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Costs of European Wolf and Human Coexistence

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Mech, L. David, "Costs of European Wolf and Human Coexistence" (2016). *USGS Northern Prairie Wildlife Research Center*. 302.
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Response to Chapron, et al., "Recovery of large carnivores in Europe's modern human-dominated landscapes," *Science* 19 Dec 2014: Vol. 346, Issue 6216, pp. 1517-1519.
DOI: 10.1126/science.1257553

Costs of European Wolf and Human Coexistence

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(2 March 2016)

Costs of European Wolf and Human Coexistence

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In "Recovery of large carnivores in Europe's modern human-dominated landscapes" (19 December 2014, p. 1517), G. Chapron and 75 other authors documented that large carnivores (LC), including gray wolves (*Canis lupus*) can "share the same landscape," with humans. The authors distinguish between North America's separation model of LC conservation and the European coexistence model and suggest that the latter is applicable to "other areas of the world." The authors mention LC-caused social conflict, but the article implies a level of compatibility between humans and wolves that is debatable. Wolves have only begun to recolonize most of western Europe and are rapidly proliferating, so the full extent of conflicts lies ahead. Conflict response will vary by culture and wolf distribution and density, but even now, wolf damages total 8 million euros annually (1) fostering such animosity that French shepherds kidnapped two government authorities, demanding that more wolves be killed (2). Sweden and Finland are at legal odds with the European Union over controlling wolves (3), and in Norway thousands of people are seeking to kill wolves (4). Persecution and poaching of wolves is common in each country (1).

Yes; wolves and Europeans do coexist, and, so far, the environmental values of the urban majority have predominated

(except for widespread poaching). However, it is important for other areas considering coexistence rather than separation to understand that coexistence will only be possible at the cost of considerable conflict and civil unrest, urban-rural polarization, and anthropogenic wolf mortality (legal, illegal, and accidental) (5). Because all cultures will not necessarily accept such costs, regions considering the European coexistence model of wolf conservation must be accurately informed about them.

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