LIFE Projects for Human-Wildlife cohabitation in the EU

Results and success of the MEDWolf program and introductive steps of LIFE EuroLargeCarnivores

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MEDwolf Project: Portugal and Italy

- First example of transboundary cooperation at an international and national level, among representatives of the political-agricultural-environmental-social and educational fields.

- Main objectives: to reduce conflicts between human activities and carnivores' needs and to promote a stable presence of wolves into rural environments.

Case-study description

Years 2012-2017

Founding estimation 3,315,272 € by European Commission

Key problems:

- Wolf population almost absent for decades- species put under protection in 1992 (Law February 11th 1992, n.157, art.2)
- Last 3 decades: critical increase of wolf – damages to livestock and dogs, attempted attacks, fear and unsafety in rural towns

Key actions:

- Mediation of interests among stakeholders
- Analysis and correlation of past damages
- Provision of damage prevention measures (according to socio-economic level)
- Establishment of groups for mutual support

Results overview

- Detailed evaluation of wolf presence and behaviours
- Establishment of communication network among stakeholders
- From 60% to 100% reduction of attacks on livestock due to guarding dogs
- Almost zero attacks on cattle kept inside the electrical fences
- Creation of specific plans for poison detection (anti-poison dogs)
- Institution of anti-poaching squads
- Awareness-raising campaigns (addressed to farmers, institutions, and public)
- Organization of interchange trips and ecotourism trips for young people

Examples of livestock protection measures

Electrical fences

- Affordable and of simple use
- Adaptable to different kinds of terrain
- Public demonstration and explanation of how to use it

Guarding dogs (LGDs)

- Renewed attention as a natural/efficient method of protection
- Part of traditional husbandry system
- Social and psychological motivations

(No involvement of lethal methods)

Examples of cooperation

Survey studies

- Creation of genetic database for mapping the wolves: cooperation among universities, farmers and experts
- Surveys about damages throughout questionnaires, meetings and interviews with locals

Training

- Guards training: theoretical part (about detection of marks connected to some species and poaching activities) + practical exercise (on the use of detection dogs)
- Staff training: for farmers (behavioural rules in case of emergency) and for veterinarians (first intervention, identification of species responsible)

LIFE EuroLargeCarnivores Project

Years 2017- 2022

Founding 6,058,902 € (EU+partners)

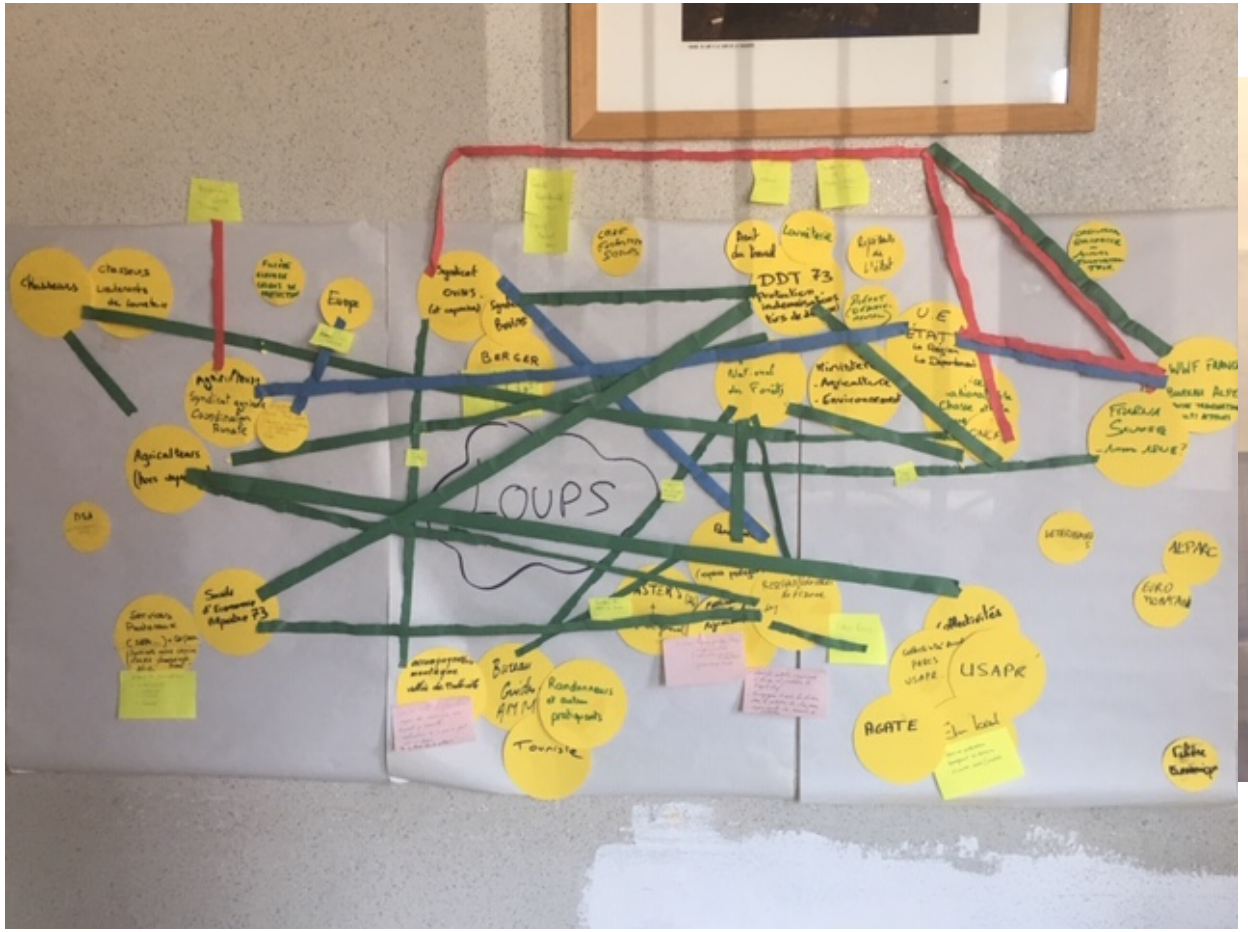
16 countries

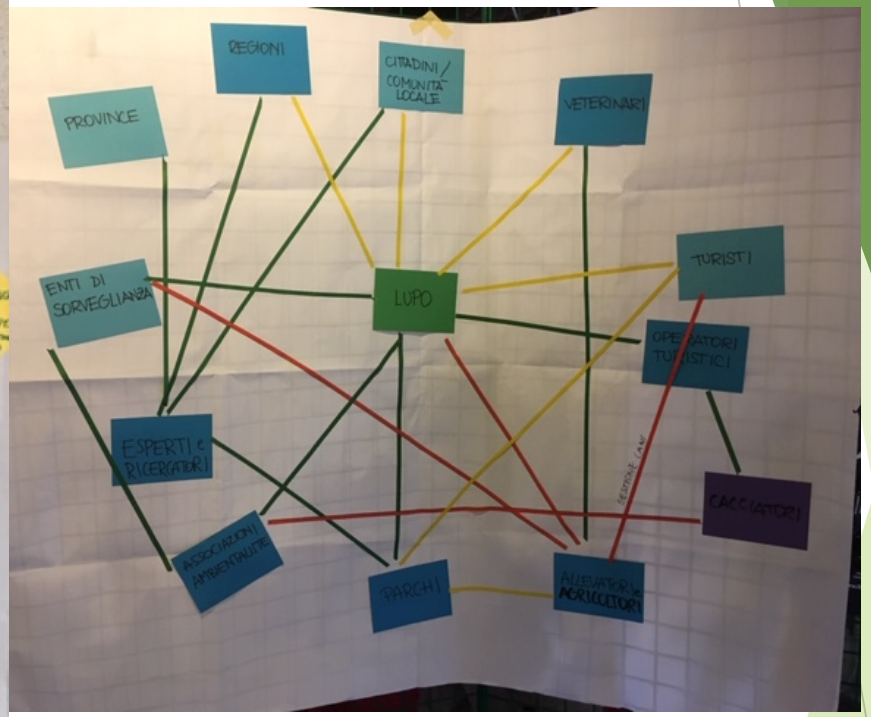
- Focus on 4 species: wolf, bear, lynx and wolverine
- Transboundary approach + national plan analysis
- Shared information and exchange of methodologies

- Expected results: comprehensive EU-wide knowledge + fostering of real first-hands actions
- Focus on communication and availability of information
- Realization of long-term and cross-border plans
- Contribution to research

It is not a conservation program, it is a cooperation program aimed to improve human-wildlife coexistence

Mapping the Stakeholders





Farmers and agriculturists- hunters- veterinarians- governmental bodies- agriculture institutions- evironmental planners- env. NGOs -anti animals associations- biologists, ecologists and experts- forest guards- tourism centers and museums- media…

Critical stakeholders involved

Hunters

- Hunting regulations and behaviours (according to each country's laws)
- Stop illegal hunting, poaching not advisable
- Avoid demonization of the wolf

Veterinarians

- Damages assessment after attacks on cattle
- Clean job, not personal involvement
- Explanation of critical points: ex. avoid feeding and mixed-breeding, limit wolf-dog interaction

The importance of information and communication networks

- It improves the decision making process and the trust among stakeholders
- It avoids false news and attempts of deceit and demonization of the animal
- It spreads simple yet conclusive rules of behaviours for the general public
- It raises awareness and gives educational incentives

A few innovation in the field

Anti-wolf collars

- Both for guarding dogs and sensitive cattle units

Anti-bears garbage bins and honey hives

- Simple technologies for avoiding damages

Thank you!

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