to 22 municipalities and cities (2,000 people sampled). The respondents' names were picked out at random from the Population Register Centre. 1,050 replies were received.

According to the study, one key feature of people's attitudes to carnivores was that Finland should have viable populations of such animals, as long as it is not in their immediate vicinity. When respondents had to decide, for example, what they thought was an appropriate population in their own home district, over 60% of the inhabitants of the provinces of Oulu and Western Finland were of the opinion that there should be no wolves at all existing locally. In the province of Eastern Finland some 40% of the population expressed the same view as did close to 60% in southern Finland. According to Vikström, respondents generally suggested that a suitable wolf population for the entire country would be less than 100.

Of all the large carnivores, attitudes to the wolf were the least favourable. Farmers were the most antagonistic, while highly educated people held the most positive views. As with

Lumiarvo's study, older people's views of wolves were more negative than those held by the young. Neither was there much difference between opinions on wolves between eastern and western Finland. In other words wolves are hardly viewed any more negatively in areas where they mainly live than they are where they are encountered only very occasionally.

Fear of wolves was evident from 44% of the replies. It was particularly predominant among the highly educated, with more than half of this group saying they were afraid of wolves.

Despite the general antagonism, Vikström's conclusion is that attitudes to large carnivores were more favourable in 1990 than they were in the survey by Korhonen in 1996, and which Vikström used as reference material. Fear of carnivores, however, had increased in that three-year period.

## **Finns in favour of control of large carnivore populations**

In 2004 Taloustutkimus (a Finnish market research organisation) conducted a survey for the Finnish Hunters' Central Organisation on Finnish attitudes to hunting (Taloustutkimus Oy 2004). The data was based on a sample of the population: 1,019 individuals, representing both sexes and a range of age groups and living environments (province and municipality type). The survey took the form of personal interviews conducted by 62 trained research interviewers.

With regard to the statement "it must be possible to control large carnivore populations", 82% said they agreed, 9% disagreed and 9% did not know. More often than not those who agreed were men, people over the age of 60, those who had merely received a basic education and people living in eastern and northern Finland. Women, the under 30s, university graduates and residents of the Helsinki area were on average less likely to agree.

## **Controversy surrounding large carnivores**

Ratamäki's qualitative study on hunters in North Karelia entitled 'Are you afraid of bears and do you hate wolves?' makes three key observations in its conclusion (Ratamäki 2001). The author says that attitudes to large carnivores change slowly. There is still hatred of the wolf in particular. Because of people's fears there are calls for the bear and wolf populations to be reduced.

Ratamäki highlights the split that exists between social and biological tolerance. Although nature would tolerate greater large carnivore populations, there should be more discussion of social tolerance when populations are being determined, and more attention should be paid to the views of local people.

According to Ratamäki, a fear of large carnivores has always existed, but it is only in recent years that it has become the subject of public debate. She thinks that certain features of contemporary society explain this. A general climate of uncertainty is resulting in a need and

an endeavour to control the immediate environment. Large carnivores represent an unknown threat in the environment. And people want to control that threat.

In her work, Ratamäki discusses in greater detail antagonism towards the wolf as a phenomenon. Among the interviewees there were no 'friends of the wolf', to use the writer's own expression. The cause of the antagonism was explained by the impressions people receive from fairytales as well as dog losses. According to Ratamäki, the wolf is also a bone of contention among various stakeholders and locals feel exasperated because they do not believe they can influence policy-makers and current policy on large carnivores in Finland.

## **Geographical variations in attitude to wolves**

There have been plenty of studies undertaken on people's attitudes to the wolf in areas other than its natural range (e.g. Karlsson et al 1999, Bjerke 1998, Pate et al 1996, Bath & Buchanan 1989, Bath 2000). A synopsis of these has also been produced in which the results of studies on different people's attitudes to wolves have been compared both regionally and in terms of when they were conducted (Williams et al 2002). The conclusions are that attitudes to wolves are less favourable in Europe and Scandinavia than, for example, in North America.

Different studies suggest that there is greater tolerance of the wolf among the more highly educated and the young. Men view the wolf more negatively than women, but, for example, hunters take a more favourable view than the population as an average. No similar conclusion can be reached from Finnish studies (e.g. Lumiaro 1997, Vikström 2000). Attitudes to wolves have become universally more favourable over time.

The synopsis by Williams et al (2002) also shows that those who view the wolf most favourably have no contact with them and tend to live in cities. As there is a trend in many countries for people to migrate from the countryside to the cities, they conclude that attitudes will become ever more favourable to wolves on average in the future.

On the other hand, practical experience has shown that if wolves return to an area attitudes there become antagonistic fairly quickly. This has been seen, for example, in Sweden. This was also thought to be explained by a lack of information. In Sweden people imagined that the wolf would settle in the forests and tundra regions of the north, but they found their way to central and southern parts of the country and have even been encountered in the Stockholm area (Williamson et al 2002).

Williamson et al nevertheless state that, although the majority of people on average in different parts of the world view the wolf favourably, opposition to the wolf is fiercest in the countryside, where violent conflicts are also possible. They therefore recommend those responsible for management of the wolf population to embark on a public debate and try and find guarantors for wolf management programmes. In addition, they believe that there needs to be investments of time and money into monitoring trends in people's attitudes. As with others who have conducted studies on wolves for a long time (e.g. Mech & Boitani

2003), they are strongly of the opinion that management of the wolf population is more a sociological, or socio-economic, matter than a biological one.

Mech and Boitani (2003) mention an essential feature connected with the wolf and man. As the wolf splits people pro and anti they, as wolf researchers, have found that it is hard 'to sell the truth' on the wolf. Those who are stuck in their own points of view look for information which backs them up. For some the wolf is nature's symbol of untamed nature and perfection, and for those who live in a nomadic culture, for example, an uncontrollable force. In their view their world is subordinate to the values of nature-lovers who reside in the city (Mech & Boitani 2003: xv and Fritts et al 2003: 290).

## Historical events behind the fear of wolves

Concern about or fear of large carnivores have an impact on people's attitudes to them. There has been some discussion about whether there is a genetic connection here. Fritts et al ( 2003: 290) and Wilson (1984, 1993) suggest that the universal fear of snakes is an example of the way we are genetically prepared to avoid negative experiences. If the history which man and wolf shares is examined closely, cases can be found which may explain man's in-built fear of wolves.

Here are some cases of wolf attacks on humans in Finland collected by Sakari Mykrä and Mari Pohja-Mykrä:

*The most famous case in Finland was in the Turku area in the 1880s. Two man-eating wolves were responsible for the deaths of at least 22 victims, and, according to some data, as many as 35 (Pousette 2000).*

*The powerful role played by the press has meant that a series of incidents over a two-year period has remained firmly in people's memories, but there had also been similar cases previously. During the same decade and prior to these events, 42 children and two adults had been mauled to death by wolves in Finland (Linnell et al. 2002). Attacks by rabid wolves were reported separately (Teperi 1977), and those who died from bites are not included in these figures. Man-eating wolves were also found outside southwest Finland, such as in the Käkisalmi, Kemiö, Kivennapa and Tampere districts.*

*It should not in any way be deduced, however, that wolves that century were actually in search of human flesh: just a handful of unusual specimens were responsible for the deaths. But wolves that prey on humans have occurred throughout history. For example, there is data from France on children killed by wolves in the 15th century (Linnell et al 2002), and wolves still eat humans today. Such data exists, at least from Russia, Belarus (Kruuk 2002), and, especially, India (Jhala & Sharma 1997, Kumar 2003).*

Fritts et al (2003) have made a more exhaustive collection of documents and publications on this topic. People's awareness of what wolves can do and the way information gets passed on from one generation to another probably explains how fears develop. These events have also found their way into stories and fairytales (e.g. Little Red Riding Hood, and the Three Little Pigs), which carry an image of the wolf on to the younger generations.

Wolf researchers Mech & Boitani (2003), referring to Ulrich (1993), describe the persuasive evidence the author presents that humans are biologically prepared to learn to fear certain situations in nature or creatures which have posed risks in their own past. The wolf might be considered to be an example of such a phenomenon in man's evolutionary history. These long-term and deep-seated fears must also be acknowledged in attempts to protect the wolf, according to Mech and Boitani.

## **2 Background to the management of the wolf population – purpose and objectives of the study**

The management of the wolf population in Finland, and the world at large, has already shown that a key issue in its success is the interaction of man and wolf. The conflicts in values which emerge from the different ways various stakeholders relate to wildlife and nature are ultimately made very real in the context of local people's everyday lives. And it is the everyday life of local people which will finally determine whether interaction between the wolf and humans can work.

It was with this very much in mind that the acquisition of the study data focused on the experiences and views of those who live in areas where wolves are known to exist. This became 'the wolf debate'. The aim was to discover what the various views on the wolf were and are, the reasons for them, and what practical issues are deemed especially important.

It is also of interest and fundamental to the future of policies on wolves to examine how the essential issues to do with managing the wolf population are viewed regionally and nationally. What changes the further one travels, and does one find a fresh approach or do people turn a blind eye to dealing with the issue of wolves?. But it is also important to appraise the position of the different parties in relation to one another and explore to what extent there are irreconcilable conflicts or, on the other hand, possibilities for building consensus.

The main aim of the process underlying this study is also to provide a channel for the ideas, views, experiences and goals of the people in areas where they coexist interactively with the wolf.

The main objectives of the study may be summarised thus:

- 1) to discover the expectations, objectives and demands of different agencies and individual citizens regionally and nationally with regard to the management of the wolf populations
- 2) to grasp the background to, and causes of, the demands and expectations people have regarding management of the wolf population
- 3) to discover the socio-economic impact of the wolf population in sparsely populated rural areas
- 4) to provide data for drafting the national plan for the wolf population.

### 3 Data and methodology

A qualitative approach was chosen for the study, where the aim was to collect as comprehensive as possible a range of opinions on wolves from different parties and try and analyse and understand the controversy connected with national policy on wolves which exists both regionally and nationally (e.g. Eskola & Suoranta 1998, Patton 2002). It was therefore decided right from the start to reject the type of survey in which people are asked for their views on prepared statements.

The study is thus not a collection of the views of organisations and people in Finland selected at random but essentially those who are affected in particular by the wolf issue. This will not cause problems if the methodology of a qualitative survey is employed as long as this basic approach to the study is also taken account of when the conclusions are being drawn.

On the other hand, this may also be seen as a strength of the data gathered. This study's data and results highlight the views and opinions of the very people who are affected by the presence of the wolf. Their attitudes and actions are likely to impact most of all on the wolf's future, and so their assessment of the situation and comments are crucially important as far as the management of the wolf populations and protection and conservation of the species are concerned.

The study data consists of written survey data and data collected from public debates on the wolf. The data was collected by region, to allow any special local features to emerge. The Game Management Districts assisted in posting the survey data and the arrangements for events and public hearings.

#### Survey for stakeholders

The first phase of the study involved determining who the parties were who had had an interest in various ways in wildlife and nature, its use or monitoring that use. These would later be known as 'stakeholders'. The aim was that the stakeholders should consider the wolf issue from different points of view and represent as comprehensively as possible the practical matters involved in the implementation of a policy on wolves. The following actors and agencies were determined as stakeholders, mainly at local level:

- The Association for Nature Conservation
- The Regional Council
- Agricultural producers
- The Rural (Advisory) Centre
- The Forestry Centre
- The Union of Forest Owners
- The Finnish Hunters' Association: local district
- The Kennel Club
- Metsähallitus

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Travel and tourism businesses  
The police  
The Border Guard  
The Reindeer Herders' Association  
The Rural Department of the Employment and Economic Development Centre  
The regional Environment Centre  
The Game Management District

The regional Game Management Districts collaborated in the search for addresses and the practical organisation of the survey. They posted the survey, prepared by the University of Helsinki, to the respondents, and gave them an average of a month to respond (regional questionnaire, Appendix 1). The Game Management Districts were also asked to respond to the survey. They also sent in their account of the situation regarding large carnivores in their area. Not all the agencies and parties replied, and the range of respondents varied from one area to another. There are more details on the respondents in the sections of this document dealing with the results of the study.

The questionnaire was also sent to a sample of municipalities, cities and Game Management Associations. Furthermore, there were actors in some Game Management Districts who it was also thought should receive a copy: for example, to the University of Joensuu in North Karelia, which has representation on the Regional Advisory Committee for Large Carnivores. There were also regional differences in the list of respondents for very obvious reasons. For example, Metsähallitus is not active all in all the regions of Finland and the Reindeer Herders' Association only operates in the northernmost parts of the country. Respondents in some regions also included the local 4-H club.

Some regional respondents had also sent the questionnaire to their own member organisations, some of which then replied to it independently. The responses at local level received this way were included in the same group of respondents as their regional organisation.

The responses were mainly processed by examining the replies to open-ended questions and analysing, sorting and encoding the main message contained therein, allocating them to the relevant categories (e.g. Pietilä 1973, Eskola & Suoranta 1998, Suoranta & Eskola 1992). The same method was mainly applied in a social and sociological survey (e.g. Takala 1987).

The replies returned were tabulated as Excel databases. Replies to some of the questions were sorted and entered in frequency tables. These questions related to the positive and negative aspects of the wolf and their relative significance (expressed as weighted values), ways of furthering interaction, views on population numbers, and methods to control the population. The content of the open-ended questions was also analysed and their main message was compressed into a short phrase and tabulated to facilitate comparisons being made.

The questionnaire concerned was also sent to responsible actors at national level, though the questions were redesigned accordingly. Two new questions were also added (Appendix 2). The data was processed in the same way as with the regional data.

## Stakeholder discussions

When the regional replies had been received, they were assembled in a provisional format. Stakeholders were invited by the Game Management Districts to a meeting where their answers were presented to them as a basis for discussion. These invitations were sent to the same agencies and parties to which the questionnaire had also been sent. At these gatherings, the issue of large carnivores was looked into more generally, and the debate was not restricted to the wolf alone. One such meeting was organised in each Game Management District, totalling 15 in all. The meetings were meant to:

- 1) establish dialogue and an exchange of information
- 2) present the different views of stakeholders and use the discussion to establish whether there were any areas where compromises could be reached
- 3) assess the need to develop regional cooperation in matters relating to large carnivores; for example, to explore the need to establish some sort of advisory body.

A memorandum was drawn up of the discussions which were also used as research data.

## Public hearings

Public hearings (one or more) were also held in the Game Management Districts. These were announced in the regional and local press. The practical aspects of announcing the events were taken care of by the Game Management District in each area. This solution was adopted because there were so many events all around the country and it would have been virtually impossible to coordinate them and organise announcements and information from one place. The Game Management Districts were guided by the project, so that the information given out would be based on the same source data and principles. There were several meetings per Game Management District in the areas where wolves actually exist, as there was an obvious need for this. The aim of the project was just as much about cooperation as research. A total of 30 meetings were held.

All the public meetings had the same agenda, which was:

- 1) the situation regarding large carnivores in the area (approximately 15 min., Game Management District)
- 2) the wolf as an animal, its range and biology (approximately 15 min., source: data from Game and Fisheries Research Institute/Ilpo Kojola)
- 3) the project and its objectives (5 min.)
- 4) summarised account of the replies received from local/regional stakeholders (approximately 15 min.).

After this the audience was told some of the areas of controversy surrounding the wolf and asked questions. There were many more questions asked at the first meetings, but it soon became obvious that just a few basic questions were all that was needed to raise the issues which were most urgent in the area concerned and which would fire the debate. The discussions at the public meetings were based on the following questions:

- 1) How would you describe the wolf situation in the area and, more precisely, how do you feel about it?
- 2) What are the positive and negative aspects of the wolf?
- 3) Should the wolf population be controlled? How should that be done and who by?

Prompts: people should not interfere at all, the population should be managed through a system of hunting licences, perhaps only 'problem' animals and problem wolves should be eliminated, possible reintroductions, animals should only be killed by the authorities.

- 4) What areas of development do you think are needed in the management of the wolf population?
  - a) research
  - b) monitoring of populations
  - c) communications
  - c) action and cooperation on the part of the authorities
  - d) legislation
- 5) What can be done to maintain and improve the interaction of wolf and man?
- 6) Can the notion of a regionally sustainable wolf population be defined? (and what would it be?)

The public meetings were chaired by either a representative of the local Game Management District or the project coordinator. The part of the meeting given over to the discussion lasted an average of 1.5 hours.

Of a total of 30 sessions held, 17 were recorded, with the audience's permission. A written record was made of the other meetings, with every presentation, comment or question written down. With long presentations just a summary with the main message was included.

The recorded sessions were listened to again, and the debate was transcribed. It was evident that the remarks made mainly fell into three categories:

- 1) general criticism
- 2) comments on the size of the wolf population, its impact and problems
- 3) demands or proposals.

These categories were divided up further into subcategories which were more precise in terms of their theme, i.e. the special issues and matters which came in for criticism, what the wolf's impact is, and what detailed action was called for or proposed.

From the content of the presentations and remarks it was decided which categories they would be included in. The purpose of this was to establish what themes those present thought were the most important and what were repeated by several speakers. The same thing was also done with the remarks made at the meetings where a record was taken of the comments on site.

## 4 Results

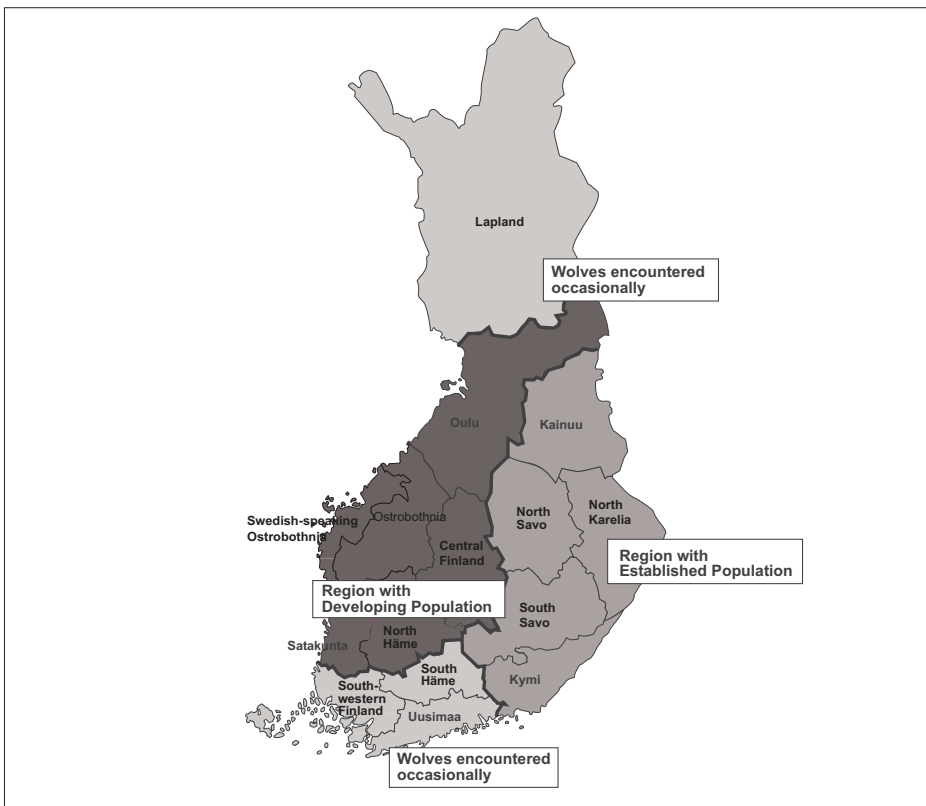
### 4.1 Written responses received from stakeholders

#### 4.1.1 Regional distribution of the data presented

The responses from regional stakeholders and people's comments on wolves are divided into three main geographical areas. This division is determined in accordance with the strength of the wolf population in terms of its occurrence and the number of sightings recorded for each Game Management District. One reason why this approach was adopted is that the wolf's occurrence and increases in the population have an influence on people's attitudes (e.g. Williamson 2002, Vikström 2000). The division is based on sightings of wolves which have come to the attention of the Game and Fisheries Research Institute.

The division used is the following (Figure 5):

1. *The area with an established population in eastern Finland* covers those Game Management Districts in which an established wolf population exists. The area has wolf territories and reproducing pairs, and wolf sightings are recorded regularly. Most of the wolves in Finland live here. The area covers the Game Management Districts of North Karelia, Kainuu, Kymi, South Savo and North Savo (2,061 recorded wolf sightings in 2003).
2. *The area with a developing population:* the Game Management Districts in which the wolf population is at present developing. Wolves are regularly found in this area but there are no permanent territories where they breed, or at least, if there are, they are only just developing. The area covers the Game Management Districts of Oulu, Central Finland, Satakunta, Ostrobothnia, Swedish-speaking Ostrobothnia, and North Häme (353 recorded wolf sightings in 2003).
3. *The area where wolves are encountered occasionally:* the Game Management Districts in which wolves have only been found occasionally in recent years. They are South Häme, Uusimaa and Southwest Finland. Lapland is also included in this group, as Finnish law regarding the wolf differs there from other parts of the country and the wolf population is kept down intentionally to prevent damage to reindeer (112 recorded wolf sightings in the entire area in 2003).



**Figure 5.** Game Management Districts and the three-part division based on regional occurrence of the wolf population.

The area of jurisdiction covered by many of the Game Management Districts corresponds to the way the Finnish regions divide the country up, though not in every case. For example, the area covered by the Kymi Game Management District covers the regions of South Karelia and Kymenlaakso, and Oulu Game Management District covers the region of Northern Ostrobothnia and part of the region of Central Ostrobothnia. The rest of Central Ostrobothnia comes under the Ostrobothnia Game Management District.

The written replies of stakeholders also include those by respondents at national level, which form a fourth 'area' for investigation.

#### 4.1.2 Stakeholders' replies

The questionnaire sent to stakeholders was mainly qualitative in its layout (see Appendix 1, questionnaires). The respondent data was made up of a total of 221 written replies (Table 1). There was a question in the survey which sought to discover how the replies had been formulated. Around 60% of respondents said they had replied to the survey as a group, meaning the respondent was a council, working committee, an appointed team or two people working together. From this it could be inferred that the answers reflect the opinions and points of view of 1,000 individual stakeholders regionally.

Some questions, such as the positive and negative aspects of the wolf and their relative significance, ways to promote tolerance and the untroubled interaction of man and wolf, the quantitative aims with regard to the wolf population, and ways possibly to control the wolf population were questions which were sorted by response and tabulated. Other questions were assessed qualitatively and the investigation focused mainly on what views were expressed, what views were repeated and common, and what views were very much individual ideas. Set out below is the response data which was first tabulated and linked to the occurrence of the wolf nationally as described previously, and then a qualitative set of response data by Game Management District. Response data by stakeholders at national level is also included in the stakeholder group comparison (Table 2).

**Table 1.** *Sorted regional stakeholder respondents, number of replies processed and distribution of replies over the different wolf population areas.*

<b>Regional respondents</b>	<b>Amount</b>
Conservationists (local and regional)	19
Nature tourism business	4
Voluntary hunters' associations	24
Game authorities (local and regional)	47
Police / Border Guard	30
Municipalities, regional councils	32
Environment authorities	5
Agriculture and forestry	37
Others	23
<b>Together</b>	<b>221</b>

<b>Regional respondents in different wolf regions</b>	<b>Amount</b>
Region with established population	73
Region with developing population	103
Wolves encountered occasionally	45
<b>Together</b>	<b>221</b>

**Table 2.** Respondents at national level:

Ministry of the Environment
Ministry of the Interior
Finnish Kennel Club
The Finnish Association for Nature Conservation
The Finnish Hunters' Association
Finnish Hunters' and Fishers' Association
The Finnish Society of Nature for Environment
Finnish Nature Association / wolf group
WWF Finland
Finnish Museum of Natural History / University of Helsinki
Hunters' Central Organization
The Central Union of Agricultural Producers and Forest Owners
Metsähallitus (The Finnish Forest and Park Service)
The Central Union of Swedish-speaking Agricultural Producers in Finland

### 4.1.3 Positive and negative views of the wolf and the wolf population

The respondents had to decide what they believed were the three main positive and negative aspects of the wolf and the wolf population. They also had to decide how significant they were on a scale from one to five (1–5). Those in areas where wolves essentially do not occur were not asked for their views on the wolf population, but about the positive and negative aspects of the existence of the wolf. This strategy was adopted because it was assumed that many respondents might have skated over the question by stating that there was no wolf population in their area.

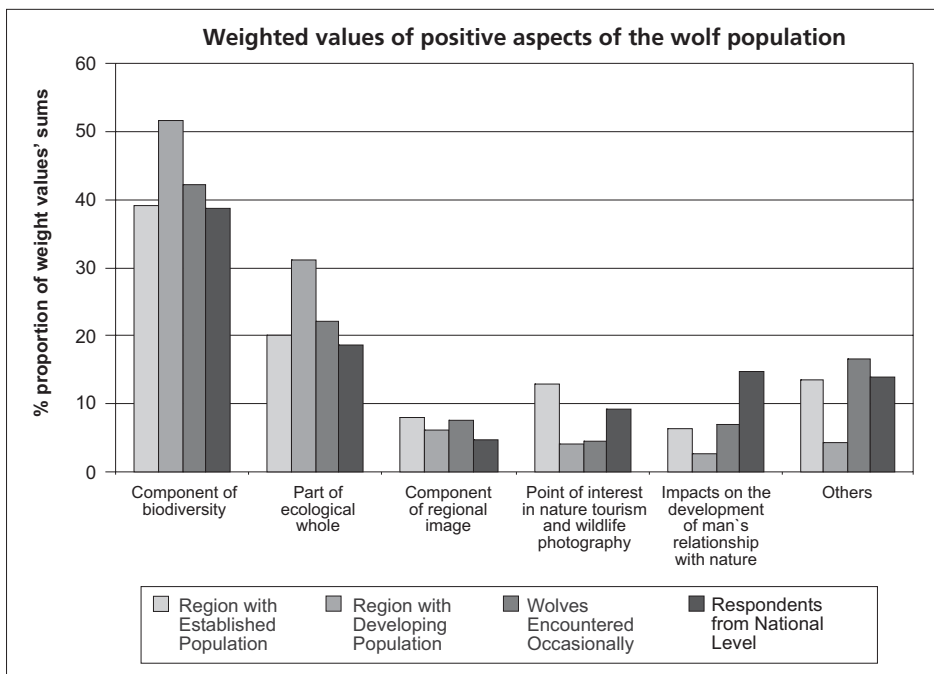
#### Positive aspects

When the respondents' replies were sorted, six different views emerged which covered the replies which were felt to be positive. When the weighted values for the aspects categorised as positive were added up and it was examined in terms of percentages how aspects seen as positive in the different areas emerged, it was evident that 'biodiversity' and 'the wolf as part of an ecological whole' cropped up most frequently and constituted the main positive factors in terms of their significance.

The main positive aspects that emerged from the combined data from regional respondents are set out below. In the opinion of the respondents:

- 1) the wolf is a component of biodiversity (absolute value)
- 2) the wolf is a part of an ecological whole (part of the food web, predator, etc.)
- 3) the wolf boosts the regional image
- 4) the wolf is a point of interest in nature tourism and wildlife photography
- 5) the wolf impacts on the development of man's relationship with nature
- 6) the category 'other', which contained one-off views which were not repeated, although in fact there were plenty of them (e.g. wolves make life exciting, the problems with wolves are minimal, they call for greater hunting skills, they provide more opportunities for hunting, wolf furs can be obtained, they compel the authorities to act, they unite people, fortunately the wolf has survived...).

There were no great differences in the replies between the areas (Figure 6), but some were apparent. For example, in the area with an established population, nature tourism and wildlife photography had a greater profile as a positive aspect of the wolf than elsewhere in the country. This is probably because nature tourism has grown and is a developing industry in eastern Finland, and especially Kainuu. Respondents at national level also thought this was pretty important. Their responses also stressed the importance of the wolf's role in man's developing relationship with nature. This aspect of the issue was mentioned mainly by conservation agencies.



**Figure 6.** Weighted values of positive aspects of the wolf population expressed as percentages for the different wolf population areas.

Different regional/local stakeholders appear generally to appreciate the same aspects of the wolf and the wolf population, even though differences in the importance they are given are discernible (Table 3). Almost everyone regards the wolf as a manifestation of biodiversity and in this respect important, but in the opinion of hunters (both official bodies and volunteers) this is its main positive aspect. On the other hand, the same agencies virtually neglect to emphasise the importance of the wolf as part of an ecological whole.

Nature and wildlife entrepreneurs lay particular emphasis on the notion of the wolf as part of nature tourism and a subject for wildlife photography. The environment authorities also see the wolf's role as a part of nature tourism and as a subject for wildlife photography as being quite important, unlike other respondents. Other agencies, including Metsähallitus, for example, thought the wolf's positive impact on an area's image was quite strong, again unlike some of the others (Table 3).

## Negative aspects

There were clearly more negative than positive aspects of the wolf and the wolf population mentioned in the data compiled from the regional respondents. The weighted values for the aspects categorised as negative in the replies were added up and it was examined in terms of percentages how aspects seen as negative in the different areas emerged. They formed nine categories, as follows (in order of importance):

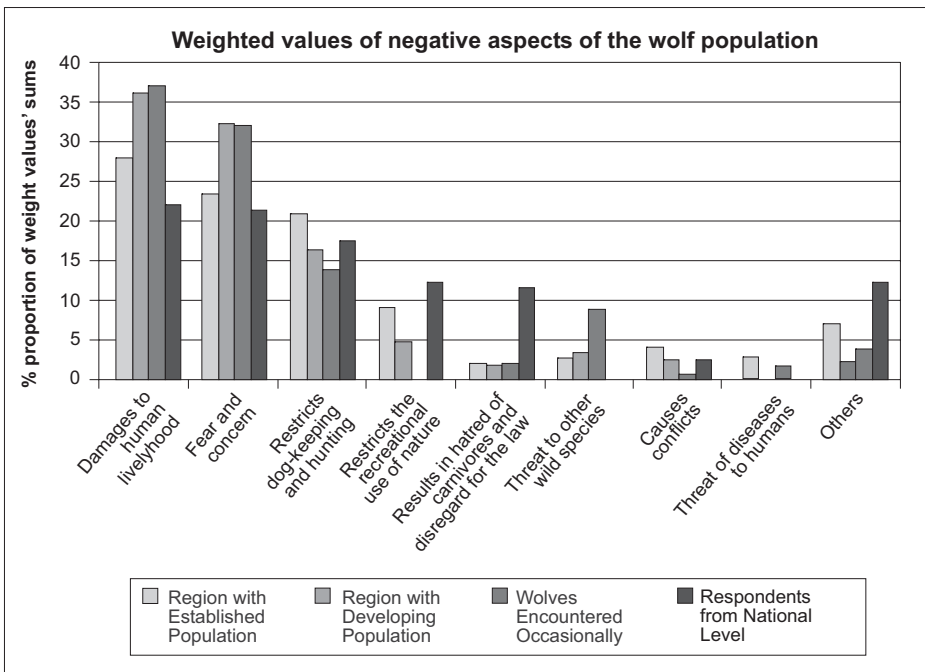
The wolf/wolf population

- 1) causes damage to human livelihoods (cattle farming, reindeer husbandry, etc.)
- 2) causes fear and is a threat to safety
- 3) restricts and causes problems for hunting with dogs
- 4) restricts the recreational use of nature (hunting with dogs aside)
- 5) threatens other wild species
- 6) causes conflicts
- 7) is a threat of disease to humans
- 8) results in hatred of carnivores and disregard for the law
- 9) the category of 'other', containing one-off opinions which had not started to be repeated

Among the responses and over the different areas two pretty equally strongly expressed views were the most evident (Figure 7). Damage caused by wolves to human livelihoods and the fear the wolf caused and the threat to safety it posed were felt to be the most negative

**Table 3.** The positive aspects and weighted values of national level respondents of wolf population. Each percentage describes the share of the variable from the total sum of weighted values. The percentage of each national level group is totally 100 % and its distribution into different variables describes the choices and weighted values of the respondents.

Regional percentage	Number of respondents	Component of biodiversity	Part of ecological whole	Point of interest in nature tourism and wildlife photography	Component of regional image	Impacts on the development of man's relationship with nature	Others
Conservationist	19	39,8	27,8	11,4	9,7	6,3	5,1
Nature entrepreneurs	4	25,0	17,5	32,5	10,0	7,5	7,5
Hunters	24	52,5	11,9	11,9	3,4	0,0	20,3
Game authorities	47	57,0	22,0	1,6	0,0	3,2	16,1
Police authorities	30	42,1	24,3	2,1	8,6	6,4	16,4
Municipalities, federations of municipalities	32	48,0	33,1	3,4	4,7	4,7	6,1
Environment authorities	5	35,8	34,0	17,0	3,8	9,4	0,0
Agriculture and forestry as source of livelihood	37	39,5	33,6	5,9	2,5	3,4	15,1
Others (universities...)	23	47,1	17,1	8,6	20,7	4,3	2,1
<b>ALL respondents</b>	<b>221</b>	<b>45,1</b>	<b>25,4</b>	<b>7,4</b>	<b>7,2</b>	<b>4,8</b>	<b>10,1</b>



**Figure 7.** Weighted values of negative aspects of the wolf population expressed as percentages for the different wolf population areas.

aspects, and they scored highly. Repeated mention was also made of how the use of dogs was problematic or even prevented because of wolves, and this scored highly too. Other views were less common. Respondents at national level tended to identify hatred of wild animals and disregard for the law as issues more than regional/local respondents. The wolf as a cause of damage was also given less importance at national level than regionally.

Damage caused by wolves to domestic animals and livelihoods and fear of the wolf and the threat to safety it poses were mentioned most often, regardless of the regional stakeholder concerned, and these also scored the highly (Table 4). There were some differences between the agencies, however. Among the representatives of the environmental authorities and agriculture and forestry, the damage aspect was given prominence. Furthermore, fears and worries about safety were not felt to be so significant among voluntary hunters or the game authorities as they were among the other respondents.

But the respondents are clearly divided on the issue of the use of dogs in hunting being hampered by wolves. The voluntary hunting agencies in particular (hunting organisations and kennel clubs), and nature and wildlife entrepreneurs too, view this issue negatively and a priority in terms of its importance (it scores highly), while others give it less importance on average. Among the nature conservationists and environmental authorities it was generally given least importance among the options for negative aspects of the wolf and the wolf population.

**Table 4.** The negative aspects and weighted values of national level respondents of wolf population. Each percentage describes the share of the variable from the total sum of weighted values. The percentages of each national level group is totally 100 % and its distribution into different variables describes the choices and weighted values of the respondents.

Regional percentages	Number of respondents	Causes damage to human livelihoods	Causes fear and is a threat to safety	Restricts and causes problems for hunting with dogs	Restricts the recreational use of nature	Threatens other wild species	Causes conflicts	Results in hatred of carnivores and disregard for the law	Is a threat of disease to humans	Others
Conservationist	19	27,9	38,0	7,8	2,3	0,0	9,3	3,9	0,0	10,9
Nature entrepreneurs	4	23,3	26,7	26,7	0,0	6,7	0,0	0,0	0,0	16,7
Hunters	24	28,8	20,6	34,8	3,4	3,0	0,0	3,9	0,0	5,6
Game authorities	47	29,4	25,2	22,2	7,3	6,1	0,8	1,3	2,5	5,2
Police authorities	30	28,4	34,9	13,8	3,2	7,3	1,4	3,7	2,3	5,0
Municipalities, federation of municipalities	32	34,4	33,4	11,3	9,1	4,1	5,3	0,0	0,0	2,5
Environment authorities	5	44,0	28,0	8,0	8,0	0,0	12,0	0,0	0,0	0,0
Agriculture and forestry as source of livelihood	37	46,7	32,0	12,7	2,6	2,0	0,0	0,0	1,6	2,3
Others (universities...)	23	34,3	24,7	14,6	9,1	1,5	8,6	5,1	1,0	1,0
<b>ALL respondents</b>	<b>221</b>	<b>33,2</b>	<b>29,0</b>	<b>17,7</b>	<b>5,7</b>	<b>4,0</b>	<b>2,8</b>	<b>2,0</b>	<b>1,3</b>	<b>4,4</b>

#### 4.1.4 Views on maintaining interaction between man and wolf

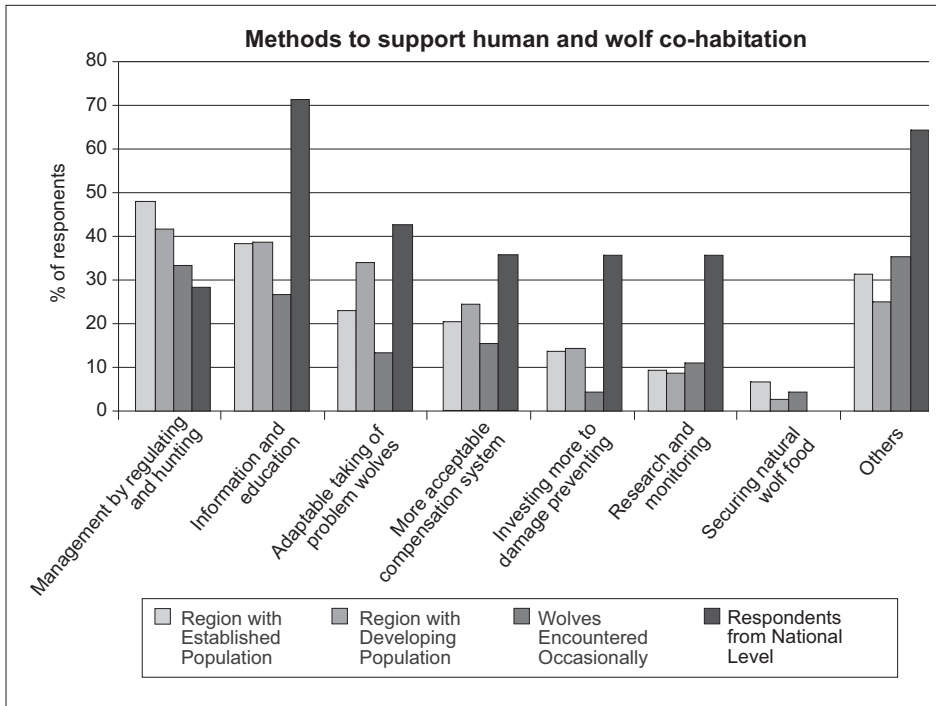
A question on ways to maintain interaction between man and wolf and promote it was intended to discover opinions on what the main issues are and what actions are needed on account of the increasing and developing wolf population. This question also attracted criticism. Many respondents thought that man was under no obligation to coexist with the wolf. Nevertheless, the question was answered pretty thoroughly on the whole and its purpose was understood clearly.

The replies were sorted according to their content and eight categories began to take shape. In order of importance over all, these were:

- 1) the wolf population should be managed principally by controlling it (reducing it, making it more timorous through hunting, taking it out of areas of human settlement, etc.)
- 2) information, education and awareness-raising
- 3) a flexible procedure for eliminating problem wolves
- 4) improvements in the system of compensation for damage
- 5) investment in the prevention of damage and the development of such methods
- 6) research into the wolf population, monitoring and development of the population (e.g. more tagging)
- 7) ensuring the existence of natural prey and its sufficient numbers (maintenance of deer populations)
- 8) other (many one-off suggestions such as keeping dogs locked up all year long, increasing wolf numbers, establishing intact packs, making sure that wolves are left alone, fencing in wolves, keeping them in zoos, clarification of the laws on self-defence, learning lessons from abroad, the acquisition of guard dogs, acquiring the right to kill wolves freely...).

Controlling the wolf population by means of hunting was highlighted particularly in the data from the area with an established wolf population. But more information and education were also seen as being important. There were plenty of one-off suggestions and views in reply to this question, included under 'other'. The large number of entries in this category reflects the respondents' wealth of ideas, though also the diverse nature of the wolf issue.

Agencies at national level generally mentioned a greater range of options in their replies, with the result that their contribution appears bigger than that of the regional respondents with respect to virtually every variable (Figure 8).



**Figure 8.** Range of options for maintaining interaction between wolf and man in the different wolf population areas. The various remedies selected by the different agencies are compared to the number of respondents. The percentage figure given in each column represents how common the relevant variable is in the respondents’ choices in each area. The respondents at national level mentioned a greater range of options than the regional respondents on average.

The views expressed in the data from respondents at national level were in fact very much the same as those of the regional agencies, but the way they are weighted in terms of importance is different. For the regional respondents control of the wolf population was important, but among the respondents at national level it was the option that was proposed least of all (Figure 8). This is perhaps best explained by the structure of the respondents. Relatively speaking, the nationally-based respondents represented more conservation agencies than did the regional ones, and they either tended to omit control of the wolf population through hunting as an option or simply regard its importance as minimal.

An examination of the various options proposed by the different agencies reveals that the nature conservation groups, nature and wildlife entrepreneurs and environmental authorities differ from the rest of the respondents (Table 5). In their view, information, education and awareness-raising are the most important ways of addressing the issue of interaction between man and wolf. Nature conservation agencies think that there are also a lot of other ways to increase tolerance. The response data, for example, mentions the establishment of wolf packs, ongoing discussions, cooperation, elk hunting without dogs, learning lessons from abroad, taxi rides for children, etc. These all come under ‘other’, as the rest of the respondents either did not propose them or the replies are not more specifically focused.

**Table 5.** Methods to support human and wolf interaction by different regional stakeholders. Percentages describe how many percent of every respondent group has mentioned the method. The bigger the percentage the more significant is the method.

Regional respondents	Number of respondents	Management by regulating and hunting	Information and education	Adaptable taking of problem wolves	More acceptable compensation system	Investing more to damage preventing	Research and monitoring	Securing natural wolf food	Others
Conservationist	19	10,5	78,9	21,1	26,3	42,1	15,8	0,0	63,2
Nature entrepreneurs	4	0,0	100,0	0,0	50,0	0,0	25,0	25,0	0,0
Hunters	24	66,7	16,7	41,7	12,5	8,3	0,0	4,2	20,8
Game authorities	47	42,6	23,4	21,3	8,5	6,4	2,1	2,1	31,9
Police authorities	30	40,0	43,3	33,3	16,7	6,7	10,0	3,3	20,0
Municipalities, federations of municipalities	32	40,6	37,5	34,4	28,1	21,9	6,3	6,3	25,0
Environment authorities	5	20,0	100,0	0,0	40,0	40,0	40,0	0,0	20,0
Agriculture and forestry as source of livelihood	37	56,8	18,9	27,0	35,1	5,4	8,1	5,4	24,3
Others (universities...)	23	34,8	39,1	13,0	17,4	4,3	26,1	8,7	39,1
<b>ALL respondents</b>	<b>221</b>	<b>42,1</b>	<b>36,2</b>	<b>26,2</b>	<b>21,3</b>	<b>12,2</b>	<b>9,5</b>	<b>4,5</b>	<b>29,4</b>

Investment in damage prevention and its development are also important for nature conservation groups and the environmental authorities in the maintenance of interaction. For other respondents this is not generally viewed as a very important option.

So the option most frequently put forward by representatives of kennel clubs, voluntary hunter associations and agriculture and forestry for maintaining interaction is control of the wolf population. This option is merely peripheral in the choices proposed for controlling the wolf population by nature and wildlife entrepreneurs, nature conservation groups and the environmental authorities. The other respondents think it is important, though. Research is regarded as important more by the environmental authorities and 'other agencies/parties'; for the rest it is of peripheral concern.

### 4.1.5 Opinions on the size of the wolf population

Areas and respondents alike are divided over their aims regarding the size of the wolf population. The aim to reduce the present population is most common in the area with an established wolf population, where almost half the respondents are in favour of this. A third think the population is at the right level, while just a few would either increase it or eliminate it entirely (Figure 9).

The qualitative responses strongly indicate that most of the respondents thought that the way the population was currently distributed was too uneven. They believe it is concentrated too much in one area. This was also the view of those who were keen to increase the wolf population. Approximately 40% of respondents in the areas with a developing or occasionally encountered population thought the present situation regarding the wolf was acceptable

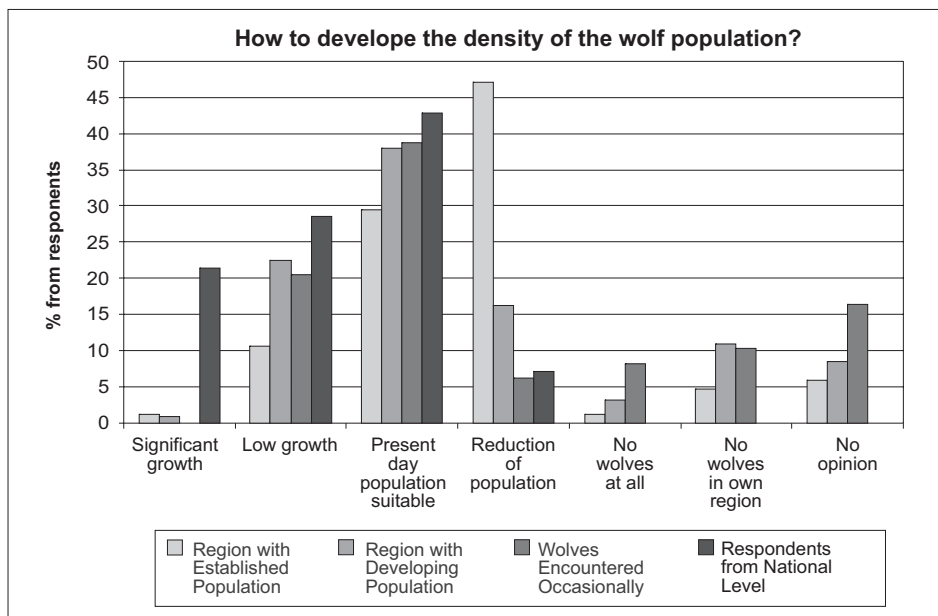


Figure 9. Opinions on the size of the wolf population in the different wolf population areas.

and more than 20% wanted to see the population strengthen. In the area where the wolf is encountered only occasionally there were opinions supporting the notion that the area should be completely wolf-free, while in the area with an established wolf population such views were virtually non-existent.

Respondents at national level replied to the same question, though in the context as the country as a whole. When the views of the various respondents are compared, it has to be borne in mind that regional/local respondents were only replying for their own region.

Some 50% of the respondents at national level were in favour of increasing the wolf population (21% significantly and 28% slightly), and around 43% thought the current population was acceptable (Figure 9). Those who endorse the notion of an increase in the population are broadly the same agencies as those among the regional stakeholders: they consider the current wolf population to be too small because they think it is either threatened or vulnerable, or because, in their view, a favourable conservation status ought to be achieved. The largest populations deemed necessary to aim for were those proposed by the environmental authorities at national level. Just one reply from agriculture and forestry was in favour of reducing the present population, without going into specific details, however. Almost everyone agreed that the wolf population was too unevenly distributed. They think it is concentrated too much in eastern Finland.

It is mainly the nature conservation agencies which believe it is necessary to increase the wolf population, and representatives from the environmental authorities agree almost as strongly (Table 6). The game authorities and the police would prefer to keep the present levels of the wolf population as they are, though some were in favour of reducing the population in eastern Finland.

Other groups are more or less of the same opinion in this category – the current wolf population is at an acceptable level. However, kennel clubs, voluntary hunting organisations, local authorities (municipalities) and the Regional Councils are the most likely to express the view that the aim should be to reduce the population. Neither the environmental authorities nor the nature conservation agencies in any area are intent on reducing the wolf population.

Significant aims expressed at regional level to increase the wolf population were classified as merely one-off - they came either from nature and wildlife entrepreneurs or nature conservation groups. Opinions in favour of increasing the wolf population many times over were interpreted as significant aims to increase the population. The opinion that there should be no wolves at all came mainly from the game authorities, principally from the reindeer husbandry area and the regions in 'Ruuhka-Suomi' (the 'congestion' zone that forms a triangle between the country's three largest cities of Helsinki, Tampere and Turku). The reasons were reindeer herding in Lapland and the dense population in southern Finland and the traffic there. The opinion that 'there should be wolves, but not in my area' came mainly from representatives of the voluntary hunter organisations and agriculture and forestry. The reasons given were generally reindeer husbandry and density of population. A few one-off views came in, regardless of area, suggesting that there was simply no need for a wolf population, or that there should only be one.

**Table 6.** The aspects of the wolf population density by different regional stakeholders. The percentages describe the direction where to respondents want the density to be developed.

Regional respondents	Significant growth	Low growth	Present day population suitable	Reduction of population	No wolves at all	No wolves in own region	No opinion
Conservationist	5,0	70,0	20,0	5,0	0,0	0,0	0,0
Nature entrepreneurs	25,0	25,0	25,0	25,0	0,0	0,0	0,0
Hunters	0,0	6,3	25,0	46,9	3,1	12,5	6,3
Game authorities	0,0	15,8	43,9	21,1	10,5	3,5	5,3
Police authorities	0,0	16,7	55,6	11,1	2,8	8,3	5,6
Municipalities, federations of municipalities	0,0	11,1	30,6	38,9	0,0	5,6	13,9
Environment authorities	0,0	57,1	28,6	0,0	0,0	0,0	14,3
Agriculture and forestry as source of livelihood	0,0	7,0	32,6	25,6	2,3	23,3	9,3
Others (universities...)	0,0	17,9	28,6	21,4	0,0	7,1	25,0
<b>ALL respondents</b>	<b>0,8</b>	<b>18,3</b>	<b>35,4</b>	<b>24,3</b>	<b>3,4</b>	<b>8,7</b>	<b>9,1</b>

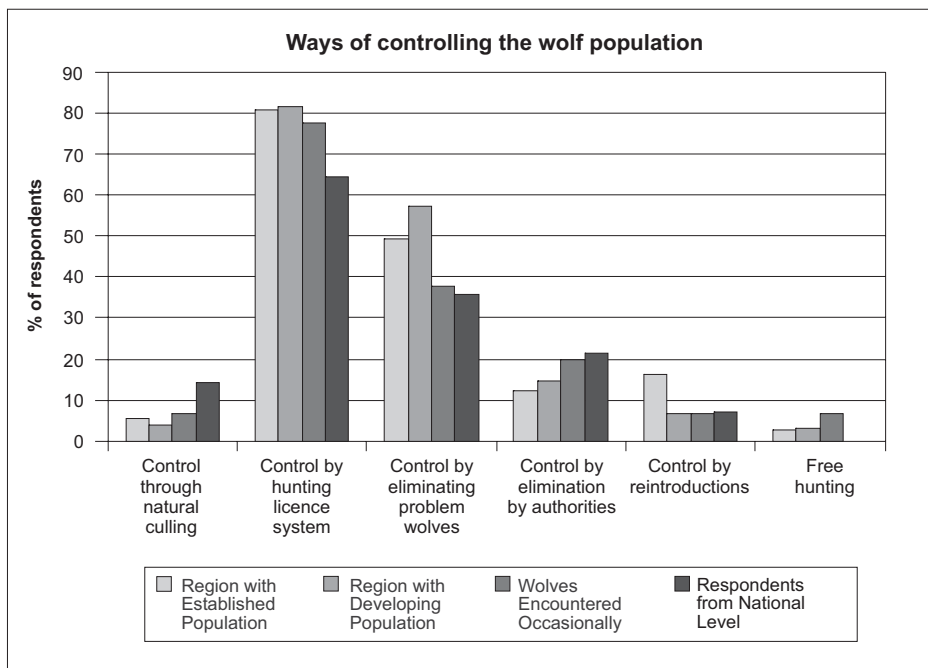
### 4.1.6 Ways of controlling the wolf population

The questionnaire for regional respondents contained various options regarding ways of controlling the wolf population, on the assumption that that was thought necessary. The respondents could choose more than one of the options if they wanted to. And that is what they tended to do. Some had crossed out the word 'only' in some of the options. This was not a major problem, however, in interpreting the data, because the replies were clearly focused.

The options for this question were as follows:

- the population should be controlled through natural culling
- the population should be controlled by means of a system of hunting licences
- the population should be controlled only by eliminating problem wolves
- the population should be controlled only on the part of the authorities, which should eliminate animals
- the population should be controlled through reintroductions
- other; what?

Regardless of area, a system of hunting licences was by far the most popular option chosen (Figure 10). Approximately 80% of respondents, whatever the area they represented, thought this was the best way of controlling the population. A considerable number had



**Figure 10.** Methods to control wolf population in different wolf regions.

written in the qualitative (open) section that the licensing procedure should be applied to individual animals or packs that cause damage. The option to eliminate 'problem wolves' was also popular. A substantial number of respondents had crossed out the word 'only' and had also ticked the hunting licence option. The 'other' option was hardly taken up. Transfers of animals (reintroductions) was most strongly supported in the area with an established population in eastern Finland.

The spread of replies at national level is very similar to the regional choices made, though the aim to control the population naturally was more strongly supported. There was not such strong support for hunting licences as with the regional replies either. This is mainly because a system of hunting licences was not among the options chosen by the nature conservation agencies (except for one respondent) or the environmental authorities, and together they account for quite a large proportion of the respondents compared to the respondents at regional level. The other respondents, on the other hand, support a system of hunting licences virtually unanimously. One respondent included in the conservation agencies who did not choose the hunting licence system proposed 'conservation hunting' as a way to control populations.

Although the system of hunting licences was clearly the most popular option as a way to control the wolf population, an examination of the replies at the level of individual agency reveals clear differences in the choices made between them (Table 7). The replies from all the agencies, except for the nature and wildlife entrepreneurs, the nature conservation agencies and the environmental authorities, focus strongly on a system of hunting licences. That is true both at regional and national level. There is equal support for eliminating problem wolves among all the respondents, however. It is thus an acceptable option for everyone.

The notion that the wolf population should be controlled naturally obtained the support of 30% of the nature conservation agencies and 40% of the environmental authorities at regional level. Nevertheless, the replies show that these agencies also sometimes selected the option 'the population should be controlled only on the part of the authorities, which should eliminate animals' and that the idea of transfers got their support. These agencies generally selected a wider range of options than the others, although they were clearly against hunting. The reason, as given in the open section of the questionnaire by many of the respondents, was that hunting only causes more problems: it worsens the destructive behaviour of wolves because it breaks up packs and the wrong animals get shot. On the other hand, the other respondents, who were in favour of a system of hunting licences, reasoned repeatedly that hunting helps to keep wolves naturally timid and consequently leads to a reduction in the amount of damage done. A similar difference of opinion also emerged in many other replies. The environmental agencies (conservation groups and the authorities) fairly unanimously shy away from the idea of hunting wolves, or at least do not support it, whilst all the other agencies are generally in favour of it as a way of controlling the population. A similar conclusion can also be reached from the data received from respondents at national level.

There was some support for the idea of the unrestricted hunting of wolves among the other alternatives proposed. These came from hunting organisations, the hunting authorities and agriculture and forestry. These opinions came mainly from the reindeer husbandry area, though there were some one-off strong demands from elsewhere too.

**Table 7.** The methods of controlling the wolf population chosen by regional stakeholders. The percentages describe the choice amount of different methods.

Regional respondents	Number of respondents	The population should be controlled by hunting licence system	The population should be controlled only by eliminating problem wolves	The population should be controlled only by the authorities, which should eliminate animals	The population should be controlled through natural culling	The population should be controlled through reintroductions	Free hunting
Conservationist	19	15,8	52,6	63,2	31,6	15,8	0,0
Nature entrepreneurs	4	25,0	75,0	50,0	50,0	0,0	0,0
Hunters	24	91,7	66,7	4,2	4,2	8,3	4,2
Game authorities	47	93,6	42,6	4,3	4,3	4,3	8,5
Police authorities	30	86,7	50,0	20,0	20,0	10,0	0,0
Municipalities, federations of municipalities	32	90,6	46,9	15,6	15,6	15,6	0,0
Environment authorities	5	40,0	60,0	60,0	60,0	60,0	0,0
Agriculture and forestry as source of livelihood	37	83,8	37,8	0,0	0,0	8,1	8,1
Others (universities...)	23	87,0	69,6	8,7	8,7	4,3	0,0
<b>ALL respondents</b>	<b>221</b>	<b>80,5</b>	<b>50,7</b>	<b>14,9</b>	<b>14,9</b>	<b>10,0</b>	<b>3,6</b>

#### 4.1.7 Problem wolves: how to define the notion and ways to deal with the problem

If one were to search the response data on control of the population for one issue there was general consensus on, combining the replies overall and using a few interpreting skills, it would be how to deal with wolves which are problem wolves. Almost all agencies are in favour of eliminating them, though there are once again differences in ways to go about it.

The nature conservation agencies, environmental authorities and nature and wildlife entrepreneurs are strongly in favour of the authorities' role as an agency to keep the wolf population in check. The others do not regard this as important. It is only proposed to a lesser extent in the choices made by the local authorities, the police and some other agencies.

When people were asked separately what constituted a problem wolf and to suggest ways to deal with the problem, once again there was a strong consensus of opinion in general. The wolf was defined as a problem wolf by virtually everyone in the different areas and among the various agencies as an animal which repeatedly enters gardens and yards and tries to prey on domestic animals, having lost its natural timidity towards humans. Many either proposed either all these parameters or highlighted one of them. Most of the respondents who expressed a view on how to deal with the situation proposed the prompt elimination of individual animals as a solution.

Other solutions were also put forward, such as better protection of domestic animals, chasing the problem animal away or moving problem wolves out of the area. One-off replies like these came from virtually all the agencies, though in particular from the conservation agencies. Only a few individual respondents did not see wolves as problem at all or did not refer to them as such but believed that the situation had been brought about by man and hunting. This view is based on the notion that hunting and man's interference cause wolf packs to break up, so that young animals left alone, especially young wolves, have to look for food which is easy to get hold of in yards and gardens, and humans interpret this as the behaviour of problem wolves.

The great majority of respondents, however, thought that it should be possible to eliminate individual wolves that fitted the definition of problem wolf. The reasons reiterated were that they add to fears and many believe they also fuel antagonism in respect of wolves.

#### 4.1.8 Recognition of conflicts in the management of the wolf population

The respondents were asked if they recognised conflicting objectives in the management of the wolf population in their area and what they thought had led to them. People did mainly say they recognised conflicts. They were generally identified as existing among two separate groups. One was between the conservation agencies and local people. Moreover, many respondents noted that the conservation agencies were actors that were based outside the local area. The other conflict was typically between those who lived in the country and those who lived in the cities and towns: "The townfolk want there to be wolves in the countryside."

The voluntary hunting organisations, kennel clubs and agriculture and forestry in particular mentioned the actions of the conservation agencies as causes of greater conflict. Their aims were typically described as 'irresponsible, 'extreme' or 'fanatic'. The conservation agencies, on the other hand, tended to propose that the conflicts were rooted in people's ignorance, hatred of wolves, fear, and hunters pursuing their own interests. Several replies by the conservation groups suggested that hunters' attitudes were mainly coloured by their antagonism towards wolves.

In some areas there seemed to be more disputes than elsewhere. In Kainuu, in addition to those described above, people identified disputes between reindeer herders and conservationists and between nature tourism entrepreneurs and hunters.

It was clear that it was felt that there were more conflicting aims in the areas in which wolves are found, and they could be localised more accurately than in areas where wolves do not occur. There were some respondents who did not identify any conflicting aims at all.

#### 4.1.9 Meetings between stakeholders and their contribution

Talks were held between stakeholders (the agencies which were asked for written replies) in all 15 Game Management Districts. At these they listened to presentations on the local situation with respect to large carnivores, with special reference to the status of the wolf population. They were also presented with an outline of their replies to serve as a basis for discussion. There are more details on the participants in the talks in the sections on each individual Game Management District. The purpose of the meetings was to try and bring to the attention of all parties the range of views there were on the wolf issue in the area and to achieve dialogue. A similar discussion was also organised for the actors at national level.

A calm and constructive approach to the talks was adopted in the main. Only at just a few meetings did some adamantly adhere to their own views and were unwilling to reach consensus.

The main contribution the meetings made was to achieve dialogue and see if there was a need in the different areas to establish joint negotiating bodies, such as those already active in North Karelia and Kainuu (Regional Advisory Committee for Large Carnivores). There was felt to be an obvious need for these now in all the regions of eastern Finland, i.e. in North Savo, Kymi and South Savo too. Similarly, a committee of the same sort was seen as a timely addition in Central Finland, and there had already been initiatives on that front earlier on. In the areas covered by the other Game Management Districts it was thought that advisory committees were not yet needed, but the desire was expressed for the arrangements made by the Game Management Districts to hold regional talks on the management of the deer populations to take account of the large carnivore issue. It was also therefore necessary to expand the list of participants to include the police and regional nature conservation agencies, for example.

## 4.2 The wolf debate – public hearings and their contribution

### 4.2.1 Meetings and participants

A total of 30 public hearings open to all to attend were held in the 15 Game Management Districts all over Finland. There people could express their views on the wolf issue. Altogether 1,617 people attended. Of them, 988 came from the area with an established wolf population in eastern Finland, 543 came from the area with a developing population, i.e. central Finland, and 86 came from Lapland and southern Finland. In all 1,933 speeches and remarks - the wolf debate – were heard (Table 8).

The meetings varied greatly in nature, though almost all were marked by strongly critical views of wolves and a general mood of censure, either aimed at the wolf itself or those who were involved in wolf issues, various institutions, the organisers of the meetings, etc. Only in Lapland and southern Finland, i.e. areas where the wolf is only occasionally encountered, was the debate calm in general and neutral in tone, and consisted of more questions than elsewhere.

The media were usually well represented at the sessions, and local newspapers reported the discussions in full. The wolf issue was well covered by the rest of the media whilst the round of public hearings was in progress.

The meetings met with a lot of criticism of various sorts, though they also received praise. Many complained publicly that the audience which had shown up at them did not represent the general view in the area. Many got in touch afterwards to say that they had been reluctant to say what they thought. The writers of this study also came in for criticism: the accusation was made that we had tried to organise the meetings in secret, had failed to announce them adequately, and had not wanted to hear people's views. Many also suspected that the sessions held were just a whitewash, and everything had already been decided either in Brussels or the capital.

The meetings were announced in the press and on local radio. They were open to anyone to attend: those who attended were not sorted into groups or asked about their backgrounds. Nor were these looked into. The discussions were held by those present with reference to the presentations made. People did not have to introduce themselves or give their backgrounds, though many were keen to do so anyway.

Most of those who attended were men. At some meetings, however – especially those held in cities and towns – women may have accounted for 30–40% of those present. No one was asked their age, but at the sessions held in rural areas the average age of those attending was estimated to be 45-55 years old, while in the cities and towns it was lower.

People were not asked what they did for a living, but it became apparent from the speakers' comments that they included farmers, shepherds, cattle herders, teachers, doctors, vets, forestry entrepreneurs, taxi divers, reindeer herders, policemen, military officers, researchers, etc. Many also introduced themselves with reference to their hobbies and pastimes, e.g.

**Table 8.** Public hearings in different wolf population regions, numbers of participants and speeches.

Game management district	Municipality	Number of participants	Number of speeches
Kainuu	Sotkamo	69	91
Kainuu	Kuhmo	93	97
Kainuu	Suomusalmi	55	43
P-Savo	Sonkajärvi	78	54
P-Savo	Rautavaara	117	58
P-Savo	Kiuruvesi	86	55
P-Savo	Siilinjärvi	81	61
P-Karjala	Tohmajärvi	65	65
P-Karjala	Nurmes	75	62
P-Karjala	Lieksa	26	70
P-Karjala	Ilomantsi	48	41
Kymi	Valkeala	13	60
Kymi	Hamina	17	63
Kymi	Rautjärvi	50	93
Kymi	Lappeenranta	34	107
E-Savo	Savonlinna	36	65
E-Savo	Juva	43	52
<b>Region with established population</b>	<b>Together</b>	<b>986</b>	<b>1137</b>

Game management district	Municipality	Number of participants	Number of speeches
Ruots.kielinen Pohjanmaa	Vaasa	76	57
Pohjanmaa	Kauhajoki	100	90
Pohjanmaa	Perho	9	46
K-Suomi	Multia	115	65
K-Suomi	Jyväskylä	23	74
K-Suomi	Kannonkoski	39	48
Satakunta	Kankaanpää	100	55
P-Häme	Tampere	55	79
Oulu	Raahe	26	53
<b>Region with developing population</b>	<b>Together</b>	<b>543</b>	<b>567</b>

Game management district	Municipality	Number of participants	Number of speeches
E-Häme	Hämeenlinna	9	69
Uusimaa	Espoo	45	57
V-Suomi	Paimio	15	65
Lappi	Rovaniemi	17	28
<b>Wolves encountered occasionally</b>	<b>Together</b>	<b>86</b>	<b>219</b>

hunter, berry picker, mushroom picker, orienteer, nature lover, dog handler/walker (usually also mentioning the breed or type, e.g. hound, etc.). Someone would also introduce themselves as a mother, the father of so many children, or a pensioner. At many of the meetings – especially those in the country – most of those attending were either active hunters or kennel club enthusiasts. On the other hand, in many of the municipalities in eastern Finland almost every other man (or even more) hunts as a pastime, so their presence in such large numbers was not unexpected. For example, in 2002 in Kainuu, including the municipality of Vaala, there were some 33,00 men over the age of 15 included in the census list and the number who had purchased a game hunter's licence came to 17,000 approximately (Statistics Finland, Register of Hunters)

For one reason or another there was something different about the meeting held in Rovaniemi in Lapland. There the wolf debate never really got off the ground and many topics were not commented on at all. There were also few in attendance. In Lapland the wolf did not seem to be a subject either of any significance or interest, except as regards reindeer herding. The presentations and comments in the data from Lapland do not make any great impact.

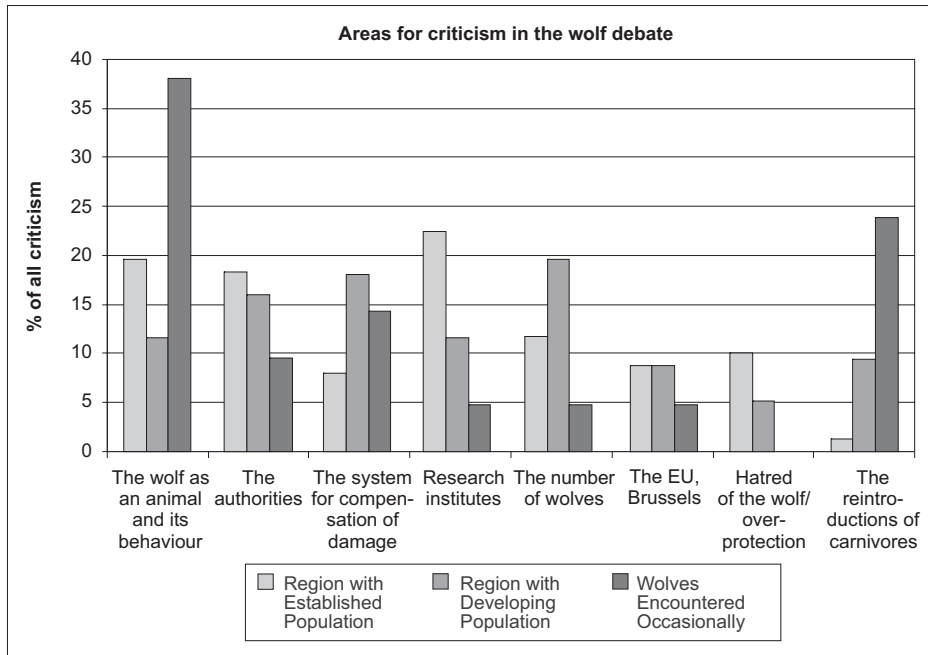
#### 4.2.2 Areas for criticism in the wolf debate

There were a lot of complaints made at the meetings, especially in the areas in which wolves occur. These were sorted on the basis of what areas they were targeted at, and then the remarks made were used to calculate how many of them were aimed at what areas (Figure 11). The same speaker may have made reference to more than one area for criticism.

Complaints were made about and focussed on:

- 1) The wolf as an animal, its actions and behaviour (e.g. entering gardens and yards, problem wolves, its way of killing and preying on other animals, its reputation, etc.)
- 2) The authorities (Finnish official agencies involved in the management of wolf populations)
- 3) The system for compensation for damage (workings of the current system)
- 4) Research institutes (especially the Game and Fisheries Research Institute but also to some extent other research institutes or universities which are involved in research into large carnivores)
- 5) The number of wolves and growth in their population (too many wolves, the aims for wolf numbers, etc.)
- 6) The EU, Brussels (joining the EU, directives and their effect on the protection of the wolf)
- 7) Hatred of the wolf and over-protection (people's complaints about others' attitudes to wolves: either hatred of the wolf or over-protection of wolves)
- 8) The reintroductions of carnivores which have been carried out (complaint about the transfers of large carnivores which have taken place in recent decades; the impression people have that wolves have also been transferred, although there is no official information about this).

There were also other complaints but they were not examined separately because the emphasis was on only the key and most important issues which were repeated and which were also probably those which would need to be paid special attention to in the context of management of the wolf populations. They are the eight points listed above.



**Figure 11.** Areas for criticism in the wolf debate. The columns show the percentage of all remarks devoted to each area. In areas with an established population 240 critical remarks were made, in areas with a developing population 138 were made, and in areas where the wolf occurs only occasionally 21 were made. The percentage figures represent the extent to which these variables account for complaints and criticism.

The sorted data on the wolf debate suggests that the wolf and its deeds come in for a good deal of criticism, especially in areas where the wolf hardly occurs. At least that is the way it looks, though the data needs to be interpreted with care. There were often strong complaints about an aspect of the issue which was topical in each area. In one it would be a recent refusal of a hunting licence, in another a case of damage highlighted by the media, for example, or some detail relating to research into wolves. In the area where the wolf population is encountered only occasionally, there was more talk of the wolf based on assumptions, and complaints about research and the authorities, for example, were not relevant. There were also fewer remarks made than in the other areas. The division by area of the data tends to 'hide' the critical remarks made more forcefully in the different regions. At the meetings people also tended to start talking about something someone else had brought up and the remarks started to get repeated. This data is more accurately presented in the examination by individual region.

Attacks on the authorities, especially the Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry, were the harshest in North Karelia and areas like Multia in Central Finland. This is for a number of reasons: the density of wolf populations locally, entries into gardens and yards, and refused hunting licences. Criticism of the research institutes was equally strong in North Karelia, Kainuu and North Savo. These stem from the rows over tagged wolves allowed to roam and access to information on them – the differing opinions on who is responsible for what tagged wolves do and the general lack of trust between local hunters and those who monitor tagged wolves.

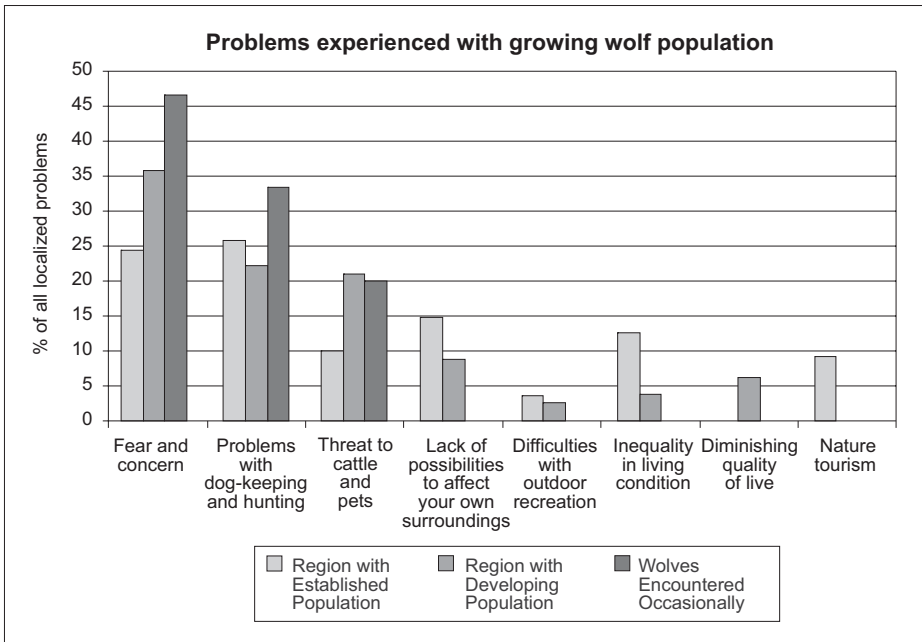
Criticism of reintroductions of large carnivores were made most vehemently at a meeting in Ostrobothnia and at one in the Game Management District of Oulu. A similar argument was also about to begin in Satakunta, but it was quelled by a forceful speech by someone there representing a zoological gardens. When large areas were compared, the most criticism of reintroductions by far was in southern Finland, where the wolf occurs only occasionally. On the other hand there were not a lot of complaints in these areas, meaning there may be greater focus on just one theme in the survey. Numerically and in terms of individual meetings the most complaints were voiced in Southern Ostrobothnia, where comments were made regarding many different issues but differed from those made at the meetings in other areas in that the complaints were not more specifically justified.

#### 4.2.3 The existence of the wolf, the growth in the wolf population and the problems that causes

The problems associated with the wolf and the growth in its population were mentioned in abundance in the remarks made. In a way this is also a kind of criticism, but now the focus is slightly different: why complain? what lies behind the complaints and criticism?

The problems focus on the following:

- 1) the concern and fear for safety caused by the wolf (especially for children)
- 2) problems keeping dogs and for hunting (especially hunting with dogs)
- 3) the threat to keeping domestic animals (including reindeer) and problems for such means of livelihood, damage caused and, for example, the additional costs incurred, the extra work, the worry, night-time vigilance, etc.
- 4) no chance to have a say in the management of one's own living environment (decisions are made elsewhere with disregard for local views)
- 5) problems for outdoor activities and the recreational use of nature (linked to the topic of fear)
- 6) inequality in living standards (e.g. compared to urban living)
- 7) decline in quality of life
- 8) nature tourism, by-products of the development of nature tourism connected with large carnivores (more relevant to the bear than the wolf).



**Figure 12.** Problems associated with the wolf and the growth in its population mentioned in the wolf debate in the different wolf population areas. In areas with an established population, 263 specific problem cases were mentioned, in areas with a developing population 81 were mentioned, and in areas where the wolf occurs only occasionally 15 cases were mentioned. The figures represent the extent to which these variables account for the remarks made, expressed as a percentage.

The growth in the wolf population in the wolf debate was strongly associated with three problems: feelings of concern and fear, problems for keeping dogs and hunting, and the threat to cattle and reindeer herding. In areas where wolves barely occur concern and fear seemed to be particularly prevalent. This could be explained by the genuine fears that people have, though also because people have been unable to ponder empirically the other effects of a possible growth in the wolf population, as in eastern Finland.

The criticism voiced in eastern Finland somehow went further. It was thought that the inhabitants had been left to their own devices concerning problems with wolves, that they were unable to have an influence, and that the issues were decided in the cities by conservationists and the authorities. Talk focused more on that than an analysis of fears (Figure 12). This was a recurrent phenomenon and was evident especially at meetings where there were people who lived in areas where the wolf population was dense.

There were regional differences in the remarks. The debate on quality of life was a special feature of the Swedish-speaking coastal areas; elsewhere it was only raised sometimes as a one-off comment. One key message that emerged from the public gathering in the district of Vaasa was that people did not want wolves settling in the area because it would diminish the quality of life too much. On the other hand, criticism of nature tourism was a special

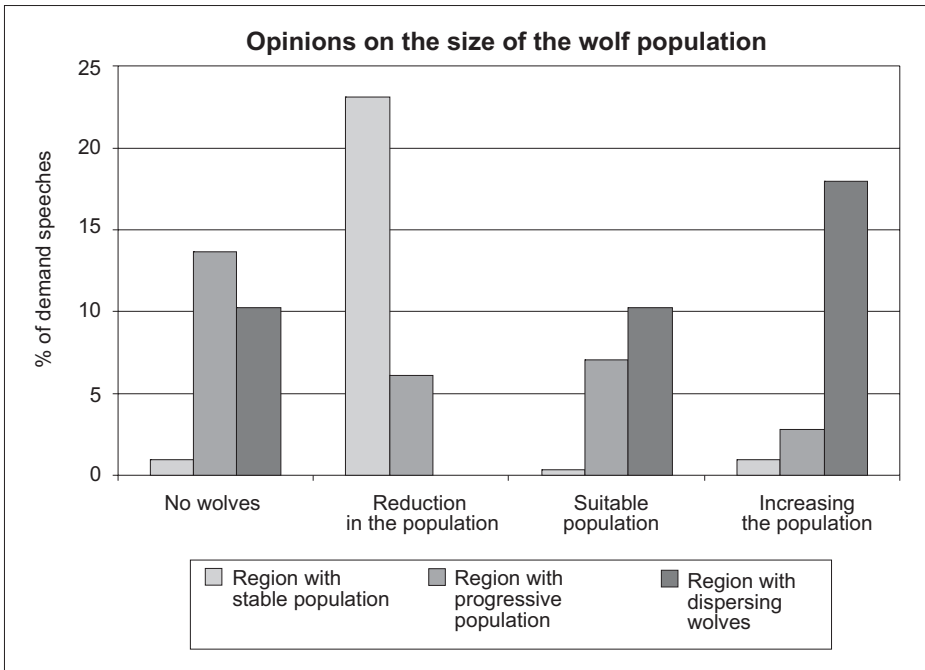
feature of the Kainuu area where in dozens of remarks and speeches there were attacks on the practice of feeding animals with carrion and gathering large carnivores in certain areas. There were also speeches defending the practice, however. There was a fierce row going on at the time about this while the meetings were taking place (spring 2004). It had a high profile in the media and was between hunters and nature and wildlife entrepreneurs, although it was mainly to do with the bear.

The point made repeatedly in the reindeer husbandry area was the impossibility of deriving a livelihood from reindeer herding if there were wolves about. This also seemed to be something that hardly needed calling into question by any agency – at least not emphatically.

#### 4.2.4 Opinions on the size of the wolf population

One theme which emerged at the meetings was whether an acceptable size for the wolf population could be agreed on in a given region, and what, for example, it would be compared to what it was currently in the area. Opinions had already come in on this before the theme was discussed, but they too were taken into account. Many speakers also wanted to take a vote and went ahead without asking, with no one trying to stop them (the organisers were criticised for this afterwards on the telephone and by email). Any reactions to the voting by those in attendance will be clear when the meetings are examined at the level of each individual Game Management District.

Opinions on the size of the wolf population revealed considerable regional differences (Figure 13). In the area where the wolf population is strong, there were no other views put forward other than a reduction in the population, except for some one-off contributions. People were keen to reduce the wolf population either through hunting or by moving animals out of the area. The few speeches in favour of increasing the population in eastern Finland generally made reference to districts in western parts of the area, where it was assumed there were 'vacant' territories. It can be deduced that the participants in eastern Finland were unanimously in favour of the rest of Finland being involved in maintaining the wolf population.



**Figure 13.** *Opinions on the size of the wolf population. The percentage figures proportionately represent the views expressed overall. In areas with an established population, there were 316, in areas with a developing population 212, and in areas where the wolf occurs only occasionally 39.*

In the areas with a developing population, i.e. central Finland, antagonism towards the wolf appears to be strong. It was here that relatively most of the views opposing a wolf population in the area were expressed. The most unanimous group among the regions in this respect was that at the meeting which took place in the Swedish-speaking coastal area. There several speakers repeatedly said that they did not want an increasing/breeding wolf population in the area, and just a few single wolves which stray into the area would be allowed. The reasons given were density of the human population, fur farming, quality of life, etc. Remarks on the subject were almost as common at the meetings in Satakunta and Ostrobothnia too. In Ostrobothnia the point was also made that keeping the wolf population at the level of just a few individuals could also in practice pre-empt the need to eliminate wolves which behaved like problem wolves. On this basis some participants considered it necessary to have a mating pair of wolves in the area. This also received support but did not meet with everyone's approval.

There were quite a number of speeches in favour of increasing the wolf population at the meetings in southern Finland. Nevertheless, many speakers thought that these areas were perhaps not suited to the wolf, owing to dense human settlement there, the large number of roads and the traffic. In Lapland the view was that it was not realistic to increase the wolf population, because of reindeer herding, although some participants were of the opinion that Lapland, as such, had space for wolves.

### 4.2.5 Demands

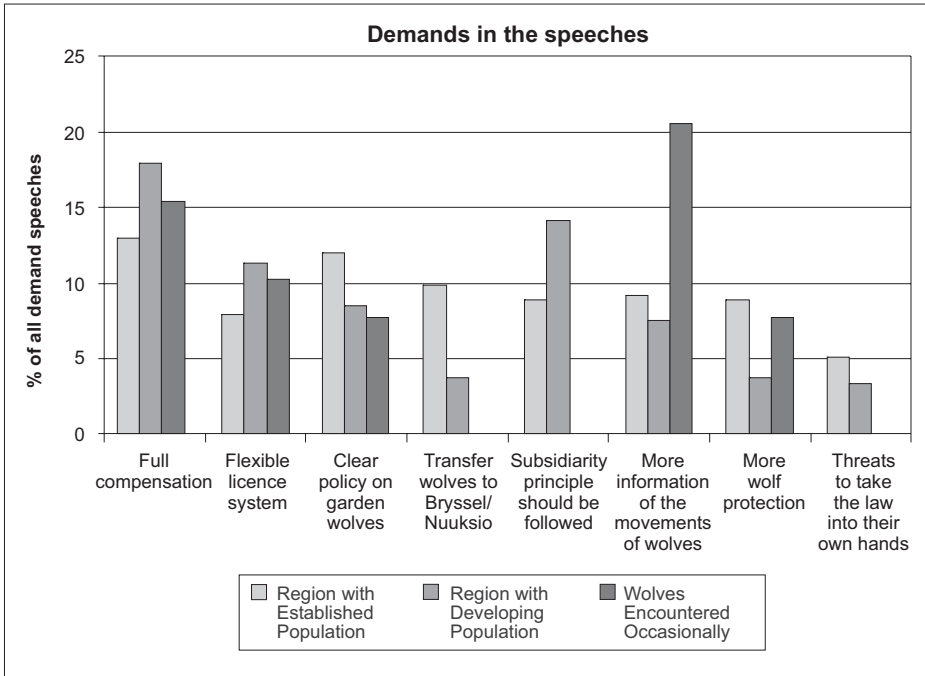
There were plenty of demands made at the meetings. The opinions on the size of the wolf population described above also constituted demands, but they were differentiated in the investigation to gain a clearer picture. The demands made were sorted by theme, and then it was worked out how many of them, plus any suggestions, were aimed at what areas. This data can also be seen to reveal issues to be taken into account in the management of the wolf population.

The main demands made were:

- 1) The practice of compensating for damage needs to be changed. The excess sum should be scrapped and compensation paid in full.
- 2) Decisions on hunting licences should be made more flexible and, if necessary, fast. A decision should not be delayed anyway, whether it is a yes or a no.
- 3) There should be some sort of policy on how to deal with wolves which enter gardens or yards. People do not know their rights and there is a general call for wolves which repeatedly enter gardens or yards to be eliminated quickly.
- 4) Wolves should be transferred to Brussels or the capital, especially Nuuksio (the National Park just outside Helsinki). Although the suggestions could mainly be interpreted as complaints, they were repeated and are therefore relevant to this section of the study.
- 5) The principal of subsidiarity should be followed. There were dozens of calls for decisions on the management of the wolf populations to be made in the local region, and generally the local Game Management District. Just a few speeches and comments mentioned the local police.
- 6) There should be information on the movements of wolves. The proposal to tag wolves in greater numbers was repeatedly made. A real-time telephone service relating to monitoring movement and information on wolves was also wanted. There was some opposition to this, though not much.
- 7) Speeches defending wolves: this category includes remarks and speeches defending the wolf's right to exist and the importance of preserving populations from a given point of view.
- 8) Threats to take the law into their own hands by those who see no changes to current practice introduced. Might entail direct incitement, threats and intimidation, or dropping heavy hints.

The demands made were spread fairly evenly among the various groups, though there are differences regionally (Figure 14). Revising the damage compensation system was the subject spoken about most, which may go to show that the current practice 'does not correspond to people's sense of justice', as many speakers put it. Remarks on transferring wolves and the principal of subsidiarity were mainly the causes of concern found in the areas where wolves actually occur. The subject was not pressing in areas where wolves are hardly ever found. Contributions on the protection of the wolf were minimal in areas with a developing wolf

population. The main reason is likely to be the fact that the meetings were not attended by representatives of conservation agencies, or, if they did come, they did not speak. At one or two meetings, such as that in Lappeenranta and Jyväskylä, there were nevertheless plenty of speeches made expressing the concern that the wolf should be protected.



**Figure 14.** Demands made in the wolf debate in the different wolf population areas. Percentage figures given as a proportion of all the demands made. In areas with an established population there were 316 demands made, in areas with a developing population 212, and in areas where the wolf occurs only occasionally 39.

## **5 Written replies and speeches and remarks broken down by Game Management District**

The following section is a summarised presentation of the situation regarding wolves in each Game Management District, as well as the written responses of stakeholders and remarks made on the wolf. It is not essential for the reader of the report to go through this material to gain an overall picture of the situation, but it was thought appropriate to present it so that the responses for each region and the comments made on the wolf could be made visible in their original form. The written replies by the stakeholders are dealt with reference to the categories described above in section 4.1, and the remarks and speeches follow the categories given in section 4.2.

The written replies are referred to briefly, mainly in the form of the key views put forward by the respondents and in terms of the weight they are given. From the speeches and remarks made at the public meetings some of the views expressed by the speakers have been selected from each of the sessions. They have been chosen to reflect the mood of the meeting in question and they also serve to highlight the issues which were focused on most at that particular gathering.

### **5.1 The area with an established population in eastern Finland**

#### **5.1.1 The Game Management District of North Karelia**

There were an estimated 700 wolves in North Karelia in spring 2004, which in practice means that the wolf population there is the densest of any region in Finland. According to the Game Management District of North Karelia, there were territories belonging to six wolf packs within the region's borders at the time. In addition, five packs were living partly on the Russian border and partly on the Russian side, and two were shared with Kainuu, one with North Savo and one with South Savo (Game Management District of North Karelia 2004, unpublished). The densest occurrences of wolves are in Ylä-Karjala and Keski-Karjala (both subregions), where, in 2003, 22 dogs were the victims of wolf attacks in the territories of five packs (Regional Advisory Committee for Large Carnivores of North Karelia 2004, unpublished). Developments regarding carnivores in North Karelia have resulted in the establishment of a body of cooperation consisting of different nature and wildlife actors, the Regional Advisory Committee for Large Carnivores, which meets regularly to spread information on large carnivore populations in the area, present opinions and try and develop local research into large carnivores.

The North Karelian stakeholder survey was supplied via members of the Advisory Committee to the agencies they represent. Eight (8) agencies replied, and from one respondent came replies from that organisation's two separate departments. Altogether, then, nine (9) replies were processed. They came in from two nature tourism companies, the Finnish Hunters' Association North Karelia district, The North Karelia Kennel Club, the Game Management

District of North Karelia, the department of Applied Zoology at the University of Joensuu, the Employment and Economic Development Centre for North Karelia and Metsähallitus. The stakeholder meetings were attended by 12 people.

## **A Synopsis of the replies of stakeholders**

The respondents in North Karelia were generally divided over the situation regarding wolves in the District. Half thought the situation was now basically problematic, out of control, and even alarming. There were individual comments that the situation was fine and the population productive and profuse. One respondent thought the wolf population was under threat.

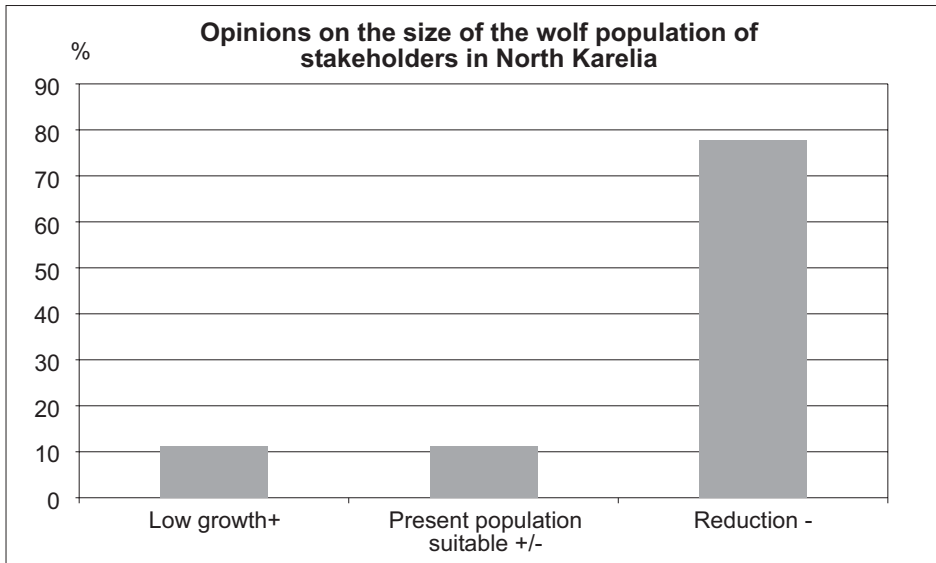
It was recognised in North Karelia that there were conflicting aims for wolf populations. Most of the respondents perceived the dispute as being either between the wildlife conservationists and the local people and due to their different views on the matter, or because of the objectives to increase the population coming from outside the area. The rows were also thought to be fuelled by a lack of information, hatred of wolves, and the fact that local people were not given the chance to have their say.

The interaction of wolf and man was thought to succeed best if the information available on the wolf population is accurate and comes along at the right time. Furthermore, an improved system of compensation for damage, control of the population, quick decisions on hunting licences and flexibility in that process were additional factors. Also mentioned were the elimination of problem wolves, state assistance for bussing/taxiing children to school, and ensuring supplies of the wolf's natural food.

The definition of what constituted an acceptable wolf population caused something of a split among the respondents. Half proposed that around 30 wolves, i.e. four to five reproducing packs, made for an acceptable population for the area. Three respondents thought that the current population was too large. One thought it was acceptable and one proposed that the present population was not biologically or genetically sustainable (Figure 15).

Licensed hunting was the most popular way to control the wolf population proposed, apart from in the case of one respondent. Furthermore, many respondents took the view that hunting should be the solution mainly for individual animals that caused damage and disruption. Nearly all the respondents defined problem wolf as an animal which repeatedly enters gardens and yards and which has no natural timidity towards humans. One respondent also regarded wolves which tended to kill hunting dogs as problem wolves. Almost everyone proposed that the speedy and unhampered elimination of such animals was an acceptable course of action. In the view of one respondent, there were no wolves which could be classed as problem wolves.

There were a lot of proposals on the subject of developing research into wolves. Additional resources, elimination of wolves as a component in research work, the study of the causes of damage, and more socio-economic research were mentioned. There was a desire to improve the way the population was monitored, through the tagging of more wolves and



**Figure 15.** Opinions on the size of the wolf population of stakeholders in North Karelia by percentage (number of respondents = 9).

by developing and providing training for the network of large carnivore community liaison officers. The issues of the impartiality and transparency of monitoring methods were also raised. In almost all the replies, information on the movements of wolves was considered to be important in order to improve communications.

In order to develop and improve the work of the authorities, the following proposals were made: greater cooperation, transparency, more monitoring, better communications and more emphasis on local aspects of the problem. Several respondents were of the opinion that if the law was to be improved, the priority objective should be a local emphasis on decision-making and quick decisions being taken. Other points repeatedly raised were a better system of compensation and scrapping the excess payment. In two replies there was a call for moderation in the protection of the wolf, and in one a call for maintaining a favourable conservation status.

In other views expressed it was thought, for example, that killings went on in secret but people kept quite about it. In one respondent's opinion, the policy on wolves had failed and the lack of trust between the various agencies caused continual problems.

## B Comments at the public meetings

Four meetings open to the general public were held in North Karelia. There were 65 present at that held in Tohmajärvi, and the same number of speeches and remarks were recorded. At Nurmes 75 people attended and there were 62 speeches/remarks made. At Lieksa there were 26 in attendance and 70 speeches /remarks were made, and in Ilomantsi 48 people present with 41 speeches/remarks made.

#### **Tohmajärvi 28.4.2004**

*"I'm a victim of damage. I got 500 euros for a heifer that had been killed by a wolf, and I bought another which cost me 1,700 euros. What does the researcher think we should do when wolves get onto the grazing land. I want an answer. Why can't they move the wolves to Nuuksio, say?"*

*"The wolf population has got out of hand. This is like the white-backed woodpecker debate; that is the world's largest backwoods out there, and it's full of wolves...we should take a tough line."*

*"It's not so much about how many wolves there are but more what they do when they get into the yards and the fact that they are not afraid. The population is not now under threat so why can we not reduce their numbers?"*

*"When the wolf population starts disrupting ordinary life we need lifts to school for the children and that costs money. The state won't pay. Mothers are worried."*

*"There is fear of the wolf. In the 50s we used horses to take the children to school because of the danger of wolves. There were bounties paid on them too back then."*

*"There are too many wolves. Who agrees? Let's take a vote." (Noted: about 95% of those present raised their hand).*

*"If we don't see some flexibility in the way hunting licences are issued we'll take the law into our own hands."*

*"There are also people here who think differently. Speak up. Why do you want to remain anonymous?"*

*"I'm a sheep breeder. I have to keep them inside, although they ought to be outdoors. Why do we have to be a model country for the EU? Why can't we decide things ourselves?"*

#### **Nurmes 4.5.2004**

*"The wolf population is too healthy. Why was unrestricted hunting abolished? There were plenty around even then. There are always more coming in from Russia. We can't guarantee children's safety. We're on an EU leash."*

*"How can there just be 70 wolves, if there are 13 packs? There must be more of them."*

*"If we can't move the wolves let's move the people. Then the problem will go away."*

*"The Greens – even the President – want to empty the remote areas, drive people out using predators. It's expensive for society to keep us here. We have to deal with these things ourselves."*

*"I had a Pomeranian dog killed by a wolf. There is no point saying that children don't feel afraid, but we shouldn't tell them so that they don't start to feel afraid. I don't understand why local people are simply not listened to. Will there just be big headlines in the national newspapers saying that the people had been heard and what effect this is all having?"*

*"Why is the person putting the plan together from Seinäjoki? Do they want to hear what we have to say at all? They are making a big noise in Helsinki but what has it got to do with them?"*

*"Powers of decision need to be brought to local level, and when those wolves are tagged and treated the way they are they get used to people. They're now like wild dogs."*

*"Millions are squandered on research every year. No more taxpayers' money should go on it. And we don't even get to know about the wolves' movements. How are we supposed to breed thoroughbred dogs here?"*

*"What is going on with the compensation system? An elkhound bitch got eaten by a wolf and the compensation was 40 euros. In another region 2,000 euros was paid for a dog, and there were not even any results from the examination. It makes no sense."*

*"The population needs to be made smaller. Who is for ten wolves? (about 70%); twenty? (about 10 people); 30? (about 10 people)."*

*"In Helsinki there is a lot more animal rights talk than here."*

*"The wolf must retain its fear of humans, otherwise there'll be problems. So we need to be able to hunt them."*

### **Lieksa 3.5.2004**

*"This meeting comes five years too late. The situation's got out of hand. Is there any point in any of this?"*

*"The wolf punters are being led by the nose. Why do we hear that the orders are not coming from the EU? Where are they coming from then? The predators are losing their fear and soon something weird is going to happen."*

*"There was a lot of damage from wolves in the 19th century. The world's wolf population did not depend on Finland then. We need to agree on what is an acceptable population for the region. The biggest problem is fear for our dogs; they are like members of the family. We need to have better protection devices. Wouldn't flashing lights help?"*

*"The present wolf policy will go against itself. Should eastern Finland foot the bill when it comes to the nation's policy on carnivores/predators?"*

*"The management plan is relevant. A reasonable population has now been exceeded. Four to five packs would be acceptable and the rest should be got rid of."*

*"Fear is a problem and it affects mushroom and berry picking. They should put a limit to the growth in the population. I won't go into the forest anymore without my husband."*

*"Hunting is the only pastime round here. Now we have to go round a whole area so that our dogs can be let off in the forest."*

*"There should be more leeway in hunting licences. The problem wolves should be got rid of immediately. The wolves should be moved somewhere right away. The powers of decision should rest with Finland, not the EU."*

*"The wolf is a part of Finnish wildlife, but now we have to eliminate some individual animals. Nowadays wolves behave very differently from how they used to. They are losing their fear of man."*

*"The Game and Fisheries Research Institute said that there were no wolves in the area and on the very same trip a wolf ate one of the hounds. The researchers just don't have the information."*

*"We have to accept that if there are wolves around there'll be damage too. There'll be no avoiding that if you want to keep the wolf in Finland."*

*"The present procedure for compensation should be reviewed. They should provide full compensation for damage for every dog."*

*"The aim for 30 wolves and four to five packs in the Game Management District is fine." (Noted: several remarks in support).*

#### **Ilomantsi 29.4.2004**

*"The population is too big. One wolf tried to get inside the cottage and the dog barked up at the window indoors. The population really needs to be thinned out."*

*"No one seems to dare speak up here. Are they afraid that the Greenpeace people or the animal protection lot will come along?"*

*"The people who are trying to protect wolves and look after them are in the wrong place; why don't you go round southern and western Finland? The present system for issuing hunting licences is a joke or they're just being fucking nasty. People should have a right to live here. The wolf makes hunting*

*impossible. Keep the wolves alive down there in the south. We don't come down there to advise you how to grow carrots."*

*"The wolf killed 18 children in the 1880s and thousands of domestic animals – no wonder people hate them."*

*"We should keep the pack at Patvinsuo and the others should be got rid of."*

*"They are going about the management plan completely the wrong way, asking everyone for their opinion. They don't ask us if they should build an annex to the Parliament building. Shouldn't they be listening to the people who live with the wolves?"*

*"If they involved the people in the field in a balanced discussion on predators and large carnivores it would take the place of the law of the jungle. I believe in proper forums for decision-making."*

*"This is not a matter of managing the wolf population but managing the human population. The elk controls the wolf population and not the other way round. So let's manage the wolf population by controlling the elk population, though then we might have some cases of humans being eaten."*

### 5.1.2 The Game Management District of Kainuu

In 2003 the wolf population in Kainuu was estimated at around 40, of which 30 were outside the reindeer husbandry area and 10 inside it. Damage from wolves is mainly evident in gardens and yards in Kuhmo. The wolves upset everyday life to some extent, and there is also fear. According to the Kainuu Game Management District, the number of dogs devoured by wolves in 2003 is not exactly known, but there are three verified cases, all in Kuhmo. However, the biggest problem is felt to be the fact that normal hunting with dogs is prevented. Reindeer losses in the Reindeer Grazing Association area of Halla have also been significant and the number of reindeer for slaughter has fallen from more than 1,000 in 2001 to less than half (Management District of Kainuu 2003, unpublished). The Regional Advisory Committee for Large Carnivores, headed by the Regional Council of Kainuu, is also active in the area.

There proved to be a good deal of stakeholders who are connected with the use of nature and wildlife in Kainuu, with a total of 20 replies returned for these groups. The respondents represented nature conservation agencies from the Kainuu Regional Organisation of the Finnish Association for Nature Conservation, three local wildlife associations, representatives of nature tourism and nature photography in Kainuu, the Finnish Hunter's Organisation Kainuu District and the Kainuu Kennel Club, two Game Management Associations, two police districts, two municipalities, the Regional Council of Kainuu, the Environment Centre, three Reindeer Grazing Area Associations, Metsähallitus and Kainuun Nuotta. Thirteen people attended the discussions held between the stakeholders. The number of people attending the public gatherings were: 93 in Kuhmo, with 97 speeches and remarks; 91 in Sotkamo, with 69 speeches and remarks, and 55 in Suomussalmi with 43 speeches or remarks.

## A Synopsis of the replies of stakeholders

The respondents' remarks on how things look in Kainuu regarding the wolf show how the wolf situation overall is seen differently among the various agencies. Four respondents thought the current situation was fine and an encouraging phenomenon, though two of these mentioned that wolves were now causing problems or considered the local population densities too great. Six respondents said the wolf population was too high. Quite a few of these thought that the situation was almost unendurable/intolerable. Likewise, several respondents regarded damage from wolves as the main issue to bring up. Three respondents made a neutral statement regarding the situation, saying that the population had grown. In the opinion of one respondent, the population is not sustainable, and illegal and legal hunting disperses the packs and foments wolf hysteria.

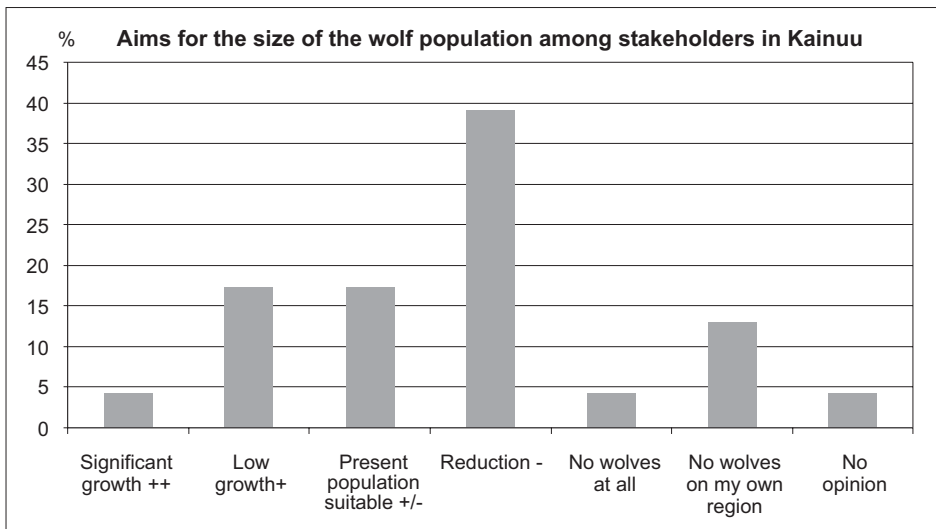
Various conflicting objectives were identified, but they were spread among a good many agencies. Differences in views with respect to principles emerged between hunters and kennel club enthusiasts, on the one hand, and conservationists, on the other. There was a lack of trust between the researchers into large carnivores and local people, and disputes between nature and wildlife entrepreneurs and photographers, on the one side, and hunting organisations, on the other. There was also an obvious conflict between reindeer husbandry and supporters of wolf protection and wolf population growth. The reasons for the disputes proposed were a lack of information, hatred of the wolf and fear of predators/large carnivores. Just one respondent thought that there were no conflicts, but that all the agencies were keen to reduce the wolf population.

The proposal made most frequently in connection with the interaction of wolf and man was to maintain communications. Control of, and a reduction in, populations, awareness-raising and ending the stirring up of fear of wolves were put forward as solutions in several replies. Investment in the prevention of damage and an improved compensation system were also mentioned. In addition, there was a number of one-off suggestions, such as making management of the wolf compatible with reindeer husbandry. The question itself also attracted criticism: in the view of one respondent there was no interaction between wolves and humans.

What constituted an acceptable wolf population polarised the respondents dramatically. Most thought it too great, some thought it was either too small or had not spread far enough (Figure 16). The view in many replies was that the wolf was not suited at all to the reindeer husbandry area – there was zero tolerance.

Opinions on the number of areas suitable as territories for wolves ranged from 0 packs to a maximum of 20–25 in the reindeer husbandry area. Several respondents, however, hit on 5–10 as the ideal number.

Among ways to control the wolf population the most popular was a system of licensed hunting, although many respondents also thought that the authorities needed to eliminate some animals. Natural culling was the solution proposed in four replies. Just as many thought that reintroductions were the right way to go. Other opinions were put forward, ranging from the unrestricted hunting of wolves to emphasising the role of research and the work of the



**Figure 16.** Aims for the size of the wolf population among stakeholders in Kainuu by percentage (number of respondents = 20).

authorities in population control. Overall the respondents divided into a few agencies which were against hunting the wolf and other respondents who regarded it as essential.

When it came to deciding what constituted a problem wolf, most respondents thought that wolves which made a habit of entering gardens and yards and were adept at killing domestic animals fitted the description. Loss of the fear of humans and, for example, killing in play were also the definitions offered several times. Some respondents thought that problematic behaviour was due to the actions of humans, e.g. hunting. Other proposals included eliminations, prevention of damage and its prediction.

There were proposals made on how to develop research into wolves. These included greater transparency, more resources and better cooperation. There were also points made, such as 'we don't need research' or 'enough's been done'. A good number of respondents called for more monitoring of the population using tags. It was also suggested that the network of large carnivore community liaison officers should be developed and that more people should be recruited for the work. It was thought vital to build up trust between researchers and the liaison officers. Transparency, frankness, consideration/discretion, and development of the Large Carnivore Information Centre were the most common solutions proposed.

The respondents' view is that the work of the authorities should also be made more transparent, and that cooperation and dialogue between the various agencies should be enhanced. One respondent thought that there should be an end to secrecy and lies. One said that the supervision of hunting was very important, and another view was that the hunting lobby was too powerful. In order to improve legislation, half the respondents felt that either the wolf's protection status should be lowered, or that conditions for hunting should be improved in other ways. Other points made were the importance of local opinion in decision-making,

the appropriateness of current legislation, harsher penalties for poaching, the importance of national policy as compared with local decisions, and transferring the wolf under the Finnish Nature Conservation Act.

Other points made were: that someone had tried to influence the respondents, responsibility for the management of the wolf population should be spread more broadly in Finland, and that the effect of fear should be taken into account.

## **B Comments at the public meetings**

### **Sotkamo 11.5.2004**

*"I'm a hunter and dog-owner. The joy of hunting has gone; all the time we fear for the dog. We do game management work and we are kennel club enthusiasts. That will soon be impossible."*

*"I wonder about the whole management plan; what needs managing? Only a few things. Who is paying for the research into wolves? It's a secret mission. Why is there no money to pay compensation? Where is the money for research coming from?"*

*"How come the EU can decide on the size of our wolf population? Nobody owns them."*

*"Now we are listening to the respondents you have to look to see how many people are behind each group."*

*"The natural wastage of wolves means that first the wolves kill the elk. You first have to see how many wolves we should try and keep, and then get rid of the rest."*

*"Since this research into wolves, everything has got out of hand. The powers of decision have left Kainuu; this gathering will lead nowhere."*

*"Of course there's money to survey the locations of wolves from helicopters, but if granny needs help somewhere out in the sticks, there isn't any."*

*"There is so much mistrust between the wolf researchers and ordinary people that you don't get any information; they even lie to you."*

*"There should be more information in real time on the movements of wolves."*

*"Tell me; what use is the wolf?"*

*"The wolf is Finland's symbol of nature; perhaps that's enough."*

*"There is fear of wolves, but it is more among those who live outside the area – it's the Little Red Riding Hood influence."*

*"This is a one-sided discussion. If there were young people and women here the mood would be different. The wolf population in Kainuu has developed along the right lines, but in future there needs to be limits set, though by the authorities, like in Norway. I have little faith in what people in Kainuu think. I hope that the collection of data won't hang on these meetings."*

*"Feeding bears and wolves with carcasses makes them tame. If they are not shot they will soon be eating out of our hands."*

#### **Kuhmo 12.5.2004**

*"It did not even occur to me that wolves should be shot. There are strong feelings about the wolf; children are very excited when they see wolf tracks. Research is good and it has produced a lot of information. I've been thinking critically about what happened in the 19th century; then even the parents killed their children. If the parents didn't do it the wolves did, but here we are less prone to fear of wolves than on the west coast."*

*"I know almost every house and building in Kuhmo and I have been going round the neighbourhood for almost 50 years now. I know what people think about wolves. The Committee for Large Carnivores won't work if we aren't even allowed to disagree. The wolf situation will soon be impossible, and the basic problem is using dogs when out hunting. No one soon will dare take their dog into the forest. It's not hysteria, it's just rational fear."*

*"There's obviously enough space round here for wolves and hunters. Dogs don't die so much because wolves eat them – they also get run over. The wolf research by the Game and Fisheries Research Institute has done good work, there has been a lot of good information, and if the wolf population is to continue growing how should we start? The wolf is not a threat to livelihoods. Keeping dogs is a hobby, though reindeer herding is something else. If a dog of mine dies I'll get another one."*

*"I have had a lot of calls saying there was a wolf in the yard, what can I do? That reindeer husbandry area border is an issue – the population should be kept down within its borders. Some of the responsibility should be taken by Helsinki and even Nuuksio."*

*"It's not just hunters that are against wolves. Keeping cattle is just as relevant – it's a means of livelihood."*

*"Feeding them with carcasses distorts the whole situation regarding large carnivores. People shouldn't be feeding predators. Predators should be wild and free."*

*"Compensation should be paid fast and in full. Packs which kill dogs should be eliminated and the population should be evenly spread."*

*"The population management areas should be at regional level; otherwise, we won't be able to disperse the denser populations."*

*"The wolf spreads the tapeworm. You can't eat forest berries in the Baltic countries without cooking them first. Are we going to have the same problem here?"*

### **Suomussalmi 12.5.2004**

*"The wolf and the reindeer are an impossible equation if you are going to practise reindeer husbandry. I have 35 years experience of this and the problems are always the same. The wolves come over from Russia. And there have been no studies of the damage that tagged wolves cause. That should be looked into."*

*"There should be unrestricted rights to hunt the wolf. The system used to work well, but now it's got difficult. The current laws are a kind of terrorism."*

*"What are we trying to do managing wolves? What do we need such large numbers of them for? Estonia introduced simpler rules. Back in the 19th century they knew that wolves eat humans and livestock and now they're blimbling well studying it."*

*"Are the powers that be still frightening the people, telling them Finland will have to go to court?"*

*"Research has revealed the existence of tapeworms. Is there any information on this? On how the wolf spreads them and what sort of risks are involved? Shouldn't this be looked into or don't they want to?"*

*"If the law stays the way it is in a couple of year's time reindeer herding will end in Halla, and then in Näljänkä. They come from over the border and from Kainuu. Researchers thought that the wolf did not catch wild reindeer, but it's turned out differently."*

*"Can't reindeer be protected with fencing?"*

*"It's too much work and it's expensive."*

*"The population in Kainuu needs thinning out, because that also affects areas around here. Then wolves should also be sent to Nuuksio, southwestern and western Finland. Whys should we be the only ones to suffer?"*

*"The wolf is one example of diversity."*

*"It's a fine beast, but it doesn't fit in around here."*

*"Feeding predators (carrion feeding) is an advantage for reindeer husbandry, because then they won't eat so many reindeer, but what will that then lead to?"*

### 5.1.3 The Game Management District of Kymi

The area covered by the Game Management District of Kymi divides into two regions: South Karelia and Kymenlaakso. In recent years the wolf's occurrence has been concentrated very much in South Karelia. The Kymi Game Management District puts the wolf population at around 25-30. According to data on population from the Game and Fisheries Research Institute, in 2003 there were one to two litters in the area, and one pack's territory was shared with Russia. The Game Management District estimated that in 2003 the wolf covered four to five main areas of distribution: Ylämaa, Pyhtää, the Ruokolahti–Imatra district and the district around Rautjärvi. There are wolves up by the Russian border and they wander both sides of the frontier (Game Management District of Kymi 2004, unpublished).

In the area covered by the Kymi Game Management District the problematic nature of the growth in the wolf population has much to do with the area's dense human population and cattle breeding. In Kymi there were 22 replies from stakeholder groups. The large number is explained by the fact that the area consists of two separate regions and the same organisations representing one another in each region answered for both. Replies came from both the Kymenlaakso and South Karelia Association for Nature Conservation, the Finnish Hunter's Organisation Kymi District, the Province of Kymi Kennel Club, three Game Management Associations, a police district, a municipality (local authority), the Regional Council of South Karelia, the Environment Centre, the Central Union of Agricultural Producers and Forest Owners of South Karelia and Kymenlaakso, ProAgria South Karelia, the Union of Forest Owners of Southeastern Finland, the Forestry Centre and the Finnish Road Administration. Two different replies also came from one agency, as there were differences of opinion there on how to reply to the survey. This issue was also taken up by the media, which demonstrates well the climate surrounding the wolf issue. The stakeholder discussions were attended by 14 people representing 13 different agencies.

There were four public gatherings. At Valkeala 13 attended and there were 60 speeches and remarks made. At Hamina 17 attended with 63 speeches and remarks. At Rautjärvi there were 50 in attendance with 93 speeches and remarks made. At Lappeenranta 34 attended and there were 104 speeches and remarks.

## A Synopsis of the replies of stakeholders

Among the respondents from the Kymi Game Management District were actors with a lot of influence in Kymenlaakso and South Karelia, which impacts on the content of their replies. The wolf population is concentrated in South Karelia, while in Kymenlaakso the wolf is found occasionally.

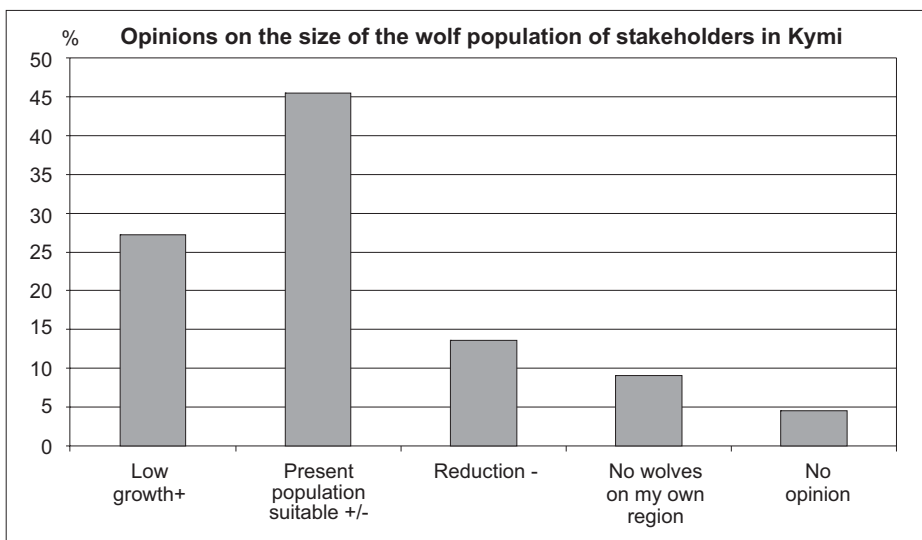
The views put forward with regard to the wolf situation ranged, as elsewhere, from simply acknowledging the situation to strong calls for action to be taken. Many respondents thought that the population's uneven distribution was a problem as was the fact that it was too dense, there were more cases of damage, and people were afraid of wolves. Psychological problems were also thought to be in evidence. On the other hand, some thought the situation was

relatively untroubled and mentioned that the wolf appeared mainly on the odd occasion (mainly in Kymenlaakso). A few respondents thought that the situation was now worrying and that the use of dogs was being prevented (South Karelia).

Most respondents identified conflicting objectives in the area with regard to the wolf population. Many recognised disputes between the conservationists and the local people. However, a good number also thought that there were no conflicting aims and that there was a common desire to reduce the population in areas where it was dense.

More than half the respondents suggested population control and addressing the problem of problem wolves as ways to maintain interaction between man and wolf. Improving the system of compensation for damage was also repeatedly mentioned. Many were also of the view that communications and education/awareness-raising were solutions which would help people to tolerate the wolf. The importance of monitoring wolf movements and reporting them was also proposed. One respondent, however, was of the opinion that there could not be interaction, as the areas are so densely populated.

Views on the objectives expressed relating to the size of the wolf population were generally moderate. Very many thought the current situation was satisfactory, although there was a desire to see the population distributed more widely. Many now wanted the population in areas where it was dense to be reduced. Only one expressed support for virtual zero tolerance, and in a few replies there was support for letting the population increase further (Figure 17). It was thought that there were between one and as many as four to five territories in the area which were suited to wolves.



**Figure 17.** Opinions regarding size of the wolf population among stakeholders in Kymi (number of respondents = 22).

The clear majority of the views on the control of the wolf population were that a system of hunting licences was a way of addressing the problem of the size of the wolf population, if need be. Shooting problem wolves was also proposed as an additional measure in a few

replies. Compared to other areas, a considerable number of respondents thought that moving wolves away was a means to manage the population, and one respondent also proposed as an option that the authorities should eliminate wolves. Other views on this point generally stressed the need for hunting and control of the population, but the view was also put forward that there should also be an expert on population control involved who did not represent the Game Management District or the police.

Respondents were very much of the same opinion when it came to defining what constituted a problem wolf. A wolf which repeatedly entered gardens or yards, which had lost its natural timidity towards humans, and which preyed on domestic animals was seen to meet the criteria of problematic behaviour. Solutions offered included elimination of the animal, and – in one answer – uninterrupted hunting, which would prevent the problem.

The proposals for developing research included more resources, more monitoring of tagged animals, studies of the movements and behaviour of wolves in the area, and examining effects of border crossings on the population. Repeated proposals for improved population monitoring included development of the large carnivore community liaison officer network and support for its work. There was also a desire expressed for developing new forms of census.

People wanted to see communications made matter-of-fact and transparent, although the media also came in for criticism for fomenting antagonism towards wolves with its reports. Greater cooperation was wanted from the authorities, as well as a clarification of who was responsible for what, bringing decision-making closer to the area, a stronger role for the Game and Fisheries Research Institute, and fast and bold decisions. The general opinion was that the law needed to be changed in the area of protection status of the wolf and in improvements to the compensation procedure. People wanted to see less in the way of commitment to the EU and more decisions being taken at national level.

Other views, from more than one quarter, suggested the existence of polarised opinions when it came to the wolf. Many respondents thought the conservationists were acting against the interests of local people and increasing the wolf population with the help of the EU. The Ministry was felt to be accommodating them. One respondent wanted journalists to receive training in how to report on large carnivores.

## **B Comments at the public meetings**

### **Valkeala 12.5.2004**

*"The farmers are out in the fields and the communications have failed; there are no ordinary people here."*

*"The liaison officers are frustrated in their work. They can't get hunting licences to make up for it. They don't understand the work they do here at the Ministry of Agriculture."*

*"Reintroducing large carnivores around Helsinki would help them make decisions."*

*"It goes against all sense of justice if property can't be defended. There should be clearer rules on when you can take action if a wolf is attacking the yard or sheep."*

*"It is impossible to fence in domestic animals. If you do it in one area the animals move somewhere else – there's no end to it."*

*"Schoolchildren are taken to school right on the eastern border. The wolves are good-for-nothings; in winter they walk along the road and if schoolchildren are on the same route – well, I wouldn't go out there myself without a shotgun. Anyway, the transport should be paid for by the local authorities."*

*"The wolf controls the elk population though a lot will be needed if that is what must be done. Last year 4,000 elk were shot here. The wolf is part of our wildlife in the right proportion – six to seven of them."*

*"Seeing a pack of wolves causes fear, and that is with us all the time, especially among children. A mate of mine came across a bear on the road and fled 300 metres – it wasn't very pleasant."*

*"Thank God for the hunters for monitoring the wolf population - let's hope they continue to do so. Problem wolves should be shot and the population should be kept down – now it's already too big."*

*"Wolves breed so fast that three to four pairs are simply not acceptable. If there are going to be so many of them something's going to happen. We don't want to become criminals."*

#### **Hamina 13.5.2004**

*"I am amazed that wolves are so strongly protected. Why is that? If a wolf gets in the yard and eats a sheep there are no consequences – only for people; the EU sees to that. The wolf violates our homes, and our right to protect our property; the system discriminates against people in the country and no one does anything about it. The Finnish authorities need to do something about this – this goes against the constitution."*

*"How can we support the work of the community liaison officers? - they do it voluntarily. Telephone costs, fuel costs – the Game Management District can't afford them. It would nevertheless ensure that sightings were recorded more successfully."*

*"If we have the powers to take decisions on the wolf issue at local level, then we can allow three to four pairs in the area; otherwise not."*

*"The wolf poses relatively no risk to people."*

*"The wolf is dangerous for children."*

*"The wolf is part of nature, but should be in the wild, not where people live."*

**Rautjärvi 6.5.2004**

*"There are wolves both sides of the border – they come and go. There were sightings of litters in three different areas, though officially there are only two litters. Whose wolves are they, Russia's or Finland's? Difficult to say."*

*"There are 10 packs of wolves in the area around Ruokolahti and Rautjärvi."*

*"This is an urgent matter – hunters don't want to kill wolves. The wolves here are threatening our everyday existence. It begs the question as to why there are no wolf hunting permits, not the other way round. The EU Treaty guarantees that we can remain here living a normal life here, but not taxi rides for children to school because of wolves. Words are not enough now; we need action, i.e. wolf hunting permits."*

*"They get into the yards, the children are afraid, you daren't let the dogs loose or let them go into the forest."*

*"When a wolf kills its victim, it rips it up – no wonder people are afraid of them."*

*"The bear problems are caused by humans; they don't lie in wait for humans, but the wolf is not like that; it looks for trouble."*

*"We should be controlling the elk population, but how can we when we daren't take dogs into the forest?"*

*"A lot of dogs go missing from yards round here and it never gets into the statistics unless they are hunting dogs."*

*"People are afraid of wolves because of the Red Riding Hood fairytale. We used to be told that tale listening with big round eyes, and people know that wolves have killed humans and may do so now. The EU is far away and has told us that that this can be decided at national level. But Finland is a model pupil. Why can't the Game Manager make the decisions? he is officially responsible for his actions."*

*"You say that there is a lot of criticism about wolves here. Are you asking for people who are going to defend wolves here then? If this gets political I'm sure the Greens will be willing to do some horse-trading."*

*"The compensation system has to be changed. A bear took two heifers off us, and the compensation came late and wasn't enough. The value they put on animals is wrong."*

*"I asked the researcher how many wolves would be right for this area. He said none – that it was too built up round here."*

## **Lappeenranta 7.5.2004**

*"The wolf culls and improves the animal populations; it doesn't cause any harm to sheep farms."*

*"If exceptional hunting licences are issued, will you game managers be issuing them for wolves too? The gamekeepers shoot wolves and they don't get prosecuted. The wolf is part of Finnish nature and wildlife. Aren't there enough problems in this world?"*

*"Who can guarantee that the wolf or bear won't do anything to people anyway? My son was on his way to school and two wolves appeared on the road in front of him. He came home and got his dirt bike and rode it to the bus stop. We hunters are organised; we pay for the damage ourselves. We have to talk about these things, but we can't start blaming people. If we compare this to the white-backed woodpecker business – how did that go? Who will suffer in the end?"*

*"My neighbour keeps his dog tied up, and it hasn't been taken off by wolves. How many dogs get run over? We have to compare it to that."*

*"The media stirs up fear of wolves. Why does the media make such a big fuss? We should take a close look at why there is so much hatred of wolves."*

*"When Finland took in refugees you didn't need to be any sort of sociologist to see there'd be problems ahead and the whole skinhead phenomenon. The wolf issue is a bit the same, and the people here are the victims. Do you think that Åland, for example, would agree to introduce wolves into its territory?"*

*"We should exploit the wolf population, like they do the lions in Kenya. Let's build fences and work together. We should be reviving the countryside. A hundred people a year are now moving away from Savitaipale, for example. We need to do something urgently, otherwise there'll be no one left in these areas."*

*"Hasn't the Council for Natural Resources suggested that hunting licence policy should be the responsibility of the Game Management Districts but that problem wolves should be dealt with by the Ministry of Agriculture? They should keep it there."*

*"Hunting licences should be dealt with by the Ministry of Agriculture. The wolf population must be allowed to increase."*

*"Of course humans can get along with predators; we have to live side by side. We shouldn't have to compete with one another. Look at Nepal – it works there."*

*"How many elkhounds and hunting hounds have they got in Nepal?"*

*"Of course we have to look at the whole picture when it comes to wolf numbers; we have to consider the damage, but they have to have enough food."*

*"Don't take your dogs into the forest. The elk population in Finland would hold out against a population of as many as 4,000 wolves."*

*"What will happen when the elk population dies out – what will the elks eat then?"*

*"Should we move the wolves somewhere else? The only problem is where. Who wants them? Who normally has the right to decide on other people's living environment? Where does that right come from? If someone has the right to do that, could we here in the country say decide that rats should be allowed to live freely in the cities?"*

*"Now that would make quite a good subject for discussion!."*

#### 5.1.4 The Game Management District of South Savo

The occurrence of wolves in South Savo has become established in very recent years, and not only close to the eastern frontier. In its own population estimates, the Game Management District put the wolf population at between 8 and 20. The problem with establishing the size of the local population is deciding what Game Management District population a pack or single animals appearing in the border area belong(s) to. A wolf pack in the northern parts of South Savo also lives occasionally on the North Karelia side, and packs in both Punkaharju and Puumala also spend time within the boundary of the Game Management District of Kymi (Game Management District of South Savo 2004, unpublished).

The wolf situation in South Savo has also provoked much debate, as in 2003 it was estimated that 20 dogs had been killed by wolves, 14 of which had vanished from yards. Compensation was paid in virtually none of these cases either, and they do not show up in the official figures for damage (Game Management District of South Savo 2004).

In all, 11 replies from stakeholders in South Savo were processed. The respondents were: the Finnish Hunter's Organisation South Savo District, the South Savo Kennel Club, the Game Management District of South Savo, the Game Management Associations of Punkaharju and Savonlinna, the police districts of Juva and Varkaus, the municipalities of Joroinen and Puunala, the Union of Forest Owners of South Savo and the Employment and Economic Development Centre for South Savo. Thirteen people attended the discussions between stakeholders.

## A Synopsis of the replies of stakeholders

The replies by stakeholders in South Savo mainly described the wolf situation in the area by acknowledging that the population in the area was growing, but was unevenly spread and mainly concentrated in eastern districts. Some expressed concern either that the population was already too large or intolerably large. There was also an increasing threat of damage in their estimation.

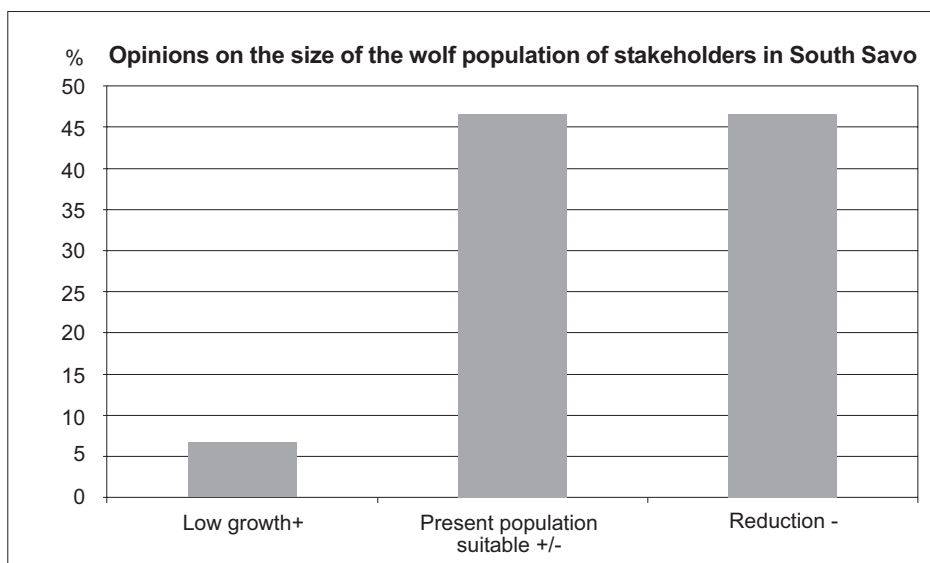
The existence of local conflicting aims was recognised, and in several replies they were put down to the unacceptability of the population's growth and the fact that pressures here came from outside the area. Two respondents did not think there were any conflicts or did not recognise any. One point made blames humans for being over-zealous about killing wolves and believed that this fuelled rows. Furthermore, reintroductions were held to be irresponsible.

Around half the respondents proposed population control or hunting as an option to ensure interaction of the wolf and man. The purpose would be to keep wolves in the wild, reduce their populations, and ensure that they remained timid towards man. Several respondents said that the solution was accurate and expert information. Local decision-making, a flexible approach to the issue of hunting licences and the elimination of problem wolves were other one-off proposals.

As regards the determination of an acceptable wolf population, half the respondents said that the population at present was either too large in general or locally. In three opinions submitted, suggestions for the wolf population were made in figures, with around two pairs considered acceptable, although one respondent thought six evenly spread pairs of wolves were a sustainable population for the area (Figure 18). There were thought to be between two and six suitable wolf territories in the area, though three replies stated that there were not any.

The respondents were very much of one mind on the matter of ways to control the wolf population. Everyone proposed that a system of licensed hunting was an acceptable means of doing this. Two respondents thought that hunting down problem wolves as an additional measure was justified. Moreover, half the respondents stated separately that hunting licences were needed in the case of problem wolves. When the respondents were asked separately what constituted a problem wolf they all replied that it was an animal which repeatedly wandered into yards or gardens trying to prey on domestic animals.

The views put forward on areas for development in research related to the need to monitor the movements of wolves and circulate information accordingly, the need for accurate information, and the necessity of making research work more effective. Wolf population monitoring had to be transparent, strictly carried out and reliant on local information and knowledge. There was also a need in society for financial involvement. The issues of appreciation of the large carnivore community liaison officers network and the motivation of its volunteers were also raised. Communications needed to be matter-of-fact, fast, transparent and in accordance with the rules.



**Figure 18.** Opinions regarding size of the wolf population among stakeholders in South Savo (number of respondents = 11).

Opinions relating to the work of the authorities emphasised the importance of transparency, entrusting the Game Management Districts with responsibility for decisions at local level, and the elimination of wolves which are problem wolves. As regards to improvements to the law, it was criticism of the EU that really stood out. More than half the respondents blamed both EU directives and hunting legislation and demanded changes to them. The main objectives were making the hunting licence procedure more flexible and the principle of subsidiarity. One respondent though the current legislation was fine.

Other replies raised other issues: the impact of fear of the wolf, the emotive nature of the wolf debate and the attitudes people had to it, and improved cooperation among the agencies, especially between the conservationists and the hunters.

## B Comments at the public meetings

There were two public meetings in the area. One was in Juva, where 43 people came along and 52 speeches and remarks were made. The other was held in Varpala, in Savonlinna, where there were 36 in attendance and where 65 speeches and remarks were made.

### Juva 24.5.2004

*I follow the movements of wolves regularly. I have precise notes on all the sightings. Wolves wander about in different groups in the area, though in Savonranta there is just one large pack of five wolves."*

*"Wolves keep stray dogs and cats under control. The wolf is not dangerous, though the police should shoot problem wolves."*

*"Conservation organisations loathe the word 'hunting'. They think it's done for fun. There aren't any problem wolves. Wolf phobia is all in the mind. There is EU policy on the wolf. Cars are more dangerous for dogs than wolves are. There are too many wolves around Juva – they upset hunting much too much. Hunting is an important pastime in areas of scattered populations."*

*"We don't just fear for dogs: berry-pickers are also afraid of wolves."*

*"Hunting licences should be for the Game Management Districts to deal with. Wolves have to be shot."*

*"Hunting licences should be for the police to deal with, not the hunting organisations."*

*"There are no genetic problems with the wolf population here, as we've got the Russian population close by."*

*"I can't hold dog trials any longer as there are wolves about. No one will bring their dogs into areas where there are wolves."*

*"The old woman doesn't go berrying alone anymore, and we can't let the dog go into the forest now without radar. Why can't they tag more wolves so we know where they are. Is there any point in these talks?"*

*"We ought to keep the cows outdoors but they have to be protected from wolves so we keep them in. But who will stop people from being afraid? Can you please control the wolf population so that our older residents can pick their berries at leisure?"*

*"Can you please get rid of that excess payment on the compensation now? I know of a lot of cases of damage where no compensation was paid. For example, for a pregnant heifer of good stock the compensation was 80 euros. If transport to the waste disposal centre cost 50 euros the compensation amounted to nothing at all. An animal like that costs hundreds of euros to buy."*

*"There should be wolves and to keep the EU happy let's fence them up inside the Natura area."*

#### **Varpala Savonlinna 25.5.2004**

*"A wolf came into the yard a week ago, in broad daylight. A big white one."*

*"The wolf populations are on the rise. Every week we see them and we ring up and ask for information. That's what we need."*

*"We're at the point where we need hunting licences and the licence should remain valid until the wolf is caught."*

*"Twenty-three years ago there was a wolf in the Enonkoski area and it took 20 head of cattle. Everyone was talking about it. It said in the newspaper that hatred for the wolf raged. I didn't see any hatred for the wolf, but it was cruel the way it ate the cow. First it ripped the udders open and let the cow go, and only then did it kill it."*

*"The main problem is that people are frustrated. The population's growing and there are no hunting licences available. We have a problem, and we can't do anything about it. It would help if we had some information so we could do something about it, but at the moment there isn't any."*

*"My motto is let's make trouble for the wolf. We are headed for the 19th century, and we have researchers whom the wolf takes care of, including, evidently, the opening speaker. This is a joke: this policy is making Finland socialist."*

*"The wolf hasn't caused any harm to humans. The bear is worse. Fear of wolves relates to dogs – there has to be proper compensation."*

*"We need to have an evenly spread wolf population in Finland."*

*"There hasn't been so much of this type of damage, fortunately. Dogs fall though the ice and drown and get run over. The wolf isn't the worst threat."*

*"Why don't they solve the wolf problem the same way they did with the eagle? Payment for litters?"*

*"It's a big risk when you ask people's opinions like this. If this doesn't lead to anything concrete we'll be in even more trouble afterwards. The people who make the decisions need to understand this."*

### 5.1.5 The Game Management District of North Savo

The area of North Savo has acquired a permanent wolf population in the last few years. There are wolf territories in Kainuu and North Karelia which also extend over to the North Savo side of the border. Wolf sightings have been common in recent years, especially in the districts of Sonkajärvi and Rautavaara. The Game Management District of North Savo says that there are 15 wolves in the area (Game Management District of North Savo 2004, unpublished).

North Savo returned 29 replies from stakeholders in the area. There were plenty of respondents at local level - local authorities and Game Management Associations – and a sample was taken from them. Eleven replies in all were processed, from: the North Savo Regional Organisation of the Finnish Association for Nature Conservation, the North Savo Kennel Club, the Game Management Associations of Rautalampi, Kiuruvesi and Rautavaara, the Varkaus police, the Game Management District of North Savo, the municipalities of Lapinlahti and Kaavi, the Union of Forest Owners of North Savo, the Central Union of Agricultural Producers and Forest Owners of North Savo and Metsähallitus. Ten attended the stakeholder discussions.

Four public gatherings were held. Those in Ylä-Savo took place in Rautavaara, Sonkajärvi and Kiuruvesi. At the meeting in Rautavaara there were 117 people in attendance and 58 speeches and remarks were made. There were 78 at Sonkajärvi and 54 speeches and remarks were made. There were 86 in attendance at Kiuruvesi and 55 speeches and remarks were made. Eighty-one people came to the meeting in Siilinjärvi in central North Savo and there were 61 speeches and remarks recorded.

## **A Synopsis of the replies of stakeholders**

The wolf situation was described variously as too small, too big and even alarming. Very many said it was unevenly spread referring to the dense populations in Ylä-Savo, especially around Rautavaara and Sonkajärvi. People stated there was now fear and damage.

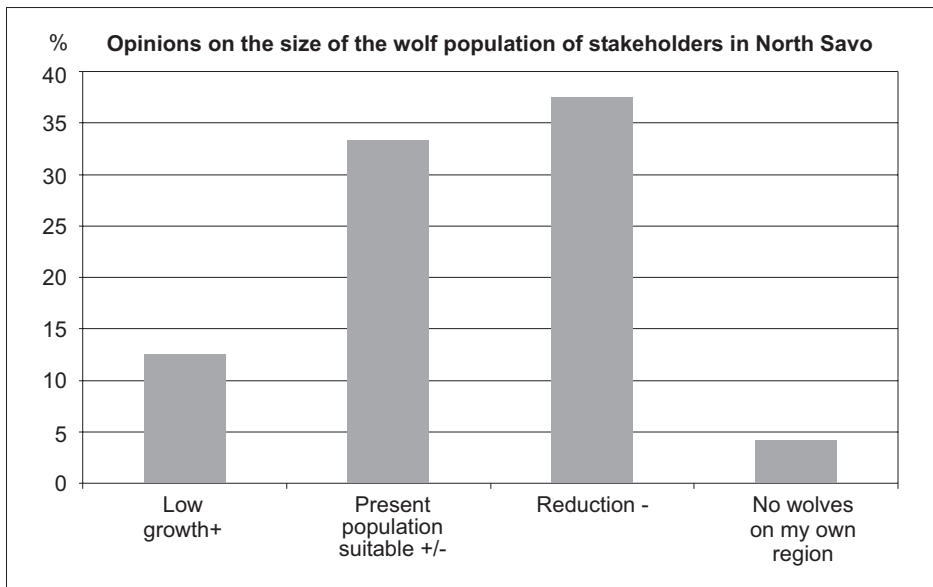
Different arguments over wolves and the wolf population were identified to some extent. These were seen as being between local people and people with influence from outside, and between the conservationists and dog owners. The countryside vs. the city issue also got mentioned. Some thought that certain attitudes ignited the rows (such as hatred of the wolf and hunters wanting to control the population), and a general lack of information was also seen as one of the causes of the problem. Local attitudes were also thought to be coloured by the fact that there was little chance for people to have their say. Two respondents did not recognise the existence of any disagreements on the subject.

The way to enhance interaction between man and wolf, it was proposed a number of times, was either to control the population or dispose of problem wolves. Furthermore, research was considered to be causing more trouble for interaction, though the positive role of research data was also mentioned. Access to information and its distribution were also vital, in several people's view. More opportunities for people to make themselves heard, an improved system of compensation for damage, and elimination of groundless phobias regarding the wolf were also mentioned.

Approximately half the respondents put forward the view that the size of the wolf population at present was on the whole acceptable. The others either thought it was too big or had no view on the matter (Figure 19). People also wanted to see the population more evenly distributed. Regarding the number of suitable territories in North Savo, opinion ranged from five to seven right down to none.

One respondent apart, the proposal submitted by all on how to control the wolf population was a system of hunting licences. Some respondents proposed in addition shooting problem wolves, and one suggested that the authorities should eliminate wolves. One respondent thought that the authorities were the only suitable agency if wolves had to be disposed of, but pointed to the Game Management District as the suitable agency for that.

A problem wolf was defined almost unanimously as an animal which repeatedly entered gardens or yards and tried to prey on domestic animals and which had lost its timidity towards humans. Many suggested the solution was to eliminate the individual animal rapidly, but better protection for domestic animals was also mentioned.



**Figure 19.** Opinions regarding size of the wolf population among stakeholders in North Savo (number of respondents = 11).

In the area of research people wanted to see more resources available as well as more tagged wolves, a focus on the study of wolf behaviour, transparency and access to information on wolf movements. In one respondent's view research was a waste of time. The role of the large carnivore community liaison officers in the development of population monitoring was made much of and their training and motivation were seen as important. Also mentioned were the availability and presentation of accurate information on the population.

The main views regarding how to develop the work of the authorities related to less bureaucracy, power being devolved locally, and closer cooperation between the various agencies. With regard to legislation, there was repeated mention of the need to have the wolf controlled more flexibly and for local people to be able to have more influence. There was criticism of the EU in the replies. One respondent saw no need for any change.

Other views expressed included the need to keep the debate going and a multi-agency approach to wolf issues, and there were separate opinions offered both against the wolf and in favour of hunting it.

## B Comments at the public meetings

### Rautavaara 18.5.2004

*"The wolf population is too big."*

*"There's no point taking about how many wolves there should be in North Savo or how many there are per square kilometre: what needs to be shown is that here in Rautavaara the wolf is a local problem."*

*"The population won't spread if there are mothers here – so you always get cubs and then wolves again. There are two litters in the area and that is the problem. It is really hard on us hereabouts having to keep an eye on the dogs all the time."*

*"I have been in contact with Parliament and an MP told me that they are now doing research into how they can start managing the wolf populations and promised to send me a document explaining what led to this. Then that statement by the Commissioner appeared and it was obvious the ministry wasn't promising anything officially, so they just saying this and that and not telling the truth..."*

*"How far are they going with the wolf population? They are looking at the year 2010, increasing the population and as natural resources increase they aim even higher. They seem to think people will get used to it."*

*"These same problem wolves go round people's yards. First we have to do something about them – get rid of them. They do the most damage and they are not scared of the smell of humans."*

*"I think the bear is more powerful and people can't do anything about them. But the wolf's really cheeky – it goes looking for dogs. Bears won't come wandering into yards."*

*"Wolves always strike from behind – never from in front."*

*"I go hunting in the area of Finland where there are most wolves and I think that they have come to stay. We should try and live with them and develop a system, radio tagging and such, but we should get a truthful answer; I have rung twice. The second time I was told that there were x number of wolves in the area and I went to another area, and there a pack made off with a calf. The researchers knew they had to come along - they really should have known that..."*

*"The wolf is part of Finland's wildlife. The wolf population is not as big as is thought. We have a lot of other causes of damage, though wolves that enter yards need to be treated specially."*

*"If we go out hunting we have to plan it. If we shoot the mothers and we are left with cubs under one year old, all hell will break loose. They won't be able to catch the elks, and they'll come into the yards."*

*"About this information to go to the EU. Everyone is providing information which is in their own interests. There should be a common point of view."*

*"There is no point in this hearing. Xx said that there need to be at least 1,000 wolves in Finland before the wolf's classification can change. Is this meeting going to have any effect?"*

**Sonkajärvi 19.5.2004**

*"What is the use of increasing the wolf population? When a wild mink came to visit the damage started and now there's been a wolf decimating the elks and dogs. Why did they have to introduce them here, with researchers coming along now behind them?"*

*"There's enough money for research, but there's not enough for compensation for damage by wolves."*

*"As this is supposed to be a public hearing I want to ask who is in favour of hunting wolves freely." (Noted: most present raised their hand).*

*"I am the only non-hunter here. How many dogs relatively speaking get run over. This smacks of the mafia a bit – no offence!"*

*"If we get a reasonable number of hunting licences issued, then that'll be one option. As regards what is an acceptable population, the wolf is in the same category as the cockroach or the louse. What is an acceptable population for cockroaches in the Parliament building? Who decides? I agree that they shouldn't be wiped out. But as they are saying in Brussels that hunting wolves which have caused damage is an internal matter for Finland what are the powers that be in Finland playing at?"*

*"So let's stop the tape so that the Greens can't listen to it tomorrow in Helsinki..."*

*"The wolf spreads tapeworms and it also infects humans. It spreads rabies. Wolves rip animals to pieces and they suffer greatly."*

*"Wolves restrict hunting for elk, because we daren't use dogs. There should be a wolf helpline. Wolves which kill dogs should be got rid of, but professionally so that we don't add to the damage. The compensation should be made clearer and there should be up-to-date information on wolf movements."*

*"Our opinions should be taken account of in the management plan."*

**Kiuruvesi 24.5.2004**

*"When wolves are tagged they become tame, they are not afraid of humans, and they get close to them. The wolf is a predator and it will also attack humans if necessary."*

*"Come on guys, why are you doing such a huge study? You only have to stay one day with the Game Management Association and you'd know where the wolves are. If we need them everywhere then move them. If we decide on five wolves for a given area let's shoot the rest."*

*"I asked the insurance company: the dog cannot be over valued: it's a Kennel Club dog. Let's not make the wolf population any bigger: we know what the result will be. Like in North Karelia, the local authorities have fewer funds and they don't pay for taxis to school any longer."*

*"Attitudes to the wolf may be an over-reaction; the fact that they are annoying and disruptive is seen as a threat. People don't want unknown threats – they want stability and peace and quiet. Sound and useful opinions are what we need from the public – after we have the plans outlined we get to work."*

*"The damage should be sorted out with cash. Fear is the greatest danger when it comes to the whole wolf business."*

*"My brother got 1,000 marks in damages when fifteen bull calves ran off into the forest. But there had been psychological damage as they had been disturbed all summer."*

*"Why do we have to pay for the damage from wolves?. The money should come from the EU if that is where the regulations come from. They should at least do away with the excess payment."*

*"What ministries will influence the management plan when the information is being sent to Brussels? Does the Ministry of the Environment still have its own lobbyists in Brussels?"*

*"Coexistence is possible if wolves stay in the wild and people live where they live."*

#### **Siilinjärvi 27.5.2004**

*"Wolves are almost becoming strokable for some reason. But why? You daren't let the dogs loose. They're coming from the border zone the whole time. They should stay there."*

*"The activists feed the EU Commission with a lot of nonsense about large carnivores and affect people's opinions. Everyone here is protecting their own living environment. The message is: licences to hunt predators must be allowed to be decided on locally. We know how take responsibility for the wolf population. We must be able to dispose of wolves which enter yards. There is ingrained fear here and it is very real. This is the message that has to go to the EU and everywhere else in Finland."*

*"The statistics on damage lie. They don't show cases where no damages were paid because of the excess payment and they don't show the work involved in keeping a watch on domestic animals because of wolves."*

*"I'm amazed: if wolves have three to five cubs, how come the population is dying out?"*

*“What is meant by problem wolf behaviour? There is no such thing. But if wolves are not shot, there will be. Hunting will keep the wolf timid, and there won’t be any problem wolves.”*

*“There’s no point us all talking big here; we have our own MP to move things along. Let’s tell him what to do. Commissioner Margot Wahlström has said that it is not imperative to make hunting illegal in Finland.”*

*“They’re putting the management plan together but you worry that the message locally is not going to get through or have an effect. The aim should be to have the power at national level. Only relevant information and pressure will do any good.”*

## **5.2 The area with a developing population**

### **5.2.1 The Game Management District of Central Finland**

Wolves have become a more common phenomenon in the area covered by the Game Management District of Central Finland in recent years owing to the growth of the population in eastern Finland. There have been sightings all over the region, but a few wolves have been almost permanently resident in the Keuruu–Multia district for two or three years now. There are, however, no sightings of litters confirmed by the Game and Fisheries Research Institute in this area. The Central Finland Game Management District estimated that there are five to ten wolves in the area in 2003. Much controversy has been aroused in villages in the area by the fact that wolves live in the southwestern part of the region (Game Management District of Central Finland 2004, unpublished).

Twenty replies from stakeholders in the area of Central Finland were processed. They came from the Central Finland Regional Organisation of the Finnish Association for Nature Conservation, the Kennel Club, the Game Management District, three Game Management Associations, two police districts, six municipalities, the Central Finland Regional Environment Centre, the Central Union of Agricultural Producers and Forest Owners of Central Finland, the Finnish association which looks after the interests of dairy farmers, the Union of Forest Owners and the Employment and Economic Development Centre of Central Finland. One agency sent in two different replies, and both were processed. A total of 15 people came along to the meeting between the stakeholders. They represented 13 different agencies.

There were three public meetings in the area. In Multia 115 people attended and 65 speeches and remarks were made. In Jyväskylä there were 23 in attendance and there were 74 speeches and remarks made. In Kannonkoski 339 people attended, with 48 speeches and remarks made.

## A Synopsis of the replies of stakeholders

The wolf situation in Central Finland was described neutrally on the whole, with mention made of the growth in the population and its concentration in the northern parts of Keuruu, Multia and Jämsänkoski. Some believed, however, that locally the situation was felt to be worrying now and there were calls for thinning out the population. There was mention too of growing fear and insecurity.

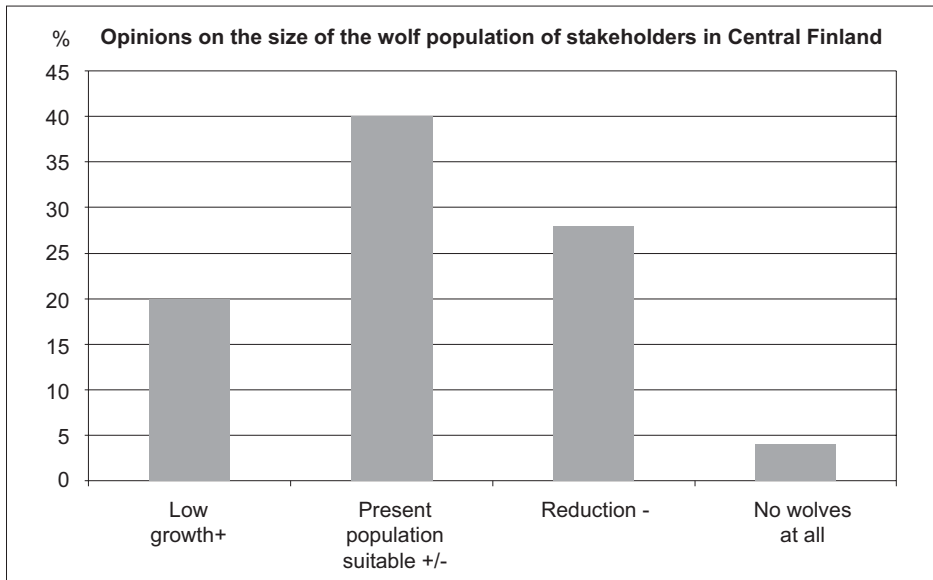
It was recognised there were conflicting aims: just three respondents did not think there were any. The conflicts were put down to people's ignorance and prejudice, and differences of opinion between conservation groups and local people, which it was felt the media stirred up in their articles on the subject. The authorities and the EU requirements which went against the expectations of farmers were also mentioned, as was the notion that wolves had been brought into the area.

Proposals for maintaining interaction between wolf and man included the circulation of accurate information and compensation for, and prevention of, damage. Several respondents also made the point that the wolf population should be controlled and problem wolves disposed of. Furthermore, there would be more tolerance if local people had more chance to have an influence, it was felt. The view was also put forward that wolves should not be disturbed and that they should be allowed to form packs, which would help them find food.

Most of the respondents thought the present wolf population was acceptable in terms of numbers. A few thought it was too small, while some were in favour of reducing the population (Figure 20). It was considered that Central Finland had room for between zero and four to six controlled packs containing mating pairs. The number of territories suited to groups of wolves in the area was thought to be between one and ten.

By far the most favoured method of controlling the wolf population proposed was licensed hunting. Only two respondents did not propose that as an option. In addition it was felt that hunting down problem wolves was a suitable method. Other one-off options proposed included natural culling and disposal of animals by the authorities. Views on this subject included scepticism about the authorities' ability to assess the situation, the need for a knowledge base and accuracy with regard to population control, and the authorities' close involvement in the disposal of problem wolves. In their definition of problem wolf, respondents stated that an animal which entered yards and gardens, preyed on domestic animals and which had lost its fear of humans had all the hallmarks of the behaviour of a problem wolf. Elimination of the animal was the most favoured solution put forward to control the situation.

Regarding research into the wolf population, people wanted a closer examination of wolf pack movements and food biology, and objectivity (in reporting) – some respondents felt that research was aimed at conservation. There was also a call for better ways of circulating information. The aims proposed for monitoring the population were various. One person thought that it could not continue to rely on voluntary work. Another thought that was the very best way to obtain information. It was hoped in the main that communications on the wolf population would be objective.



**Figure 20.** Opinions regarding size of the wolf population among stakeholders in Central Finland (number of respondents = 20).

It was hoped that the authorities would show boldness rather than prejudice in their work. The point was also made that the environment centres should have a role in the management of large carnivore populations and guidance and advice. Several respondents were in favour of closer cooperation. Legislation could be developed by an improved system of compensation for damage by predators (no excess payment and full compensation paid), being able to dispose of problem wolves, bringing decision-making to the regions, and less influence from the EU. The opinion was also put forward that measures to prevent damage from wolves should be made compulsory before other measures were taken. A separate Government decree on large predators was also proposed.

In the open sections of the survey comments were made the like of which had appeared before. One new idea was to hold regular get-togethers, and another was for the powers that be to come and talk to the local people.

## B Comments at the public meetings

### Multia 26.8.2004

*"This is a very well planned meeting. If it were in the parish hall we wouldn't speak up, even if we think that all wolves should be killed off. A wolf killed a dog of mine, and I sent in the bill – it wasn't paid. If someone wants to defend the wolf he has to be able to give a good reason for doing so. If my dog bites someone I'll be in court and liable for damages. But when a wolf that belongs to the state kills, I don't get compensated. Should I take the state to court?"*

*"Of course wolves and bears are welcome here – I am on their side."*

*"Luckily it was a dog it took. If it had been a child things would have been different. I remember a case 70 years ago when a child beggar disappeared and they only found some torn clothes. We were told this and we were relieved when there weren't any wolves around any longer. So I ask you, who are we trying to increase the number of wolves for? Who will benefit – the big shots in Brussels, you or who? I don't mean that all wolves should be killed – and we wouldn't get them all anyway."*

*"I don't want to kill off all the wolves round here, but when it gets to the stage where they are getting very close, something has to be done. We've now had 35 sightings in yards where there have been children up until March. Who can assure us it's safe? I check every few minutes to see if the children are still there. A wolf tore a sheep to pieces 70 metres away from our yard. Since then we've been sending the children to school by taxi. Do you remember the Ranua case, when a wolf jumped over the fence and the whole pack had to be killed. And here they are free to come into the yards." (Noted: some 20 people said that wolves had entered their yard and about the same number had seen a wolf).*

*"I have lost 50 sheep over three years. Will you still be carrying on with the tour when we have the first human victim?"*

*"Well, we'd get some order if the compensation payments are sorted out. Then the state would work out how many wolves are worth keeping."*

*"The law needs to be changed. It's laughable here how our own business is decided by Europeans, when they have first killed their own predators and gone to live in village communities. We all live in isolated spots and we can't do anything. Of course we need to be able to hunt predators – how else are they going to learn to steer clear of humans? If a wolf came into my yard I'd shoot it, but what would that mean? They are making criminals of us and there's no longer any respect for the law."*

*"We drew up a petition and the minister replied that fear was a personal thing. I'm not afraid, but I fear for my children."*

*"We're desperate. We are trying to do something about it but we can't do anything. There's nothing that can be done. We've now learnt that the sheep need to be protected just like bicycles have to be in the cities. But what are we going to do with empty pastures? We should be taking the animals there."*

**Jyväskylä 31.8.2004**

*"In recent years the number of large carnivores has increased. That has meant fewer people go into the forest."*

*"It would be good to know, for the sake of comparison, the extent of the damage caused by dogs. I'd be brave enough to pitch my tent in the forest, but not necessarily in the city."*

*"Wolves are a part of nature, and I want to see them there."*

*"We should be thinking about how we might exploit the wolf as a tourist attraction."*

*"There are too few wolves. There should be six to eight pairs. Then you'd hear them howling."*

*"I don't want to hear wolves howling - my dog starts barking. In places wolves are starting to become too common now."*

*"Four packs is an acceptable number for Central Finland."*

*"Are you from the city?"*

*"Yes, from Jyväskylä."*

*"Lapland would be a good place for wolves – with its wilderness and all, but they don't breed there. Humans don't need to interfere in the balance of nature."*

*"Nature takes care of things otherwise, but problem wolves have to be disposed of with decisions taken at regional level."*

*"We seem to agree that compensation should be paid in full and with no excess having to be paid." (Noted: general approval.)*

*"Wolves should be hunted to keep them timid and the populations should be controlled."*

*"That Little Red Riding Hood Story should be banned. It colours people's opinions."*

*"I don't agree with hunting or controlling the wolf populations. We don't control human populations. If we think wolves shouldn't be allowed to get close to where humans live, where it is allowed to roam. We need more information, and if we have to kill problem wolves we have to know which one to kill, and what the consequences will be."*

**Kannonkoski 1.9.2004**

*"This has already been decided and these hearings are just a contrivance. No more hunting but there are wolves in the area. They find the dogs when they are barking at the elks. The scientists hide the information, and especially when it comes to the movements of tagged wolves. We didn't get any information on the wolves in the area for the examinations of the dogs' dead bodies."*

*"The wolf researchers and their tags should be sent to Siberia – they've got enough wolves there."*

*"It's a countryside versus the city situation. In the country children are afraid of wolves. They're purposely devastating the countryside."*

*"I live in the city and have a cottage in the country. I'm not afraid of wolves, but I don't want to see them around."*

*"Get the wolf off the threatened species list. They should be hunted. We need to have a wolf population which is fit for hunting. Places where people live should be made safe and animals that come into the yards should be got rid of. Hunting licences should be dealt with by the local authorities, and the population should be monitored as carefully as possible."*

*"Where should they put the wolves over from the zoos? Not in the wild, that's for sure. Have wolves been moved here?"*

*"The research is first-rate. The Swedish system is good too – each pack is tagged and monitored. Only then you know where the packs are."*

*"There shouldn't be any precise objective with regard to the population. It seems that they tried that and that then they reported on that, but we don't want an increasing population here. The situation has been fine in the last few years. The occasional wolf should be allowed, but the problem wolves should be killed immediately."*

### 5.2.2 The Game Management District of Oulu (Northern Ostrobothnia and part of Central Ostrobothnia)

There is no permanent wolf population in the area covered by the Game Management District of Oulu: the wolves there are merely wanderers. Around Raahe, however, there were wolves in 2002 and a litter there too (Game and Fisheries Research Institute 2004), which later vanished thanks to human intervention.

Twenty replies from stakeholders were processed. They came from the Northern Ostrobothnia Regional Organisation of the Finnish Association for Nature Conservation, the Finnish Hunters' Association Central Ostrobothnia local district, the Kennel Club of Central Ostrobothnia and Northern Ostrobothnia, three Game Management Associations, three police districts,

the Regional Council of Northern Ostrobothnia, the Environment Centre, the Central Union of Agricultural Producers and Forest Owners of Central and Northern Ostrobothnia, the Forestry Centre of Northern Ostrobothnia, the Union of Forest Owners, the Association of Reindeer Herding Cooperatives and the Reindeer Grazing Association of Livo in Pudasjärvi, the Employment and Economic Development Centre and Metsähallitus. Nine attended the stakeholder discussions. One public meeting was held in Raahe, with 26 in attendance and 53 speeches and remarks made.

## **A Synopsis of the replies of stakeholders**

Respondents in Central Ostrobothnia, except for two agencies, said the population was small, that there were occasional movements of wolves, but that things were generally quiet. In Central Ostrobothnia the population was said to be on the rise.

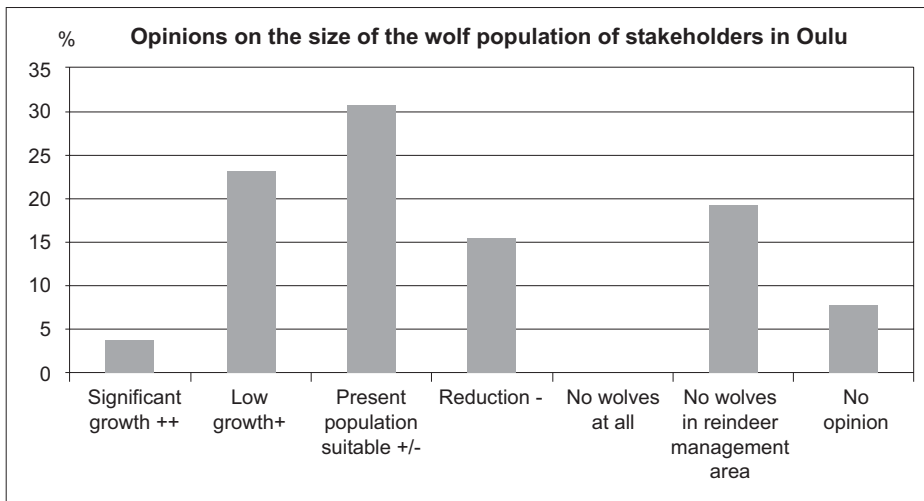
It was recognised that there were conflicts regarding the wolf. They were felt to be due to fear and ignorance, and even hatred and hysteria. Some identified differences of opinion between the local population and the conservationists. One respondent stated that people were not even willing to try and understand the views of local people. The reindeer husbandry area was felt to be a problem unto itself, and a good number said that reindeer herding and wolves just did not go together.

In order to make the interaction of wolf and man easier it was suggested that there should be a supply of accurate information and education, an improved system of compensation for damage, a ban on the wolf's presence in the reindeer husbandry area, elimination of animals that cause damage, and decision-making at more local levels. More research and the formation of wolf packs were also seen as remedies.

Regarding aims for the size of the population, there was a fairly even spread of opinion on the current situation regarding increasing the population and stabilising it, and, in some replies, reducing it (Figure 21). The numbers to be aimed at ranged from six to eight packs to just one pair. People did not seem keen to increase the wolf population in the reindeer husbandry area. When asked about the number of suitable territories in the area, the replies ranged from around 10 to none.

Most respondents opted for a system of licensed hunting as a way to control the wolf population plus shooting problem wolves. Some agencies felt there was a need for more eliminations by the authorities. Two respondents would not accept any eliminations other than by the authorities, and one also proposed transfers as a means of controlling the population.

Most people agreed on the definition of problem wolf. A wolf which came into yards, tried to prey on domestic animals and which had lost its fear of humans was an animal which matched the definition. Most of the respondents said killing the animal was a solution, though some also suggested moving it away from the area.



**Figure 21.** Opinions regarding size of the wolf population among stakeholders in Oulu (number of respondents = 20).

Greater transparency, ensuring there were sufficient resources for monitoring, closer examination of movements and behaviour, and better prevention of damage were seen as the necessary measures to be taken if research was to be improved. There was also a need to define favourable conservation status. With respect to monitoring the population, more tagging of wolves was repeatedly mentioned, as was listening to the local people. People wanted to see transparent and honest communications, and a telephone hotline service was also proposed.

Ways suggested to develop the work of the authorities and their cooperation included a more flexible approach to issuing hunting licences, cooperation between the police and the Game Management District, a bigger role for the environmental administrative departments, powers of decision locally, and general clarification of procedures. To improve the law a few repeated proposals were made: a better system of compensation, a more flexible interpretation of protection of the wolf, and harsher penalties for illegal hunting.

The views expressed in the open section related to such issues as the importance of the wolf's right to exist, the importance of people's rights, keeping the wolf in the wild, the impact of fear and the need for more information.

## B Comments at the public meetings

### Raaha 16.9.2004

*"If we'd had this situation back then, when Milla (a wolf) was here, it would have been a full house. Back then there was fear and we got a lot of calls at the police station. It was serious. Now that Milla's lot have gone and the population has gone down, the situation has quietened down a lot. We've got away with a minimum amount of damage. The sheep have gone in Vihanti, but if things stay the way they are we won't have much trouble with wolves.*

*But if we start to see damage being done there'll be a big noise about it, especially if we start losing dogs. I saw that Milka cross a main road, sit down by the side of it and watch the cars go by."*

*"The agricultural producers in Vihanti think that now we've got rid of the wolves, we don't need them here anymore. It causes mental stress, it means fewer people go berry-picking, and dogs aren't used so much. If there are losses compensation has to be paid in full."*

*"Elks are timid when wolves chase them off. Then there's no point breeding dogs."*

*"All wolves should be tagged to know where they are and to be able to avoid them. Milla didn't catch dogs but just liked to join the hunt."*

*"There needs to be a hunting licence system and a hunting season for the wolf, so that we can control the population if we need to."*

*"What is a favourable conservation status for the wolf? It has to be defined."*

*"A wolf entered yards in Pyhäjoki in the spring and drank from the dogs' bowls. My neighbour's bear dog chased it away. What sort of wolf was that? It wasn't afraid and it went into yards. Why couldn't we get a hunting licence for it?"*

*"If a wolf is not disturbing domestic animals or local residents, so be it. But they don't seem to be like that. They get in the yards – one got into my neighbour's yard."*

*"What is the truth about wolves being transferred? I believe they've been lying to us about this."*

*"In other countries they think it's great that there are predators and wilderness in Finland. We need to nurture this image – it's a great advertisement."*

### 5.2.3 The Game Management District of Ostrobothnia (Southern Ostrobothnia and part of Central Ostrobothnia)

In the area covered by the Game Management District of Ostrobothnia wolves are normally found every year, although no reproducing pairs have been encountered in the last few years, according to Game and Fisheries Research Institute data. In the Peräseinäjoki district there has apparently been one breeding site this century, but it has obviously not been documented adequately - either that or the litter has vanished. The area's wolf population is shared with the Game Management Districts of Central Finland, Oulu, Satakunta and Swedish-speaking Ostrobothnia. The Game Management District for this area estimated that in spring 2004 there were five to ten wolves wandering in the area (Game Management District of Ostrobothnia 2004, unpublished). Sightings have been focused in the Suupohja district and in Central Ostrobothnia. Yearly sightings normally number a few dozen.

There were 19 replies from stakeholders in Ostrobothnia. There were from the Ostrobothnia Regional Organisation of the Finnish Association for Nature Conservation, the Finnish Hunter's Organisation Ostrobothnia District, the Kennel Clubs of Central and Southern Ostrobothnia, the Game Management District of Ostrobothnia, three Game Management Associations, the police districts of Kaustinen and Kokkola, four municipalities, the Central Union of Agricultural Producers and Forest Owners of Central and Southern Ostrobothnia, and the 4H club of Southern Ostrobothnia. Fifteen attended the stakeholders meetings, representing 11 separate agencies. Two public hearings were held, one in Perho and the other in Kauhajoki. The meeting in Perho was attended by just ?? people, and there were 46 speeches and remarks made. At Kauhajoki there were 100 people and 90 speeches and remarks were made.

## **A Synopsis of the replies of stakeholders**

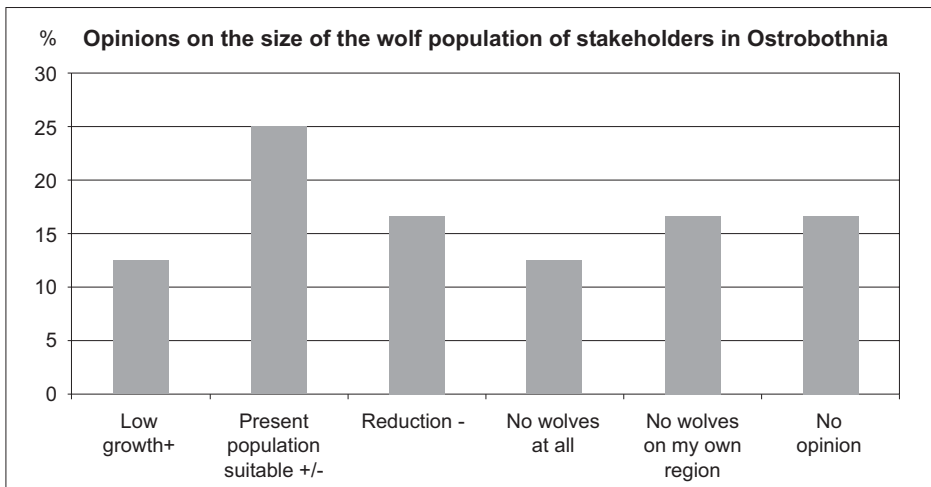
Views of the situation regarding the wolf population varies from neutral descriptions to strong opinions being given. Most respondents said that the population was small but growing. Some thought the population was too small and a few were already worried about its rise. In the opinion of one respondent there were now too many wolves in the area.

There was a wide range of opinion when it came to recognising the existence of conflicting aims in the area over the wolf population. Some thought there are no conflicts, but the majority acknowledged the fact that they existed. For example, conservationists and hunting organisations were felt to be groups with opposing views. The sources of the conflict were considered to be distrust of local residents, differing values, fear and ignorance, the objectives of the authorities, and, for example, the work of the Game Management District (protecting the wolf) in the wolf debate.

Ways proposed to maintain interaction between the wolf and man included a proper system of compensation for damage, control of the wolf population and, in particular, the speedy removal of problem wolves, effective circulation of accurate information plus awareness-raising, keeping wolves in the wild, and keeping them in zoos, and not letting them roam freely. Population monitoring was also thought to be important.

Respondents had very varied views regarding wolf numbers, ranging from increasing the population to absolute opposition to wolves. Most respondents, however, said that the population situation was more or less acceptable (Figure 22). In terms of actual numbers, the proposals ranged from two to three packs to none. Many said they thought one to two packs was about the right number. As for suitable territories, the proposals ranged from four to eight to none. Many proposed one to two areas which would be suitable for wolves to live in.

There was something approaching full agreement in the choices made relating to the possible control of the wolf population when it came to the suitability of a system of hunting licences in managing the population. Only four agencies did not select that as an option. More than half the respondents also suggested that problem wolves be hunted down. Some also thought that the authorities should kill the animals, and one thought natural culling



**Figure 22.** Opinions regarding size of the wolf population among the respondents in Ostrobothnia (number of respondents = 19).

was a solution. Another said that moving the animals away was an option in the control of the population.

In defining what constituted a problem wolf the respondents were in close agreement. The criteria were met by animals which repeatedly entered yards, had lost their natural timidity towards humans and preyed on domestic animals. The main solution proposed was their elimination. One respondent took the view that actual problematic behaviour is only the result of the dispersal of packs effected by man.

Greater transparency and better communications of results were among the needs proposed in research into the wolf population. Areas of research suggested included food consumption, movements, the differences between individual wolves and packs regarding food consumption, and investigating the causes of problematic behaviour. In the area of population monitoring there was a call for reliability, more/fewer tagged wolves, support for the community liaison officers, and improved methods. Transparency in communications and distribution of information on wolf movements were mentioned. But the point was also made that information from the authorities was not needed because local people took care of it.

In the opinions given on cooperation from the authorities and their work it was evident that it was felt cooperation between the agencies should be improved, there needed to be more emphasis on flexibility and local concerns, and it was hoped too that the environmental authorities would be more involved in decision-making on large carnivore issues. The amendments to legislation deemed necessary were a change to the damage compensation system, lowering the protection status for wolves and reducing obstacles to hunting, and establishing powers of decision at national level. Also mentioned was the aim to remove the wolf from the list of game species. There were strong differences of opinion.

A lot of other points were made under 'other comments', though in practice they confirmed the opinions already expressed, in some degree even forcefully.

## **B Comments at the public meetings**

### **Perho 30.8.2004**

*"The wolf population is now at an acceptable level. In Salamajärvi there are now one adult and two cubs and that's enough."*

*"The land round here is so fragmented that there are no suitable areas for wolves (Kauhava)."*

*"We older people cannot learn to tolerate wolves; the young learn better."*

*"There should be more wolves in our area. There is definitely food for them in the forests. There should also be full compensation paid for damage."*

*"Every year there are more cubs born, which move around in the area. There is no space in Perho, for example, suitable for even one litter. Perhaps there would be on the eastern border."*

*"The wolf'll be shot, you can be sure, if it attacks the dog."*

### **Kauhajoki 24.8.2004**

*"There has to be a limit to the population. We need to know how many there are in the district, otherwise the same thing'll happen as with the lynx. They eat hares and then other changes take place. Predators have an effect on the game populations, and it's not natural the wolf being here."*

*"The wolf population is small; nevertheless it is already a nuisance locally (around Suupohja). The trials are suffering, dogs are disappearing and can't be found, and the compensation they pay is not enough. If the EU wants us to take care of the wolves let's stick them in the zoo and keep the EU happy."*

*"We don't need research with tagging. Why study them? Let's just kill them. We just need more biologists – and that costs money. The powers that be are just sitting around drinking. The whole thing is a load of nonsense."*

*"The researchers didn't believe it when the wolf went into the barn and the police wouldn't take a stand, but then the ministry gave its permission (to kill it). But it would be good for the wolf if it was under pressure from hunting a bit all the time. Then there would be more tolerance. And what about the wolves which are getting old? Now that we can't get rid of them and they start causing damage – surely we should be able to dispose of them. Total protection for the wolf is the biggest problem – it shouldn't be made into some holy beast."*

*"What is that excess payment thing? If I go and destroy my neighbour's crop, I could say "Hey! You've got an excess to pay on that."*

*"Of course we should allow in wolves, but they have to be controlled. The current situation is just contemptuous of humans – it's as though wolves were worth more than people."*

*"Fear of wolves starts at elementary school with Little Red Riding Hood. Bears are teddies - toys; wolves are evil."*

*"We don't need wolves round here."*

*"Two or three are all right, but no more."*

*"I have seen a litter of wolves in Peräseinäjoki, but think: the two or three wolves you'd agree to is too small a population. You can't hunt a population that small, and it's only by hunting them that you keep wolves timid. And the worst thing is that it's kept as a mascot on the chest of drawers. Something that causes problems but which you can't touch. Let's keep six to eight packs here and get rid of a few every year."*

*"That's a good idea."*

*"My opinion remains the same."*

*"We hunters and landowners will decide what the wolf population is. If they don't listen to us we'll kill of the last of them."*

*"How many of you have seen a wolf in the wild?" (Noted: about 20 of those present.)*

#### 5.2.4 The Game Management District of Swedish-speaking Ostrobothnia (Region of Ostrobothnia)

There has been no permanent wolf population in Ostrobothnia's coastal region in the last few years, but occasional wanderers have been encountered at times, most frequently around Kristiinankaupunki. In 2003, however, a tagged wolf named Noppe settled in the Kristiinankaupunki district and paired up with a local female, and together they caused some damage: they killed a few dogs. In the summer of 2003 – before Noppe arrived on the scene – wolves killed more than 80 sheep in the same area. This is quite a densely populated area, and wolf movements close to villages aroused much controversy and calls for their destruction (Game Management District of Swedish-speaking Ostrobothnia 2004, unpublished).

Replies came from 18 separate stakeholders. They came from two nature organisations, the local Finnish Hunter's Organisation branch, the Vaasa Kennel Club, the Game Management District, two Game Management Associations, the Närpiö police, three municipalities, the local Central Union of Agricultural Producers and Forest Owners branch, ProAgraria, the local Union of Forest Owners, the Forestry Centre, The Finnish association which looks after the interests of fur farmers, the Employment and Economic Development Centre, and the 4-H club.

One public hearing was held in Vaasa. It was attended by 76 people and 57 speeches and remarks were made.

## **A Synopsis of the replies of stakeholders**

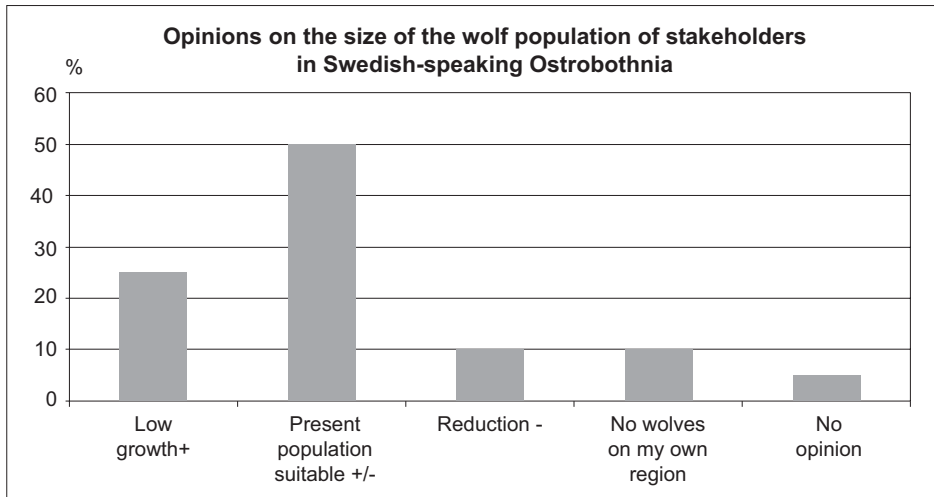
The wolf population was mainly described as being one where occurrences were occasional, the situation varied from year to year, and it was mainly roaming single wolves which were encountered. The coastal zone was felt to be a migration area, and the sea was assumed to halt the movement of wolves. However, there was worry concerning population trends, and one respondent thought the present situation locally was disturbing. Fear was also now thought to exist.

The existence of conflicting aims was localised perhaps more precisely than in many other areas. This may be because of recent events around Kristiinankaupunki. Several respondents recognised that there were conflicts arising between conservation organisations and local aims. This was felt to be due to the ideology of wildlife organisations and unwillingness to make compromises. The point was also made that those who defended the wolf did not themselves encounter wolves but do their conservation work a long way away from the areas where the wolves live. One respondent thought human fear lay behind the disagreements. It was also proposed that it was the researchers who sparked the rows.

Coexistence between wolf and man could be maintained, according to the respondents, by keeping wolves in the wild, controlling the population and killing off problem animals promptly. Special mention was made of the unsuitability of the coastal regions as wolf territories owing to the dense human settlement there, the traffic, etc. Furthermore, more information, knowledge and transparency were needed.

As to what made for an acceptable wolf population, there were various views on the subject, but keeping the situation as it was seemed to be the most favoured option. A good number of respondents thought that the area was not suited to the maintenance of a wolf population and that people did not want to see it increase. Only three believed that the wolf population could be increased, though some thought the area did not need any wolves at all (Figure 23). There were also calls for reducing the present population. It was felt generally that there were few suitable wolf territories in the area. Most respondents stated emphatically that the districts in question were not suitable for wolves to live in.

The way to control the wolf population mainly proposed was licensed hunting; just three respondents did not regard that as an appropriate option. Some wanted hunting licences principally to be used to kill individual animals causing harm. One of the respondents' choices did not extend to hunting, but natural culling, and eliminations by the authorities was felt to be a preferable option. In the open section of the questionnaire the following remarks were made, among others: the Game Management District should be the agency to issue hunting licences, there should be a lot of different solutions implemented to control the population, and the disposal of problem wolves was a matter of urgency and could not be planned as part of a management plan, for example.



**Figure 23.** Opinions regarding size of the wolf population among the respondents in Swedish-speaking Ostrobothnia (number of respondents = 18).

The respondents were in close agreement on the definition of problem wolf, saying that an animal which repeatedly entered yards or gardens, had lost its natural timidity towards humans and preyed on domestic animals met the criteria for problematic behaviour. The solution proposed in the main was to kill the animal. Someone suggested fencing the wolves in, and in a few replies mentioned the notion that hunting had an impact on making the population naturally timorous.

Regarding how research could be developed, the need was mentioned to study the behaviour of the wolf in different situations, the behaviour of people and their acceptance of the wolf population, the prevention of damage and improved methods to do this, an examination of the impact of wolf phobias, and, in particular, investigating the effect of fear on willingness to settle in sparsely populated areas. The view was also expressed that research into wolves on the present scale was a waste of money. There was just one proposal for improving ways to monitor the population: apparently to incorporate elk censuses from the air and combinations of game triangulation censuses in the process. Otherwise people just said that monitoring should continue. To develop communications there had to be transparency, information on wolf movements and numbers, and a flow of information among the various authoritative bodies.

Better communications was the main proposal offered to develop the work of the authorities and their cooperation. It was also seen necessary to involve the environmental authorities in the cooperation process. There were a few clear proposals to improve the law. The majority thought the problem was the distribution of power and hoped that it might be clarified through legislation. The importance of the local focus was emphasised. An improved system of compensation was regarded as important, but the point was also made that the law should ensure that the wolf's existence was viable. Similarly, the wolf's environments needed to be preserved as did sufficiently large unbroken areas of forest for them.

Under 'other comments' a lot of other views were stated, including the frequently expressed notion that Russia's large wolf population should be taken into account in the management of the Finnish population.

## **B Comments at the public meetings**

### **Vaasa 9.8.2004**

*"The quality of life here is suffering. The wolf is a danger to domestic animals and it's hard to get compensation. We don't want a permanent wolf population here."*

*"How can you replace a dog, one of the family, with money?"*

*"I've lived here almost 70 years and we have got on well enough without wolves. Now someone in Helsinki has dreamt up the idea that we need wolves all over the country. I'd like to ask why."*

*"The wolf helps to preserve an ecological balance. For example, it controls the elk population. Traffic, for example, is more dangerous for dogs than wolves. Hunters could concentrate more on controlling the mink population, let's say."*

*"The EU can't decide on our wolf population - surely we have to do that here."*

*"Is it even legal to catch wolves on motorsleighs and tag them?"*

*"We have to decide who should say first how many wolves should be kept. After that we need to make our minds up as to who is to decide on limits on the population."*

*"I have small children and I don't want wolves near by. I'm worried for my children."*

*"We must vote on whether we want wolves here or not. We should hold a referendum."*

*"No referendum thanks. We who live with the wolves should be allowed to decide."*

*"A wolf tore some of my domestic animals apart. Who's going to pay the costs of protecting them? Who will compensate me for an expensive thoroughbred? Who'll pay for the extra work protecting the animals?."*

*"I lived on the Russian border for a long time. I have experience of wolves. Don't let even one in around here."*

*“We should have the right to defend ourselves. The principle of subsidiarity should be brought in. The compensation system needs to be put right and there should be a hunting season for the wolf.”*

### 5.2.5 The Game Management District of Satakunta

As late as the early 1990s there were quite a lot of wolf sightings in Satakunta. They had diminished in number by the end of the decade, however. Very recently they have increased, following a quieter period lasting a few years. At the start of 2004, there were sightings, mainly in northern Satakunta and around Kankaanpää. The Game Management District put wolf numbers at some two to five in the period 2003–2004 (Game Management District of Satakunta 2004, unpublished). They are likely to be the same animals which were also seen in the Game Management Districts Ostrobothnia and Swedish-speaking Ostrobothnia.

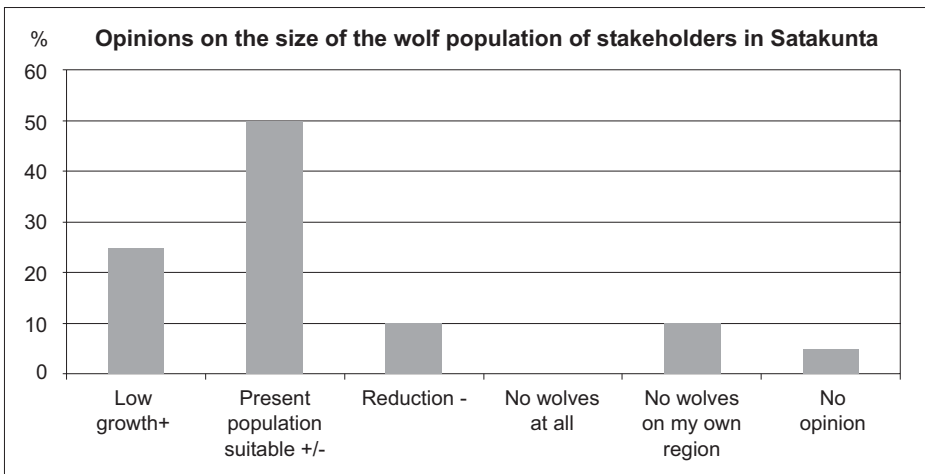
A total of 16 replies from stakeholders were processed. They were the Satakunta Regional Organisation of the Finnish Association for Nature Conservation, local Finnish Hunter’s Organisation branch, the local organisation for owners of hunting hounds, the Game Management District, two Game Management Associations, two police districts, two municipalities, the Regional Council of Satakunta, the Satakunta branch of the Central Union of Agricultural Producers and Forest Owners, ProAgria, the Union of Forest Owners of West Finland, the Employment and Metsähallitus/the wildlife services. Ten were present at the discussions between stakeholders. Nine agencies were represented. One public meeting was held in the area. One hundred people came along and about 55 speeches and remarks were heard there. At the beginning of the meeting someone also organised a personal demonstration bearing streamer saying “no wolf management zone in Satakunta”.

## A Synopsis of the replies of stakeholders

Many believed there were a few wolves occurring in the area as a description of the wolf situation there. Some imagined the population was growing, and in some people’s opinion at a dramatic rate. The situation was now leading to fear and livestock rearing was beginning to be problematic. One respondent said that the population was too small.

With regard to conflicting aims for the wolf population the view was put forward that fear and hunters with their own set of objectives lay behind the disagreements. Some saw the scenario as being outsiders versus local people. One thought that grandiose aims for protection of the species sparked the rows. A few respondents were of the opinion that there was general agreement in the area that the wolf was suited to the environment in Satakunta.

There was a whole range of suggestions regarding how to maintain interaction of the wolf and man: more knowledge and information, killing off problem wolves, hunting to control populations, keeping the wolf in the wild, a better damage compensation system and prevention of damage.



**Figure 24.** Opinions regarding size of the wolf population among the respondents in Satakunta (number of respondents = 16).

Definitions of what made for an acceptable population ranged from increasing numbers to total removal. However, a considerable number thought the current situation in the area acceptable (Figure 24). In terms of numbers the maximum proposed was three reproducing pairs. The opinion was also put forward that there should be wolves but not there. When asked how many suitable territories for the wolf could be determined in Satakunta, very many thought there were two to very potential ones. Some thought there were not any at all because of the predominance of agriculture in the area and the dense human population. One respondent was of the view that there could be as many as five such areas.

Most respondents opted for licensed hunting as a solution for controlling the wolf population. Only two did not and suggested instead that the authorities should eliminate wolves. Natural culling was one respondent's choice. Moving the animals away was proposed just once. Many respondents who were in favour of licensed hunting had also chosen hunting down problem wolves and stated that that should be the first move.

In their definition of problem wolf, respondents agreed that wolves which repeatedly entered yards or gardens, had lost their timidity towards humans and preyed on domestic animals matched the behavioural criteria. The solution was in the main "prompt" elimination. Two respondents suggested moving the animals away initially and only after that taking other forms of action.

It was proposed that better familiarity with wolf behaviour and movements was the way forward in research. People wanted research to focus in particular on local wolves. Many replies showed that people were keen for the behaviour and history of wolves that entered yards and gardens to be investigated. To develop monitoring of the population it was suggested that wolves should be tagged and that there should be transparent communications on wolves and their movements. Transparency was mentioned repeatedly as an ingredient in improved communications.

The authorities came in for criticism. There had to be more cooperation and meetings to promote it. Changes in the law proposed included less protection for the wolf, a better system of compensation for damage, adherence to the principle of subsidiarity and flexibility. One respondent thought the current laws were fine. Other replies condemned the Game and Fisheries Research Institute for secrecy, and said that fanaticism should not play a part in human activities. People also said that wolves were responsible for more damage to elk, etc. by forcing them to form herds.

## **B Comments at the public meetings**

### **Kankaanpää 8.9.2004**

*“Communications on the wolf project have failed. There is a climate of secrecy. This is just aimed at hunters. The project is costing too much money ... I got to lose an unborn child because of a wolf: it was a dark autumn night, I was pregnant, and I had to look for some cows in the forest which had been chased off by a wolf. Children too are afraid of wolves.”*

*“I am a hunter and the father of three little girls. I understand the threat that wolves pose to children, although I myself am not afraid, nor are my children. And I am not afraid for them either – we go orienteering. But I understand the concern that a wolf might come into the yard. Compensation needs to be paid in full and the decisions must be taken by the Game Management Districts. The wolf situation is acceptable at present; we don't have to kill them all off.”*

*“Now we are regressing. There didn't used to be fear of predators. Now wolf numbers are being increased. I have two children, and I no longer send them off on journeys through the dark forest. And now we're going to have to that grazing obligation. How will that then affect the raising of livestock? We don't need to protect the wolves when more of them are coming over from Russia all the time.”*

*“I'm from Lauhavuori and it seems that people aren't even bothering to report it when they see a wolf. They were spraying the crops from the air in Lauhanvuori and they saw 18 separate wolves and six bears. There are lots of them”*

*“The hunters used to take care of the wolves – now it's the researchers, but we don't need them. Obviously the hunters can do it – what do we want the researchers for?”*

*“We have talked a lot to ordinary people. Round here we think that the problem wolves should be killed off but that the wolf in the forest should be left alone.”*

*“I'm the housekeeper at a farmhouse and a teacher, and in the 70s we were taught that wolves were dying out. Now they are coming back, and this is a turn for the worse. The fences won't keep them out, and we have to be able to get hunting licences for problem wolves. The EU is affecting country life in other ways now.”*

*"This message we are sending out must get to those who take the decisions. We have to have clear rules on how to deal with a wolf which comes into yard."*

## 5.2.6 The Game Management District of North Häme

There was no established wolf population in North Häme in 2003, but wandering individual wolves have been found, and a pair has been living more permanently mainly in the Kuhmoinen district. The situation is new and a few attempts on the lives of dogs and livestock have aroused a lot of controversy. Altogether 10 replies from stakeholders were processed. They came from the Nature Conservation Society of Pirkanmaa, three Game Management Associations, two police districts, ProAgria Pirkanmaa, the Union of Forest Owners of West Finland, Metsähallitus and the Häme 4H club. There were so many replies in from the Game Management Associations that just a sample of them was used. There was one meeting organised in the area, in Tampere. It was attended by 55 people and 79 speeches and remarks were heard there.

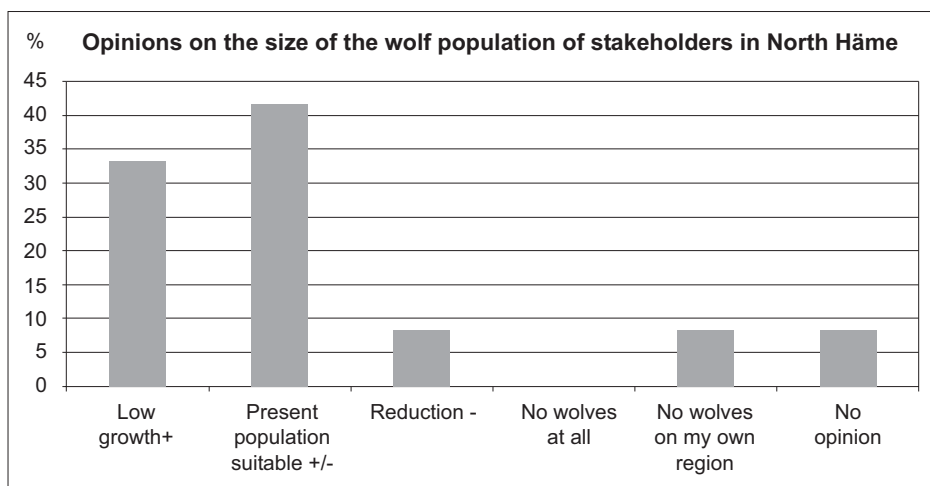
### **A Synopsis of the replies of stakeholders**

In describing the wolf situation in the area, respondents stated in the main that wolves were only occasionally found in the area. One respondent's view was that the mood is one of wait and see and people are worried that the population is starting to increase. One thought that wolves were suited to the area and one said that the lack of any breeding population was a problem in the preservation of the species.

As regards the recognition of conflicting aims only one respondent took the view that there were hunters and cattle breeders who were against the notion of conservation. Otherwise, people thought that mistrust, fear and ignorance fuelled the conflict. One respondent stated that the hunters were neutral, while another considered hunters to be jealous of their deer/elk.

To bolster interaction between man and wolf and to maintain it, awareness-raising, access to information, improvements to the compensation system, hunting to promote fear of humans among wolves, the elimination of problem wolves, population control and an objective approach to reporting on the part of the media were the proposals made. The most frequently repeated views had to do with the importance of access to information and the disposal of problem wolves.

The range of opinion regarding what made for an acceptable wolf population went from two to three mating pairs to individual animals occasionally entering the area. The population should either be allowed to increase with caution or, to many people's mind, the current situation was just fine. There were nevertheless views opposed to the presence of individual wolves (Figure 25).



**Figure 25.** Opinions regarding size of the wolf population among stakeholders in North Häme (number of respondents = 10).

Eight respondents were in favour of licensed hunting and two only approved of hunting down problem wolves as ways to control the wolf population. One of these was also for eliminations by the authorities. Both were in favour of reintroductions. Many respondents who supported licensed hunting said separately that only packs causing harm should be hunted down. Problem wolves were described once again very much along the same lines. Wolves entering yards or gardens, which have become tame and which target domestic animals are problem wolves in their view, and they should be eliminated, if possible. One respondent was of the opinion that the first and foremost step should be to protect domestic animals.

Proposals for better research included transparency, increased monitoring, studying the background to problematic behaviour and sociological research. Two respondents thought that the present levels of research being done were adequate. As regards better monitoring, people suggested the present methods should be used plus air censuses, and asked whether the work could continue on a voluntary basis.

Respondents wanted communications to be frank, to contain information on wolf movements, to be based on research and to be comprehensive. To develop cooperation from the authorities it was hoped there would be a greater sense of partnership and guidance as to how people can and may act in situations involving wolves. The point was also made that the Environment Centre should have its own officer in charge of large carnivores to cooperate with the game management staff. There was also mention of regular meetings of interest groups being held. The law could be improved through a better system of compensation for damage from predators and being allowed to hunt down problem wolves, in which the Game Management District would have a role to play. Under 'other comments' a new point was made: there should be a modern version made of the Little Red Riding Hood fairytale.

## **B Comments at the public meetings**

### **Tampere 8.9.2004**

*"There are two wolves in Kuhmoinen. They have attacked dogs and livestock and are now coming into the villages. You don't dare take your dog out into the forest. The wolf doesn't belong in villages – it belongs in the wild."*

*"The situation is tricky. The wolf is a game species. The population should be managed so that it is sufficient but is what is also enough. If there were just two pairs and we could hunt the rest things would be better. How could we account for it to the people who live in eastern Finland if we hunted down the rest? So there definitely ought to be two pairs. Monitoring should be done voluntarily and the alpha pairs should be left alone."*

*"Why must we have wolves at all? Why not change the law?."*

*"In Tampere they used to train students of communications theory to be Soviet positive. Is there now a course on wolf-positive communications?"*

*"If we were allowed to hunt wolves there'd be more tolerance. The problem is the dogs. We should have a law which allows you to shoot wolves if they are attacking a dog."*

*"It's strange how wolves are accepted. There must be enough of them over the eastern border. Why can't they be put in enclosures?"*

*"This is not just a matter for hunters. I'm a cattle breeder. The cattle have stampeded a number of times. At least the excess payment in the compensation should be scrapped."*

## **5.3 The area where wolves are encountered occasionally**

### **5.3.1 The Game Management District of South Häme**

The wolf occurs mainly only occasionally in South Häme and the wolf is not in any way a topical issue. That also explains the lukewarm participation in the meetings held. A total of 12 replies from stakeholders in the area were processed, eight of which were from Game Management Associations, three from police districts, and one from the Employment and Economic Development Centre. The other agencies did not answer. The stakeholder discussions were attended by 16 people representing 12 different agencies. There was one public meeting in Hämeenlinna, with nine in attendance and a total of 69 speeches and remarks made in the discussions.

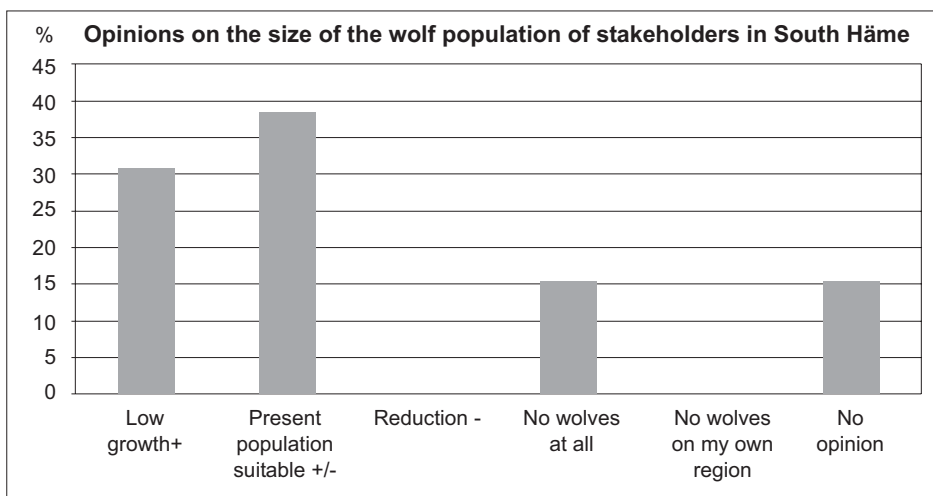
## A Synopsis of the replies of stakeholders

The wolf situation was described fairly neutrally with the remark that wolves were found occasionally, even regularly in one area. In one person's view is that the population is now at an acceptable level, and the situation cannot be considered in any way critical.

People said there was some antagonism towards the wolf in the area. One respondent thought that there was some degree of confrontation between the conservation agencies and the residents of rural areas. One respondent also thought that protection of the wolf was a fashion and led to arguments. Not everyone could identify and subjects of dispute.

As a means of maintaining interaction between humans and wolves, it was suggested that wolves should be kept away from where there were people. Accurate information and control of the population were also some of the opinions offered. One respondent was also of the view that there were no solutions for interaction.

There were several options proposed as to what constituted an acceptable wolf population. There were calls for both increasing and reducing the population. Many respondents thought the current situation – wolves were encountered occasionally – was fine. In terms of target numbers views ranged from one to two breeding pairs to not a single wolf. One respondent thought that the population could be increased but the density of human habitation needed to be taken into account (Figure 26). There were thought to be anything from one or two to zero suitable wolf territories in the area. Many said the dense human population was a barrier to wolves settling there.



**Figure 26.** Opinions regarding size of the wolf population among stakeholders in South Häme (number of respondents = 12).

The most favoured of the options for possible control of the wolf population was a system of hunting licences. One respondent had simply opted for hunting down problem wolves. Three respondents had also chosen eliminations by the authorities as an option in addition to licensed hunting.

Defining what constituted a problem wolf, the respondents repeatedly stated that an individual wolf which entered gardens and yards; had lost its timidity towards humans and preyed on domestic animals matched the behavioural criteria. The main solutions suggested were elimination, and people hoped for a swift reaction from the authorities.

The main needs for development in research were more tagging for monitoring purposes, improved study of movements, and achieving transparency. There were calls for support for, and further development of, the work of the large carnivore community liaison officers in the monitoring of the population. It was also seen as important to conduct a survey of breeding sites. Transparency, speed, honesty and frequency of action were mentioned in the development of communications on the population. Someone also doubted that communications were actually needed.

To improve cooperation from the authorities it was suggested that there should be a reliable flow of information, planning for emergencies and making it easier to dispose of problem wolves. The law could be improved by making it easier to dispose of problem wolves, giving Finland the powers of decision, making the wolf a game species that can be hunted or shot with a licence, and developing the compensation procedure.

Others made the point that the views of those living in the countryside and areas where there were wolves should be taken account of. The opinions of the wolf conservationist were thought to carry far too much weight. There was also thought to be a need for policy on aims for the management of the wolf population.

## **B Comments at the public meetings**

### **Hämeenlinna 26.8.2004**

*"What is a problem wolf? It should be shot the moment it comes into the yard. How do you know later on if you are shooting the right animal?"*

*"The housekeeper had killed a wolf which had come into the yard. It would have run away if someone had said 'boo!'. Would we treat people this way?"*

*"The wolf is timid towards humans; it's not a threat. The biggest threat is damage to domestic animals and hunting hounds, but in nature you live on nature's terms."*

*"Conditions for the wolf have changed in southern Finland. The habitats now are totally unnatural: there is no reason to introduce them here. Have they brought a van full of them here? Were you involved in moving them?"*

*"At what level should decisions be taken if there are wolves around? In Kainuu they slaughter. There should be an objective authority; at the moment they've been pretty extremist."*

*“Interesting, isn’t it? In Europe there are wolves right in the areas where people live but there they don’t hunt with dogs like we do here.”*

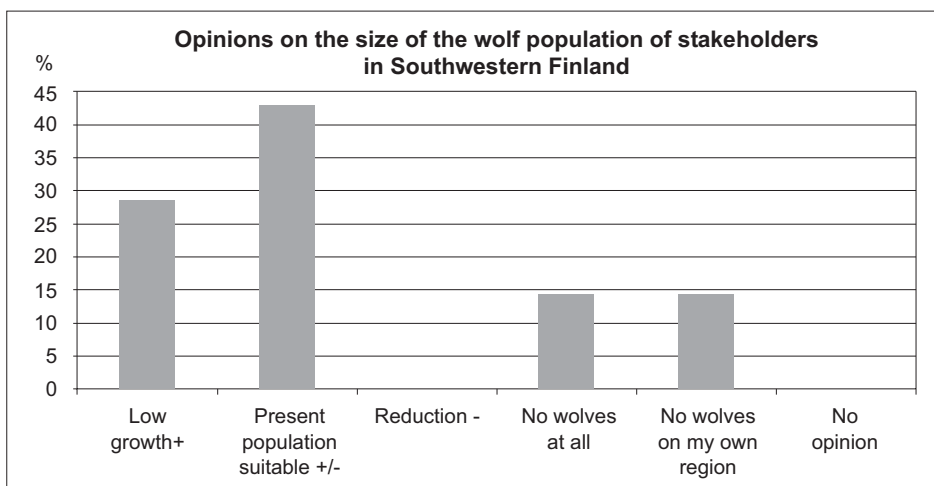
### 5.3.2 The Game Management District of Southwestern Finland

Southwestern Finland is the area in Finland where it is least likely to encounter a wolf. In the last few years there have just been occasional visitors to the area. There were six stakeholder respondents in all. The replies came from the Southwestern Finland branch of the Association for Nature Conservation, the Kennel Club, and four police districts. Seven attended the stakeholder meeting, representing six agencies. There was one public meeting in Paimio, where 15 people came along and 55 speeches and remarks were made.

#### A Synopsis of the replies of stakeholders

In giving a general description of the situation with respect to wolves in Southwestern Finland the respondents said that there were not any. Barely any conflicting disputes were identified, and many reasoned that as there were no wolves, there were no disagreements. One respondent thought there was mistaken information floating around. Information was needed to maintain and enhance interaction between man and wolf. One respondent took the view that wolves were not needed, and one made a long list of solutions, such as wolf seminars, more research, fences for protection and people having to adapt.

Almost all the options were chosen in the matter of what would constitute an acceptable population (Figure 27). One respondent was of the opinion that one wolf pack could exist in the area, another was in favour of increasing the population, three thought the present situation was just fine, and one said the area should be kept free of wolves.



**Figure 27.** Opinions regarding size of the wolf population among stakeholders in Southwestern Finland (number of respondents = 6).

For ways to control the population, four respondents thought that a system of hunting licences would be good but that it was only problem wolves that should be shot. Two respondents thought the best solutions were killing off the pets and the authorities taking action to eliminate the animals. One of these respondents also added reintroductions to the range of solutions.

Wolves were described as problem wolves if they came close to areas of human settlement and were adept at hunting domestic animals. The danger that wolves could mix with the dog population was also mentioned. Two respondents had opinions regarding how to manage the situation. One suggested eliminating such individuals, and another stressed the need to exercise discretion in each case.

There were no suggestions regarding how to make developments in research. There was a call for adequate monitoring of the population. To improve communications, people wanted to see more action and effectiveness. Nor were there any clear proposals for how to improve cooperation from the authorities, other than organising a seminar and enhancing partnership generally. Nobody saw any need to amend the law, though the point was made that eastern Finland should be allowed to hunting the wolf population to a greater extent than is the case now.

## **B Comments at the public meetings**

### **Paimio 22.9.2004**

*“Doesn’t the wolf move in packs? Why do they move around alone here?”*

*“Why doesn’t Southwestern Finland have its own wolf population?”*

*“How big an area does a pack need? Are there any areas here where a pack could prey on small deer.”*

*“Wolves should be made to fear humans, and that will only come about if they are hunted. They should be able to grant hunting licences. Why are we Finns so conscientious? The Italians interpret directives more loosely.”*

*“That wolf slaughter at Hyrynsalmi was awful and provocative – that they should boast about killing those wolves! It led to a ban in the reindeer husbandry area.”*

*“The fear of wolves in Southwestern Finland is the result of the events in the 1800s.”*

*“We now have a sustainable wolf population; we don’t need any more.”*

*“It doesn’t matter if they come here, but let them come here naturally. You would think there was some tolerance here.”*

### 5.3.3 The Game Management District of Uusimaa

In the area covered by the Game Management District of Uusimaa the wolf has mainly been an occasional visitor. In August 2004 a young male wolf crossed the area, according to observations by the Game and Fisheries Institute, and it killed some sheep in Kirkkonummi (Game Management District of Uusimaa 2004, unpublished). Wolf movements were also monitored closely in the media, and this led to much public controversy in the area.

Thirteen stakeholder agencies replied to the survey. They were from the Uusimaa Group for Environmental Conservation, the Uusimaa Kennel Club, four Game Management Associations, two police districts, the municipality of Kirkkonummi, the Uusimaa Environment Centre, Nylands Hästavelsförbund, the Uusimaa Forestry Centre and the Union of Forest Owners of South Finland. The meetings of stakeholders were attended by 17 people, representing 13 separate agencies. A public meeting held in Nuusio in Espoo was attended by 44, and there 57 speeches and remarks were heard.

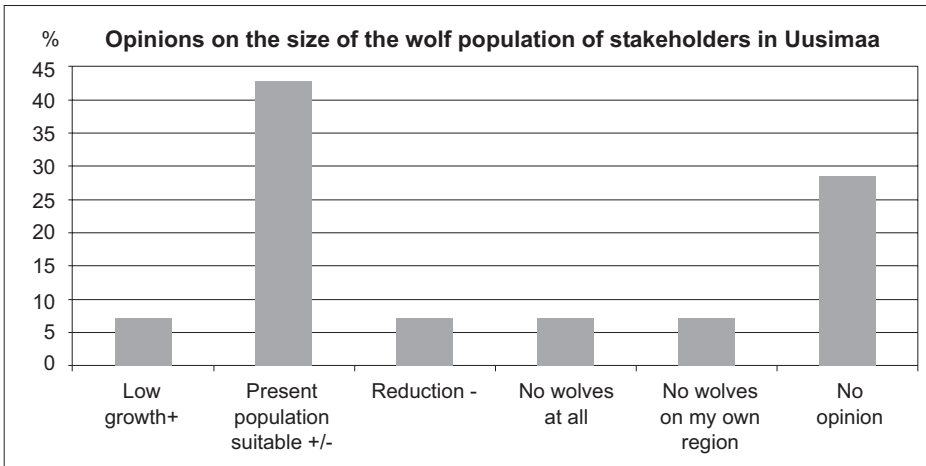
## A Synopsis of the replies of stakeholders

When describing the wolf situation in the area the respondents stated in the main that there were no wolves there, or if there were they were merely visitors. However, one thought the situation was now worrying. Two thought there was space. In the opinion of one of them, the return of the wolf was a desirable thing. One respondent said there should be no wolves in the area.

There was a range of views concerning whether there were conflicting aims. Three respondents did not think there were any. Some recognised their existence and identified them as being between city and country dwellers. One respondent connected the issue with conservation of the forests, another to greenbelt issues, building parks, etc.. Many, however, stated that the area was not suited to the wolf because of the fragmented nature of the landscape.

Ways to promote interaction between wolf and man proposed included communications, compensation for damage, keeping wolves timid towards humans, the wisdom of decision-makers (prompt action), ensuring wolves had enough food, the protection of greenbelt areas, and wolf enclosures. A few respondents were of the opinion that there were no solutions.

When it came to the definition of an acceptable wolf population most of the respondents thought the present situation was fine, but there were also proposals to have, for example, one or two pairs living in the area. On the other hand, there were a few objections made to wolves entering the area. Not everyone had a view on this (Figure 28). Three respondents suggested there were suitable territories for wolves: one thought there were four to eight, one just a couple or so, and one just one. The others who had a view on this (seven) thought that there were no suitable territories for wolves in Uusimaa.



**Figure 28.** Opinions regarding size of the wolf population among stakeholders in Uusimaa (number of respondents = 13).

Regarding ways to control the wolf population, 10 respondents thought that licensed hunting would be the best method to deal with the matter, if necessary. Three proposed that the authorities should just be responsible for eliminations, of whom one would also allow the shooting of problem wolves, whilst another believed that natural culling would be an adequate solution in addition to action by the authorities.

Defining problem wolves, they said that individual animals which entered yards, repeatedly preyed on domestic animals and which had become tame met the description. Killing the animal was the solution proposed most often. One respondent would agree to that if other alternatives had been ruled out.

Developments in research could be achieved with extra resources, more research into wolves in southern Finland, and investigations into the impact of the wolf population on ungulates. To develop monitoring of the population other assessments needed to be made than just an estimate of the minimum population: for example, the likely population, and the extent to which the network of community liaison officers needed support and payment for their work. One suggestion made was to introduce the Swedish system and increase tagging. Communications needed to be more effective and up-to-date and should not just appeal to the emotions.

The message was that the environmental agencies also need to be involved in cooperation on the part of the authorities, and more flexibility was called for. There were two opinions regarding how the law could be improved. One was that the wolf should have a lower protection status, and the other, that the current system of licences in exceptional circumstances went against the Habitats Directive. The same respondent also felt that the Finnish Police Act should be used to get round the Finnish Hunting Act and proposed deducting the excess from compensation for damage. One respondent was of the opinion that the law was all right in itself but the authorities cannot reach agreement on how to interpret it. Other views covered causes of fear of wolves, suggestions for new sources of funding to prevent

damage from wolves (EU agricultural funds) and the notion that man did not need to live on the wolf's terms.

## **B Comments at the public meetings**

### **Espoo 2.9.2004**

*"A wolf ate my neighbour's sheep in Kirkkonummi. I go hunting in Lapland and I'm against all the fuss over wolves. There are too many people living round here and too many people in the forest. The wolf would get used to the small of humans, and there would only be problems, like there are in Estonia. We had a lot of dogs disappear in Kirkkonummi when that wolf came here, but we don't know what happened to it. Wolves are not suitable here – if someone wants wolves they have to be responsible for their actions too."*

*"The wolf enriches wildlife, but the compensation business has to be looked into. The environmental association could have been involved in compensation payments and We need to keep an eye on trends in the population. The wolf is welcome within reason."*

*"Wolves here are wanderers. If this were somewhere they bred then work out how many gardens and yards would be on its territory: the wolf couldn't live a normal life here – it'd become a problem wolf right away. And I don't recommend sheepdogs that guard flocks for built-up areas – they defend their territory against wolves and anything else."*

*"There's no compensation scheme in a lot of countries, and in Italy and Spain, for example, there are many times more wolves and also a lot of sheep. Are they more tolerant or what is it exactly?"*

*"If the population is strong, the wolf issue obviously has to be managed through a system of hunting licences, with problem wolves the main target. The Game Management Associations have experts: the current system is really good.."*

*"Could there be an internet service providing information on wolves? It would be a pay service and the money collected could be spent on protection of wolves and compensation for damage. There needs to be cooperation and consensus on the wolf issue, and the most important thing is more information."*

### **5.3.4 The Game Management District of Lapland**

During the period 2003–2004, five to ten individual wolves were thought to have been present in Lapland. The focus of their occurrence was eastern Lapland, where wolves live and move mainly close to the Russian border. The wolves in Lapland frequently come from Russia (Game Management District of Lapland 2004, unpublished). The wolf population in

Lapland is controlled on account of reindeer herding. One wolf might easily kill dozens of reindeer: the loss of reindeer to wolves has reached 300-600 a year in the last few years. The wolf's protected status in Lapland differs from the rest of Finland, because in the reindeer husbandry area wolves come under Annex V of the Habitats Directive. This has made possible control of the populations in the area.

In Lapland there were replies from 14 stakeholder agencies. They were the Environmental Protection Association of Lapland, the Finnish Hunters' Association Lapland district, the Lapland Kennel Club, three Game Management Associations, the police district of Tornionjokilaakso, the State Provincial Office of Lapland, the municipality of Inari, the Association of Reindeer Herding Cooperatives, the Central Union of Agricultural Producers and Forest Owners of Lapland, the Union of Forest Owners of North Finland, Metsähallitus Eastern Lapland district and the Lapland 4H club. The discussions between the stakeholders were attended by 17 people representing 12 different agencies.

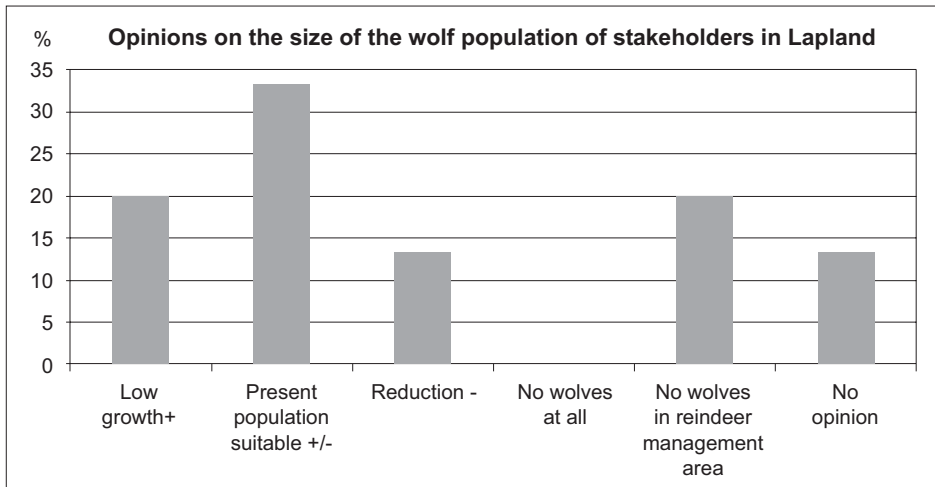
## **A Synopsis of the replies of stakeholders**

The wolf situation in Lapland was described as frail, with the population few in number, and some respondents said that there were a few wandering animals in the area. One respondent thought that the situation was tolerable, and another that the population was at a sufficient level. The situation in the area was described neutrally.

Conflicting aims in the areas were identified and linked mainly to reindeer husbandry. Many respondents were of the opinion that the reindeer herders would not tolerate a wolf population and attitudes confirm this. A few respondents thought the conservationist groups or friends of the wolf were opposed to this. Some thought there were no disputes and some also imagined that the conservationists would agree to wolves being eliminated on account of reindeer husbandry.

Predictably, consideration of reindeer husbandry was to be linked to ways to maintain interaction of the wolf and man. There was repeated mention of compensation for damage caused to reindeer. Control of the population and keeping it down were also seen as essential in many replies. Killing off wolves that entered yards or gardens, and more research and monitoring were also mentioned. One respondent proposed that the compensation procedure should be linked to wolf territories, following the eagle compensation model. There was also a proposal for allowing wolf territories inside wildlife and national parks.

An acceptable wolf population for Lapland attracted a range of views, from minimal growth of the population to wiping the population out completely. Around a third of respondents, however, thought that the current situation was fine (Figure 29). A quarter thought that there were no suitable territories for wolves in Lapland. Some thought there was one, one person thought the Urho Kekkonen National Park and the districts around Lemmenjoki were suitable, and two people came up with around 10 suitable territories.



**Figure 29.** Opinions regarding size of the wolf population among 14 stakeholders in Lapland.

Eight respondents thought a system of hunting licences was an appropriate way possibly to control the wolf population. Three of these wanted separately to see controls mainly focused on problem wolves. One respondent felt that natural culling and eliminations by the authorities were sufficient. One-off replies also focused on reintroductions and merely shooting problem wolves. Two respondents hoped for a hunting season, with unrestricted disposal of the wolf.

Problem wolves were defined as wolves which entered yards and gardens, were becoming tame and had lost their natural timidity towards humans, and wolves which were adept at preying on domestic animals. Two respondents were of the opinion that needless killing of reindeer was characteristic of problematic behaviour.

Regarding further research, there was a need for more information on how wolves acquired food and the way they preyed on reindeer. There was also a call for cooperation between the reindeer herders and the scientists. People were keen to see population monitoring become a trimmer and more efficient exercise, with new methods devised, more tagged wolves and improved information flow between the various actors. Communications were felt to be very important: communications on wolf movements were thought to be particularly important, and some people said it was vital for the reindeer grazing associations to have access to information. Only one respondent thought that too much information was not a good thing.

Ways suggested to promote the work of the authorities and cooperation included increased partnership, its coordination by the Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry, for example, and cooperation with local people. The priority move in changes to the law should be a system of compensation, the replies suggested. It needed to be generally more comprehensive. Flexibility in giving decisions on hunting licences and the local focus in decision-making were mentioned. In addition, having a hunting season from 1 September to 30 April was one proposal.

There were plenty of other points made, most of which were repeats of remarks made earlier. But a new proposal was to establish cooperation between Russia and Finland in the management of populations and acquiring EU funding for the purpose. The message also came for a handful of respondents that the nation had an important role in managing populations. There was also a call to abolish the custom of having reindeer herders issue a statement when damage had occurred.

## **B Comments at the public meetings**

### **Rovaniemi 18.8.2004**

*"The wolf is such a huge threat to reindeer herding that it is simply not appropriate here."*

*"Statistics on damage from predators do not cover the killings the reindeer grazing associations and reindeer owners have had to put up with. The sums for compensation only reflect the reindeer that have been found killed by predators. To prevent the damage they've switched to herding reindeer in the mountain, which puts up the costs. It also adds to costs to look for reindeer which have been killed by predators."*

*"The wolf population in Lapland is not ecologically sustainable, and although there is no agreement on this as yet, it doesn't stop us from talking about it."*

*"In Lapland people's relationship with nature has always been close and uncomplicated, and fear of predators here is not really the same thing as in other places."*

*"Sure more wolves would be acceptable in Lapland, but the compensation systems has to be made more flexible."*

*"The wolf would have some value as a tourist attraction here, but wolves would not appear to be acceptable here because of reindeer herding."*

## **5.4 Synopsis of the replies at national level**

There were 14 respondents at national level, four of which were conservation organisations: Finnish Association for Nature Conservation, the Finnish Nature League wolf team, Natur och Miljö, and the World Wide Fund for Nature. Hunters and kennel clubs were represented by the Finnish Fish and Game Association, the Finnish Hunters' association and the Finnish Kennel Club/Trial and Competition Committee. Game management was represented by the Finnish Hunters' Central Organisation, and agriculture and forestry by the Central Union of Agricultural Producers and Forest Owners (MTK) and its Swedish-speaking internal organisation Jord- och Skogsbruk. Other respondents included the Ministry of the Environment, the Ministry of the Interior, the Zoological Museum and Metsähallitus.

In their descriptions of the wolf situation in Finland respondents at national level fall into two groups with essentially different views. One decries the poor status of protection for the wolf population, the factors that threaten it and the problematic attitudes what people have towards the wolf (six respondents). The other feels the population as it is and the developments which have taken place are fine, but also mentions the problems the wolf population causes (eight respondents). The more extreme views range from the notion that the wolf is seriously threatened and that a favourable conservation status has not been achieved, at one end of the scale, to the view that the population is now at a sufficient level, the areas where it is dense are too large and the situation regarding for those who keep domestic animals is serious, at the other.

Conflicting aims were identified. For example, the city versus the countryside and the local people versus the conservation groups conflicts were cited. The suggested causes of the rows were ignorance, fear, a lack of cooperation and common objectives, a loathing of predators, the actions of extremists among conservationists, and the lack of any strict definition of favourable conservation status.

There were plenty of proposals for different sorts of action to maintain interaction between the wolf and man. The question was pondered more thoroughly than it was generally among the regional respondents and there was a wider range of solutions offered. More information was the one which stood out most, but other solutions included prevention of damage and an improved system of compensation, the elimination of the most problematic animals, greater focus on the principle of subsidiarity, and more posers of decisions at national level. One-off suggestions included investment in the supervision of hunting, harsher penalties, prompt action on the part of the authorities, and the human dimension (human-oriented management programme).

As to what respondents considered an acceptable wolf population, opinions differed from the objectives announced regionally. There were no views in favour of reducing the population. Although some respondents did say there were serious problems, especially in the areas of dense population in eastern Finland. Six respondents though the present population was too small. Proposals for increases in numbers ranged from tripling the population and an interim target of 300–500 animals to 25 pairs (i.e. some 250 wolves). Two respondents did not indicate any numbers. One thought that a favourable conservation status had been achieved in eastern Finland, but elsewhere in Finland they were not on target. Five respondents considered the current situation to be acceptable (or adequate) in terms of numbers, but many wanted to see the population spread more evenly than at present.

Respondents at national level were also asked whether it would be right for the population management aims to vary by region. Six respondents thought that this would be a good starting point, though on certain conditions which they made clear. Three respondents were opposed to the idea, and one would accept a special policy for the reindeer husbandry area. Others considered the matter provisionally without adopting a position.

People were also asked what the role in population management was at regional level. This was on account of the powerfully stated demands that had come from local areas. This proved

a difficult question to assess and replies were received with various conditions attached. Applying some interpretation to the replies, six respondents were opposed to the idea, some of whom based their view on a lack of confidence in current game management, with its heavy lead from the hunting fraternity. The others (eight) were in favour of the aim in principle but wanted to see everything coordinated nationally. Many suggested the setting up of cooperation and action groups as an additional tool in large carnivore policy at regional level.

When asked about ways to control the population, two essentially different views were expressed. Eight respondents thought that a system of licensed hunting and, in addition, the practice of shooting problem wolves, and, in some cases, eliminations by the authorities, were the appropriate options. Others thought that the population should be managed through different forms of elimination by the authorities. Nature would cull the population to some degree, and transfers of wolves was also proposed. One respondent suggested 'conservation hunting' as a way to manage the population, without explaining in more detail what that would entail exactly.

As regards the definition of a problem wolf, two respondents - echoing the views at regional level exactly - chiefly thought that the term could apply to an individual wolf which repeatedly entered gardens or yards, was fearless and concentrated on preying on domestic animals. One respondent was of the opinion that there were not really any such creatures: the hunting lobby and humans create such situations. The solution proposed was elimination, and some wanted decisions to be taken at national level. But there was also a need for more tolerance.

Among the proposals for developing research, it was regarded as important to continue and conduct more satellite monitoring. There was also support for demography, gene pool studies, defining favourable conservation status and developing methods to prevent damage. Proposals for ways to improve monitoring centred around the large carnivore community liaison officers. Some of the respondents thought that they should receive more training, and another view put forward was that people other than hunters should be recruited for the positions. One thought that the community liaison officer network should be done away with entirely and a new scheme developed. DNA analyses and cooperation with Russia were also proposed as ways to assist population monitoring.

There was a whole range of views on how to develop communications. While in the regions there had been a clear call for transparency, now the point was made that communications should be considered closely and that the information given should be selected carefully. There was also a need for a change of attitude. Other proposals included a wolf helpline, and frank information warning about movements of wolves.

The main solution offered to develop the work of the authorities and their cooperation was the need to increase partnership and transparency. Some of the respondents wanted a bigger role for the environmental administrative bodies and conservation agencies. The point was also made that hunting licence quotas should be in accordance with the recommendations given by the Game and Fisheries Institute. Suggestions for improvements to legislation included tougher penalties, more regulation at national level, a lower status of protection for the wolf, an improved system of compensation for damage, and the right to dispose of

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problem wolves at local level. Two respondents were of the view that current laws were fine in the main.

Other comments included plenty of suggestions and views which merely reinforced what had been said earlier. Other remarks included that notion that the wolf in the reindeer husbandry area was a taboo subject, cooperation with Sweden should be stepped up, there needed to be guidelines on the current system of hunting licences, prevention of damage would not succeed if it relied on voluntary work, and that the biggest problem was fear of the wolf handed down from generation to generation.

## **6 Discussion**

### **6.1 Summary of the main results**

#### **Fear and problems associated with the wolf**

The stakeholders and people who took part in this survey generally look on the wolf rather unfavourably, or, at least, the species is regarded as being quite problematic. There is a lot of fear surrounding the wolf and its actions. The fear is for domestic animals, especially dogs, though also the safety of children. The wolf debate was commonest where the wolf population is just strengthening, and especially where wolves have entered yards and gardens and close to areas of human settlement. In northern Finland fear of the wolf was not so strongly expressed as in the south.

It is the movements of wolves and their visits to yards and gardens which also cause people to ask about their legal rights. They want to know what the wolf's rights are and what those of people are, especially in their own backyard. Although the law gives people the right to protect their property, it is thought to be interpreted in different ways.

Not only are the presence of packs and wolves and their movements close to where people live felt to impact on the lives of local people in many different ways but people also think that they are not being treated equally compared to city dwellers. People believe that they cannot have a say regarding their own surroundings themselves and that the decisions are now being taken in places beyond their sphere of influence. A typical view that people have in areas where wolves exist is that national and international demands for protection and conservation take priority over their livelihoods (which involve keeping domestic animals) and their rural pastimes. For example, hunting is regarded as an important activity in sparsely populated areas, and the use of dogs, their training and entering them in trials are key ingredients in hunting today. The wolf population is felt to affect and in any areas even completely prevent the use of dogs.

Those who are concerned about the protection of the wolf, on the other hand, think that local people's worries about the wolf population are the result of ignorance, wolf phobia and hatred, and the stirring up of hysteria in different ways, very much due to the hunting lobby. The views of those in favour of protecting the wolf are based on notions of its rights based on its intrinsic value to live a life which is natural for its species, and that its task in nature is to act as a controller of other animal populations, such as deer. The conservation agencies take the view that the damage done is minimal and there are ways to make its prevention more effective.

#### **The wolf population attracts criticism**

The wolf provokes a lot of criticism regionally, which is not so much targeted at the wolf itself anymore, but at the various agencies which play a part in the management of the wolf populations. These complaints are strongest in the areas with an established wolf population,

where wolves are starting to become a part of the everyday existence of people in their immediate surroundings. The main butts of criticism are the Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry, the EU, and, with perhaps surprising vehemence, research, especially the Game and Fisheries Research Institute. Complaints about the latter are mainly to do with tagging, the monitoring of wolves and communications on it.

The law also came in for criticism. A very common view locally is that current legislation overprotects the wolf and does not address possible problems or deal with them. This is especially true of the damage compensation system, the elimination of problem wolves and the lack of flexibility in this area, hunting/shooting wolves and the system for making decisions itself.

The role shared by the European Commission and the Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry as policymakers regarding the wolf is also a crucially significant target of criticism. Both come in for a lot of criticism, but the prevailing concern is the sheer uncertainty as to whether the management of the wolf populations is a matter for the nation or is coordinated by the European Commission.

### **Regional confrontations: eastern Finland and the rest of the country**

Regional stakeholders and local people generally agree that the wolf population is now too big in many areas in eastern Finland (Kainuu, North Savo, North Karelia, South Savo, South Karelia) and there are calls to thin the population out either by hunting animals, by eliminating them in other ways or by moving them. A typical view locally is that the rest of Finland should also take responsibility for maintaining the wolf populations. Nor is it an exaggeration to say that the tolerance threshold has now been exceeded among a large number of people at local level in many areas of North Karelia, Kainuu, and South Karelia where wolves are concentrated. The emotional levels the wolf debate reaches reflect this: irritation, rancour, threats and frustration were very evident in areas with strong wolf populations.

However, it is in areas where the wolf population is only just becoming stronger that antagonism for the wolf would seem to be the strongest. The view put forward repeatedly and often, especially in the coastal areas of Ostrobothnia, in Satakunta and in Ostrobothnia itself, both in the written replies and in the debate was that people did not want to see a breeding wolf population in their area at all. Although in eastern Finland – where the population is strong – there were a lot of different complaints, the view there generally was that wolves had to be allowed, though not in the quantities there were at the moment. In Lapland too, tolerance seems to be minimal, owing to the existence of reindeer husbandry. Perhaps surprisingly, there was a feeling of tolerance of the wolf in Uusimaa, Southwestern Finland and South Häme, although many thought that their local area was not in fact suited to the wolf (the number of participants was far smaller in these areas than in the rest of the country).

## **The conservation agencies' and environmental authorities' own agenda**

A large number of stakeholders at both regional and national level were listened to in the study. The stakeholders fell into nine categories. A key observation made in the survey was that in general the various agencies were more or less agreed on many of the targets and solutions proposed for managing the wolf populations, except for the nature conservation groups, the environmental authorities and the nature and wildlife entrepreneurs (the latter were few in number amongst the data, however, and were concentrated in eastern Finland). To some extent there were differences within the different agencies in the main line of argument alluded to here, but they were one-off comments.

The conservationists and environmental authorities would like to see the present wolf population increased – especially those respondents at national level – and do not think that the current situation regarding wolves in eastern Finland is problematic or that the population is large in the same way the other respondents generally do. More information, awareness-raising and education, the need for more research and the prevention of damage were the main solutions in the management of the wolf populations, in their view. Neither do their proposals normally extend to killing wolves to control the population: all the other agencies generally regard that as vital.

A few details emerged which showed there was consensus both in the wolf debate and in the replies sent in by the stakeholder groups. People want to see the system of compensation for damage reformed: the excess should be scrapped and full compensation paid. Problem wolves are generally defined in the same way, and nearly all the respondents agree to their elimination in dealing with the problem, if not as a first move, then in principle. The conservation agencies and environment authorities would like it if eliminations could be carried out by the authorities. Other agencies generally propose hunting or eliminations by hunters as the solution to the problem.

An examination of which agencies make the most demands regarding the hunting of wolves and reducing the wolf population reveals that they tend to be the voluntary hunting organisations, kennel clubs and agricultural and forestry businesses.

The regional and national overview of the wolf issue was one aim of the study. There were a few observations to be made. At regional level nearly everyone believes that solutions for management of the population should be implemented at regional/local level, or at least local people and agencies should be able to have a significant influence on basic policies in respect of the wolf. In the regions there were only some one-off comments among some conservationists and environmental authorities which indicated a different opinion. The local Game Management District was quite commonly thought to be a suitable actor for taking decisions, except, again, for the conservation and environmental bodies. Nevertheless, this support varied from one Game Management District to another – some clearly inspired greater confidence.

Respondents at national level saw the regional/national role division differently. Nearly half thought that the main policies should be headed at national level, and there too should be where complete responsibility is taken, though regional actors would nevertheless be heard. There were also a few one-off replies stating that Finland had an international responsibility for the wolf populations - especially of Scandinavia – and that therefore the international requirements regarding protection take precedence. Such supranational aims for a policy on population management came from the conservation agencies.

## **6.2 Barriers to consensus on wolves and their background**

The mistrust that exists between various actors is quite a crucial factor in disputes over the wolf issue and, moreover, a barrier to consensus. Although the way people and the different actors relate to nature and what they hold to be natural values differ and are the reason for deep-seated attitudes and the different aims people have, people's differing experience of the wolf policy already implemented has switched its focus from that of an ideological debate to criticism of practical solutions, the wolf policy as implemented, and the roles of the various agencies in it.

### **Local people challenge the game authorities**

People living in areas where there are wolves do not trust the national authorities, because they say they know that the wolf policy may be completely controlled nationally. The Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry's policy is criticised from two points of view. Some think that the complaints and appeals made in Finland by the conservation agencies have resulted in special conditions being attached to the policy. Some, on the other hand, claim that it is all about lack of will or courage or simply increasing the wolf population and ignoring the opinions of local people.

People in areas where there are wolves and a considerable number of the agencies that have now been heard, however, are calling for less strict policies on hunting the wolf population and justify that in many different ways. Almost all the main agencies and local people - conservationists and environmental bodies apart – believe that the wolf population is now far too dense in large areas of eastern Finland. Its socio-economic impact, in particular, is too great now and there is a call to reduce the population. Tolerance of the wolf is low even in areas where they occur only as visitors travelling alone.

If we want to localise the extreme attitudes and antagonism towards the wolf it is likely to be among reindeer herders and those who actively hunt with hounds. The demands made by these either to reduce or prevent the growth of the population were unambiguous. It would also seem that there was barely any desire to reach consensus. For the reindeer herders a system of compensation might raise tolerance levels, but among the hunters the situation is graver on account of the close emotional ties they have with their dogs. At the moment no reliable or viable solution is recognised with respect to how to protect hunting hounds from

wolves. The use of dogs in hunting has become a problem, and in many areas the feeling is now that it is virtually impossible. Compensation paid on dogs killed by wolves does not cover the loss of the dog to the owner as a dog is for many a member of the family and people think that no amount of money can replace it.

## **Conservation agencies challenge the game authorities**

Many of the main conservation agencies say openly that they do not trust the game authorities and especially those at regional level. One key reason for this is that regional game management is under the control of hunters. The conservation agencies cling closely to the message of the current Habitats Directive and the protection status it gives to wolves. They would prefer to see its powers increase rather than become more relaxed. The conservationists also believe that the current laws have been interpreted too loosely in recent years. Many would like to see solutions to management of the wolf population come immediately within the jurisdiction of the environmental administration, or at least its scope of influence increase.

Although the conservationists' role at one end of the wolf debate is generally a clear one, there are nonetheless several of them and there exist some differences in approach between them. For example, there are differing views on some of the most challenging questions, such as attitudes to wolf hunting and targets for population growth. Some believe the attitudes and aims of local people genuinely as conditions they see as attached to a possible agreement. This group seeks a conciliatory approach and is also obviously prepared to make compromises. The WWF in particular seems to be adopting this line. With some conservation agencies, however, the ideological view of conservation is so strong that it may be hard for them to yield, for example regarding their principles connected with hunting.

When we take a look at the willingness to reach consensus among the agencies which strongly promote protection and conservation and the whole issue of reaching agreement on the wolf situation, an even bigger question mark hangs over the attitudes of the national environmental authorities. Its policies are very much in line with those of the idealistic conservation agencies and many of their aims for the management of the wolf population - especially ways to control it - appear to represent extreme views, particularly in comparison to regional aims. This obviously does not make it any easier to implement a policy on wolves which is based on a will to reach agreement. The Ministry of the Environment has an official role: it decides, for example, on the classification of threat for different species nationally, and it also has an important part to play as an expert when dealing with the European Commission. On the other hand, it tends to emphasise the importance of establishing cooperation and achieving common objectives in any solution to the wolf issue, which suggests that it would like to be involved in laying down practical policies. Fundamental to this, therefore, is finding a model and scope for cooperation between what are the two key authorities involved, the Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry and the Ministry of the Environment.

## Law interpreted in different ways

The main actors have differing views on how to interpret current legislation. The police in particular raise this matter. They think the current laws are fine in general but they believe that differences of opinion in its interpretation are the main problem.

Although the wolf is a strictly protected species in the EU Habitats Directive and in its national transposition, they clash in application when it comes to the problem, for example, of how to define favourable conservation status. Before a single decision on whether to grant a hunting licence for a wolf can be taken, it has to be resolved whether or not eliminating the animal would threaten its favourable conservation status. And it needs to be pondered whether any other satisfactory solution exists. Another issue which lacks definition and is open to interpretation is social sustainability and how to gauge its significance in the elimination of individual wolves or in controlling populations.

The conservation agencies and the environmental administration are of the opinion that the Finnish wolf population is not at a favourable conservation status and they would like to see the population increased. The conservationists would also like to see the population spread to the rest of Finland. The same people also think there are a lot of other ways which should be tried to control problems before the hunting option is taken up. They do not mention social sustainability but put the stress on ecological sustainability and the biological requirements of the wolf. Other agencies generally think the current state of the population is now acceptable and do not see favourable conservation status as a barrier to control of the population. They also lay the emphasis on socio-economic issues – in practice social sustainability – as a criterion in controlling the population.

The right of the police authorities to grant hunting licences for the wolf in exceptional circumstances and the application of this in practice also divides respondents. Some conservation agencies are of the opinion that they have got round the current legislation. Many locally take the view that this right has been exercised too cautiously and applied haphazardly in different parts of the country.

## Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry in the crossfire

Amid the conflicting aims of the conservation agencies and local people the Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry has pursued a policy which none of the agencies has actually been satisfied with in the last few years – not local people, not the stakeholders or the European Commission.

Many consider the Commission to be a key actor behind the disputes over the policy on large carnivores, although its role for a large number of people is disorganised. This study does not delve more deeply into the work of the Commission but, because of the criticism evident in the data, its role cannot be ignored either. Although the Commission is thought to steer domestic policy on large carnivores through its monitoring procedures, the public

are unaware of how that happens and what its actual role is. This causes problems for the credibility of the entire administration system.

People have obtained information directly from the Commission (via their MPs) that wolf policy is a matter for the nation. But the Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry claims that the Habitats Directive and its transposition nationally are preventing it from taking the decisions which local people and the various agencies are calling for. Many actors at local level would like the work of the national authorities judged by the European Court of Justice. The Ministry, however, has been keen to avoid the Court and has adapted its policies according to the Habitats Directive.

The Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry has been caught in the crossfire of differing demands, claims and requirements (Figure 30). Accordingly, the work of the Ministry in particular needs thinking about. Has it failed in its task or is it dealing with something which is impossible? The biggest pressure and the toughest expectations come to it from the regions. The Ministry believes that the current law and the Commission's monitoring procedure, in particular, prevent the kind of decisions which are expected and called for at regional level. As far as is known, the monitoring procedure is a reaction to groans at national level which have not yet come to the attention of the public.

Against the background of the situation overall, it would appear that the Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry has not had any practical opportunity to act in a way that satisfies all parties but has interpreted the Habitats Directive in a way that that has led to complaints from all quarters.

Moreover, in pondering the work of the European Commission and the national authorities and the aims of the various interest groups, it also seems that the adoption of EU internal legislation as part of Finnish law and the fact that it is subject to interpretation have in themselves been creating and exacerbating the conflict in the wolf debate. Furthermore, the habit that EU environmental policy has of giving strong protection status to individual species has been alien to the Finnish way of thinking. This has resulted in a situation where the conservation groups have identified an effective way to promote their objectives while others feel that common sense no longer applies.

The situation has come to a head in that the European Commission has brought a legal action against Finland on the wolf policy it has implemented. The policies pursued by the authorities are being appraised legally.



**Figure 30.** *Conflicting wishes and aims in respect of the game authorities.*

### The paradoxes of tagging

A significant lack of trust also became evident between the Game and Fisheries Research Institute regarding studies of large carnivores and local people, particularly in Kainuu, Ylä-Savo and Ylä-Karelia. There was bitter criticism at times of research into carnivores/predators, and that was also sometimes true of elsewhere in the country.

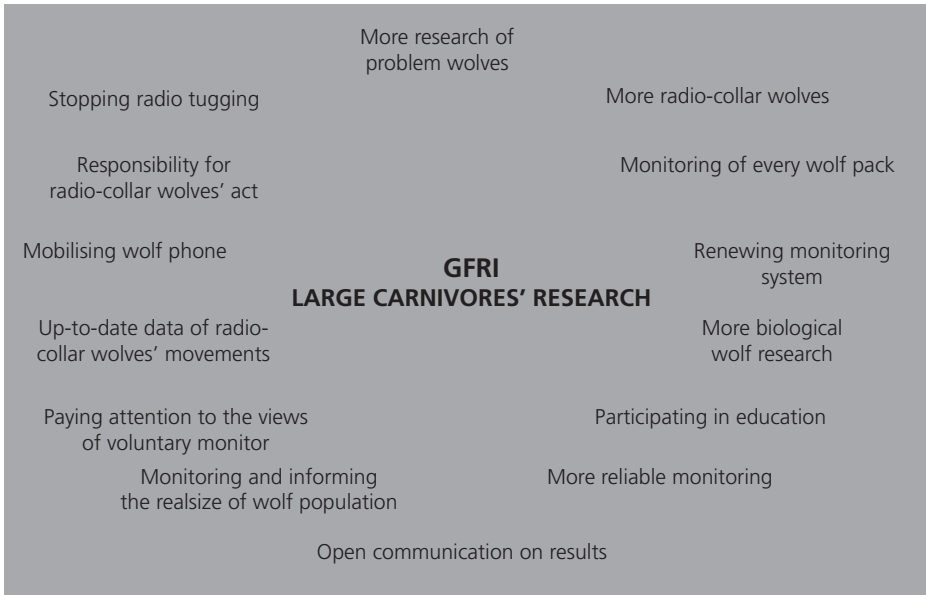
This is all paradoxical because many agencies want to see more tagging and monitoring of wolves and yet the practice has in many ways aggravated the wolf controversy. But this kind of basic research helps to gain information on wolf movements, behaviour and access to food, which people and the different agencies generally seem to want.

In the last few years the complaints have been due to the rapid strengthening of the wolf population, which many associate with the tagging of wolves. It is also commonly believed that wolves have been transported into new areas. Information that has reached public attention on damage caused by tagged wolves is felt to make the Game and Fisheries Institute responsible for the actions of wolves. When a tagged wolf preys on a dog in a garden or yard, for example, the feelings of loathing towards the wolf seem to be projected on research, which is regarded as somehow accountable for the animal's behaviour. Many take the view that a tagged wolf is no longer wild and free but is under the control of humans. Similarly, many suspect that a wolf thus controlled alters its behaviour towards man. They think it becomes 'dog-like'.

Furthermore, giving wolves names angers people, especially those in sparsely populated areas. Many in such regions feel that a lot of money is spent monitoring wolves with names on such things as helicopters, motorsleighs, long working hours, etc. People think that the wolf is

considered to be of greater worth than local people living in remote areas. They also seem to think that wolves which are the subjects of study cannot be interfered with: tagging and monitoring are assumed to be part of a move to protect the population (Figure 31).

Naming them has also given tagged wolves a human character, and the media has put a face to them. The death of wolves like these has caused sentimental reactions and sadness for the wolf that 'everyone knows'. This in turn exacerbates the situation and heightens controversy. There are key personal issues associated with tagged wolves and reactions to research.



**Figure 31.** *Conflicting wishes and aims in respect of research into wolves by the Game and Fisheries Research Institute.*

### 6.3 A socio-economically sustainable wolf policy

The wolf issue is a typical environmental conflict in which the aims of the various interest groups differ. The differing views are partly personal and are to do with the way people relate to nature and these are based on values (e.g. Pietarinen 1987). The wolf question differs, however, from many other issues in the sense that it lacks a powerful force trying to promote its own economic interests, which is normally the case with many conflicts surrounding industry, and even forestry.

In the wolf debate the local population sees nature conservation as a threat and the set of values behind it as alien and out of control (Nieminen 2003). The point of any survey on environmental conflicts is to try and analyse the various points of view and identify possible solutions with reference to them (e.g. Bisi & Kurki 2003, Kojo & Hokkanen 2004, Kyllönen & Raitio 2004, Peltonen 2004, Nygren 2004, Nie 2001, 2003). Ways to resolve disputes in forestry, for example, were thought to be administrative transparency, action which inspired confidence, and a separate strategy for managing conflict (Nygren 2004). In the conflicts

between timber production and reindeer husbandry described by Kyllönen & Raitio (2004), unambiguous decisions and clear identification of those responsible were thought to be an important ingredient in conflict management. Nor should the administration ignore conflicting demands, even if they only appear to be a local problem: assessment of the situation as a 'zero-sum game' will not produce solutions. It was also felt important that the role assumed by one party in conflict management should match that party's actual role.

The conflicting aims over the wild reindeer sparked off a debate mainly towards the end of the 1990s and recalled the conflict surrounding the wolf as regards its basic features. At the time local views clashed over control of the population and protection interests were targeted at the wild reindeer. Bisi & Kurki (2003) stated five key practical-level observations which game management should take account of. They related to the workability of the system of compensation for damage, the dissemination of accurate information, the degree to which the authorities react to situations, and the public hearings procedure. Furthermore, hunting wild reindeer seemed to be a decisive factor from the local point of view in raising tolerance levels. In addition, dialogue between game management and those investigating the subject from the conservation/biological angle was found to be important.

The conflict in the aims of management of the wolf population, however, is far more serious and multidimensional than that over the wild reindeer. It affects a far wider range of people, and fear of the species makes the task of conflict management difficult. All the agencies are agreed that a national programme is needed to manage the wolf population, one which takes account of the wolf's biological needs and the socio-economic needs of man. This study suggests, however, that extreme aims for the wolf are so controversial in terms of their ideology and the practical issues which management and protection of the population are based on, that a population management programme that satisfied all the interest groups would be an impossible feat. The only way forward is to look for compromises. A separate issue is whether current legislation would allow for compromise. The case to be heard in the European Court of Justice and its consequences will also be in full view in the near future.

According to Nie (2002), seeking compromise is a scenario typical of the wolf issue. The author states that the solution must be found by means of a very vocal and often muddled democratic process involving many parties, though in which there is both the opportunity to have a say/influence and also accountability. It is important that the different interests get heard, but cooperation should be established and be allowed to proceed without endangering other areas of environmental policy. The wolf debate needs a well organised framework to operate in, says Nie.

Even if there is no consensus, it will remain the task of the game authorities, as it has up till now, to implement a wolf policy, with the constraints imposed by current law, which not all the interest groups will be completely happy with. Many of the main demands and requirements are creating pressures to amend the law, and the changes might well increase tolerance of the wolf but would also incur costs.

The national authorities responsible for managing the wolf population will also have to assess what weight to give the ideological and ethical objectives relating to conservation. How people's fears – justified or otherwise - should be taken into consideration in population

management cannot be ignored. Neither can the demands of people with businesses and livelihoods to protect or the hunting lobby, etc. At the same time the general principles of democracy have to be weighed in the wolf debate. Do all citizens have an equal right to decide on the key principles underlying management of the wolf population regardless of where they live? Or do those who live in the countryside who interact with wolves have more of a right to decide what happens in their own environment than do those living elsewhere?

This in fact once again clashes with the issue of social sustainability and the way it operates. Social sustainability has come to be understood partly as sustainable development, though that has rarely been tested in real situations. Democracy basically results in the majority deciding and not those most affected. The issues surrounding the wolf, furthermore, are hardly commensurable. It will ultimately be a matter of a community environmental policy and defining the rights it gives.

Existing legislation aside, the current climate of opinion suggests that democratic decisions on the wolf that are based on national opinion would probably lead to stricter control of the wolf populations than is the case currently and restrictions on its growth. That would be the case if the general opinion people had were listened to and, in particular, if the opinion of local people in rural areas were heard.

On the basis of this study, a few principles and practical proposals can be mentioned which would appear to be almost unanimous objectives and expectations, and would assist in the management of the wolf populations:

- a review of the system of compensation for damage caused by wolves
- the development of ways to prevent damage, with special emphasis on finding a solution for the protection of hunting dogs and ensuring there are resources to prevent damage
- preserving the special status of reindeer husbandry in the management of the wolf population
- maintenance of dialogue between the various interest groups and more cooperation between the agencies both regionally and nationally when carrying out the management of the population
- cohesive policy on the treatment of wolves which repeatedly enter yards or gardens, which have become tame and which are adept at preying on domestic animals, and guaranteeing the potential for their elimination
- more reliable, research-based information and its active distribution
- a definition for Finland of favourable conservation status of the wolf and its main principles
- the establishment of a national management programme for the wolf and its approval to be as broadly based as possible.

In addition, there are some important principles worth mentioning which are important for maintaining and managing wolf populations from the socio-economic viewpoint but on which there is not unanimous agreement between all the interest groups or regionally/locally:

- the general notion that Finland is responsible for nurturing a wolf population with reference to a favourable conservation status in its territory
- preserving the right to hunt the wolf population and monitoring its impact
- achieving more even distribution of the wolf population
- more chances for regional administrative bodies to influence decisions
- adequate allocation of resources to research into wolves, monitoring the movements of tagged wolves, and access to up-to-date information on them
- the involvement of the conservation agencies and the environmental authorities in the management of the wolf population
- emphasis on social sustainability in wolf policy (listening to local people, flexibility on the part of the European commission, etc.)

## 6.4 Epilogue

The researcher's role in examining the social issues connected with the management of the wolf population is a challenging one. Not only does the wolf divide people to an extraordinary degree, but people judge where the researcher him/herself stands amid the conflicts surrounding the wolf. When the data was being gathered the motives of the writers of this report and their own attitudes to wolves were repeatedly challenged. Sometimes we were suspected of conducting the survey from the point of view of the wolf conservationists, but we were just as likely to be criticised for preparing for the management of the wolf population on the hunting lobby's terms. Direct communications by email and phone after the public meetings were over were at times perplexingly frank and outspoken.

They also inevitably led to consideration of our own role and attitude to wolves whilst the survey was in progress. As the study data was mainly qualitative in nature and the research instrument employed in the interpretation of the data is ultimately our own assessment, it will probably be an honest gesture to try also to shed light on those values underlying our own examination of the wolf issue.

We have both received an education in biology, have families with children, and own a gun dog – so a sort of domesticated wolf is one of our family. The many features which remain in the dog left over from the wolf we are quite familiar with. The wolf is a beast of prey which is part of our countryside and wildlife, whose development has made it adapt and survive. We cannot help but admire the wolf and the graceful way it moves, its powers of endurance

and its strength. There are also reasons why it has been persecuted. The interests of man and wolf have conflicted throughout history and will continue to in the future.

We take the view that the wolf has an intrinsic right to exist in our countryside. But the wolf's value as a species is not greater than other species that might be compared to it. Neither is the wolf, according to scientists familiar with the species, an umbrella species or indicator species, on account of which it would have a special value in nature (see Mech & Boitani 2003).

As the wolf is now returning to the Finnish countryside its habitat has changed. Owing to our deer populations it has unprecedented resources of food available to it. It is probably unrealistic, however, to expect the wolf to be able rapidly to redeem the place it had in nature hundreds of years ago. We have moved and settled in its territories, and we could not - at least not without causing a crisis - adjust to it. We have had to control the elk population and just as surely we will have to control the wolf population.

What is an acceptable wolf population? It needs to be so sufficient that we have guarantees that the species will be preserved in nature. We think the wolf is entitled to that. The current wolf numbers, forming as they do part of a huge Russian wolf population, are probably enough to guarantee that the wolf will survive in the immediate future. The wolf may occupy new territories as long as we can adapt to it and the scope for interaction grows, but increasing the populations as an end in itself is not wise or justified, given the current situation. The wolf is the wrong species to make an environmental bone of contention out of. It is a risk to the environmental organisations' image in its promotion of important issues, but above all it is the wolf which suffers on account of the rows and disputes. The wolf is a species which should be able to be managed one way or the other by consensus. Many environmental crises have resulted in arousing public attention and an improvement in the state of the environment as a consequence. This cannot be expected when it comes to the wolf conflict. The wolf is too much of a problem for man. Sakari Mykrä and Mari Pohja-Mykrä aptly describe the wolf's lot as 'too much and too many':

*"All in all people's image of the wolf is linked startlingly often to the words 'too much/many'. Its distinctive characteristics, habits and natural inclinations have affected and still affect us too powerfully to adopt a neutral position. The wolf is too clever at preying on other animals, is too cunning an opponent, too good a survivor, too distant and reserved, too weird... Yet in the companionship they feel with dogs, people also feel close to the wolf. That feeling of closeness, however, is contradictory too. The wolf is much too wild for that."*

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## Appendix 1. The questionnaire in the preparing of wolf management plan

### THE QUESTIONNAIRE TO INTEREST GROUPS IN THE PREPARING OF WOLF MANAGEMENT PLAN

#### Background information of respondent

Organisation you are representing

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Names of respondents

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Contact information (address, phone, e-mail)

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*If a question is too difficult, you can leave it unanswered. The aim is not to test your knowledge, but to find out your aspects concerning those issues you prefer important and which are essential from your point of view.*

1. How would you describe wolf situation in your home council/game management district?

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2. What are the most important a) positive characteristic and b) negative characteristic aspects concerning wolf population? Preferably sign at least three both of them. Define significance of issue mention by using weight values 1-5, with scale 1) hardly significant, 2) little significant, 3) significant, 4) quite significant, 5) very significant.

a) positive aspect weigh value (1-5)

1.		
2.		
3.		

a) negative aspect weigh value (1-5)

1.		
2.		
3.		

If you find out more positive or negative characteristics, you can define them below or make other comments of issue.

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3. Do there occur contradictory objectives concerning the wolf in region and what are reasons for these?

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4. Which are the best methods to maintain or improve co-existence between human and the wolf?

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5. What would be the adequate amount of wolf pairs or wolf packs in your council or game management district? (if this question is too difficult to answer you can give your perception of the abundance of wolves, is it too small, adequate, or too big.)

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6. How many adequate wolf territories do exist in your council in your point of view? (The size of an approximate wolf territory is about 100 000 hectares in Finland, when answering you can take into account human livelihood and habitation in the region.)

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7. If the size of wolf population should be regulated, what would be the best method/methods to use?

- a) only through natural culling
- b) by means of hunting licence system
- c) only by eliminating "problem wolves"
- d) only by the authorities, which should eliminate animals
- e) through reintroduction
- f) other, what?


8. What kind of behaviour of wolf you define as problem causing? What kind of action it would demand?

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9. What kinds of essential needs in developing management practices you will see concerning the wolf,

a) in research

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b) in monitoring

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c) in giving information

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d) in authorities' co-operation

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e) in relevant legislation

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10. Some other important aspects or statements concerning the wolf, which did not rise up in previous questions? (for example the background of public debate etc.).

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The wolf debate in Finland is the research of co-existence between human and the wolf. By using regional and national aspects the research consists of the picture of relationships between human and the wolf in the beginning of 2100<sup>th</sup> in Finland, and what kinds of wolf policy should be practised.

In the data there are highlighted those people who are living in interaction with wolves. By using their aspects, so called wolf debate, the aim was to find out what kind of point of views people have, how they argue their aspects, and which kind practical issues they deal with. These debates about everyday local life were heard about in 2000 meetings around Finland. Additionally the research consists of aspects of about one thousand regional or national interest groups' and associations' representatives.

The research was a part of the process to prepare management plan for wolf population in Finland. The research was made by initiative and financing of the Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry.



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