

Suomen Suurpetohdistys ry

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sami.vaisanen@kuhmo.netBy Mr. Magnus Hagelstam 29th March, 2009magnus@onduline.fi +358-40-173 7833**CRITIQUE OF THE NINA REPORT "THE FEAR OF WOLVES"****The authors**

Suomen Suurpetoyhdistys r.y., The Large Predator Society of Finland, is an NGO which works for large predator policies which respect humans and their fundamental rights and informs about large predator issues.

The society is situated in Kuhmo in eastern Finland, a municipality of 5.500 km² with 10.000 inhabitants, 75% of which live in the town of Kuhmo and 25% in small villages. There have been wolves in Kuhmo since times immemorial. The range of some packs extends into Russia, from where wolf immigration is more or less constant. Individuals and packs which approach human habitation or attack dogs or cattle are traditionally eliminated, but some stay in the forest and nobody sees any reason to hunt those. Unfortunately, many are habituated on arrival, obviously because there are hardly any moose left across the border in Russian Carelia and moose is practically the only natural prey on our latitudes. Wolves coming from there have long since been reduced to living mainly on garbage, dogs, cats and cattle.

The Kuhmo hunters are highly organized and conservation conscious. They have, for instance, worked for decades to save the endemic and endangered wild forest reindeer. Today, the EU-imposed strict protection of the wolf is ruining this conservation work. The local wolf population is skyrocketing and the reindeer population is plummeting. In 2003/04 there were 25 wolves in our area, in 2004/05, 41 wolves and in 2005/06, 77 wolves.

Predator management in Kuhmo is irresponsible. Conservationist tourism entrepreneurs feed bears with pig carcasses and up to 30 bears at a time frequent feeding sites where conservationist tourists film them, resulting in their habituation. Wolves eat there too, and get habituated as well. Some walk the streets of our villages without the slightest fear and one is occasionally found sitting on the porch of a family house - the owner usually ushers it off with a broomstick. It is common knowledge that this situation inevitably will lead to wolf attacks on humans, and that such predator mismanagement would be unthinkable in Canada and Alaska. Across the border in Russia, wolf hunting is free and people do what they can to keep the wolves at bay.

Our national authorities are bound by EU rules, under which both wolves and bears enjoy strict protection and they systematically turn down applications to kill habituated wolves and packs.

There is general local acceptance of a limited number of wolves which stay shy and live in the forest, the way they always have. The current strict protection regime of the wolf and the idea that they should colonize inhabited areas is, however, abhorred.

We have studied the NINA report

The fear of wolves: A review of wolf attacks on humans

We find the NINA report to be biased, inconsistent or unrealistic on numerous points which we detail below.

We find that the NINA report arrives at the wrong conclusions regarding the danger of wolves to humans because of its selective and biased interpretation of the available information.

We find it irresponsible to treat a matter of public safety in such a cavalierly manner.

However, we agree in principle with the conclusions, but note that they are useless:

risk situations. However, based on these results we have made a number of management recommendations that should help to reduce both the actual risks and the level of fear concerning wolf attacks. (1) **Keep wolves wild.** Any wolves that appear to lose their fear for humans or act in an aggressive manner should be removed from the population. Carefully regulated hunting may be useful in maintaining shyness. (2) **Prey.** The prey base available for wolves in Scandinavia today can be described as very good. It will be important for game managers to ensure it remains this way even when they have to include wolf predation into management plans. (3) **Reaction planning.** Wildlife management agencies should establish reaction plans as to how to respond to wolves that act in an aggressive manner or lose their shyness. These plans should be co-ordinated with those for brown bears. (4) **Rabies.** Scandinavia is presently rabies free and the risks of it occurring appear to be very low. However, there should be clear plans as to how to react should it enter Norway.

1. Maintaining the shyness of wolves in populated means killing off practically all of them, because wolves have a strong tendency to predate on dogs and livestock. If they survive it, they get more and more habituated and become dangerous to humans. Their predation on domestic animals breaches the fundamental right to property and to respect for the private life and the home. It is a matter of course that the authorities intervene when a man or his dog kills somebody's sheep on pasture or his dog in the front yard. At present, wolves are practically immune from persecution for such acts.

The above piece of advice is in conflict with the following statement:

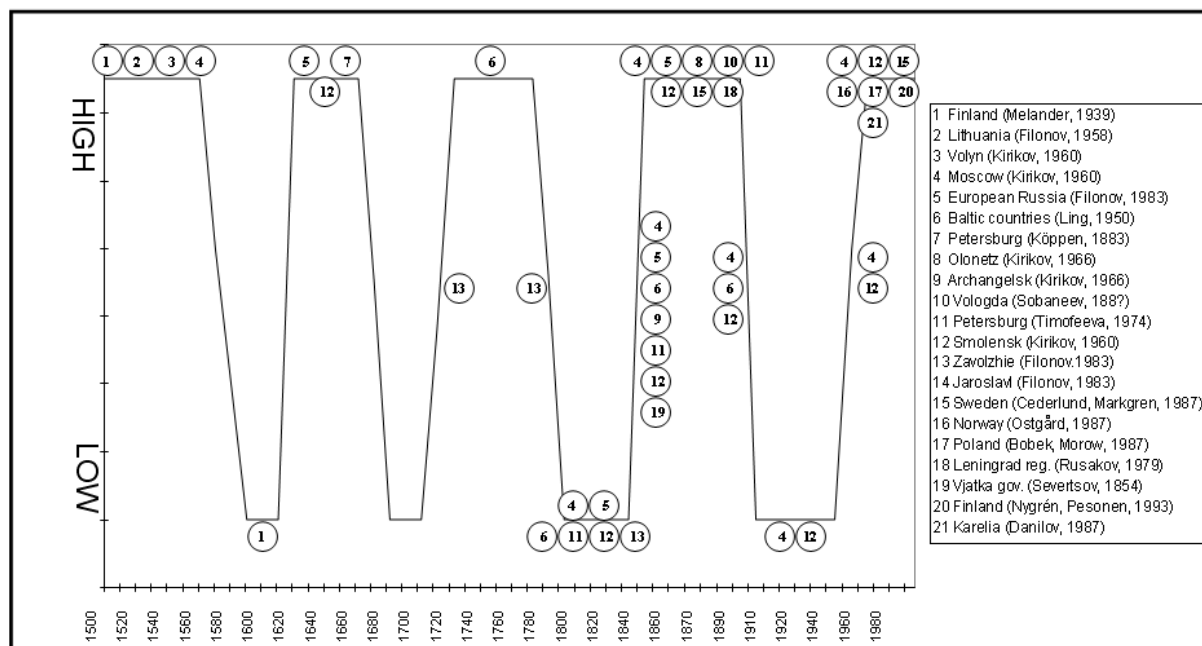
Summary

Because of the large scales at which large carnivores live, their conservation cannot occur only within protected areas. They must therefore be conserved within multi-use landscapes where conflicts with humans occur. Conflicts are diverse and include

2. The prey base cannot be maintained by regulating human hunting. Wolves multiply until they have depleted the game populations. In Finland and Sweden, 120.000 moose used to be harvested annually and in the whole of Russia, 16.000. Wolves have been strictly protected for only a few years. Since then, ungulate populations are plummeting in the wolf areas in the Nordic countries. Maintaining a well-fed wolf population and a strong ungulate population is possible, but only through strict control of the wolf population. Wolf protection produces depleted ungulate populations and starving wolves.

The depletion of prey and ensuing plummeting of the wolf population is illustrated by the review of moose populations in the Finland and Russian Carelia compounded by Kaarlo Nygren and Pjotr Danilov:

RECONSTRUCTED MOOSE POPULATION PEAKS IN FENNOSCANDIA AND EASTERN EUROPE



3. At present, conservationist organizations and authorities abhor the killing of wolves, which is the only effective way of keeping wolf- and ungulate populations stable on a desirable level, and EU legislation practically prohibits it. Only fencing and scaring are allowed, both of which are practically and economically unfeasible.
4. There is no known way of preventing a rabies outbreak among wolves, as they move great distances and hesitate to take inoculated bait. An outbreak will happen sooner or later, and its disastrous consequences are well known.

Below, we specify a number of points in the NINA report which have caught our attention.

1st remark

Summary

Because of the large scales at which large carnivores live, their conservation cannot occur only within protected areas. They must therefore be conserved within multi-use landscapes where conflicts with humans occur. Conflicts are diverse and include

1 Introduction

(Woodroffe & Ginsberg 1998, 2000). In many parts of the world, such as Europe, the landscape is so modified, and human densities are so high, that large carnivores must be conserved in the multi-use landscape surrounding houses, farms, villages, and cities (Linnell et al. 2001a,b).

As noted above, the statement "*must be conserved in multi-use landscapes surrounding houses, farms, villages, and cities*" is treated as an article of faith. In consequence, the NINA report turns a blind eye to the obvious conclusion to be drawn from the facts it contains: *You cannot have wolves in such areas without sacrificing personal security, the right to property and the respect for the private life and the home.*

Below, we detail various points in the NINA report which contain selective fact-finding or verbal or logical acrobatics, obviously written in order to make wolf protection in inhabited areas look feasible.

2nd remark

wolf attacks under present circumstances are very, very low throughout Europe and North America.

The NINA report fails to mention that this inevitably changes as wolves re-establish themselves in inhabited areas and become habituated. The present abundance of wild prey is no guarantee against attacks on humans and the abundant ungulate populations, the result of decades of human game management, will soon be depleted as wolves multiply and game management ceases – nobody will invest in promoting ungulate populations to feed wolves.

Wolves and bears were exterminated in areas with high human density in Europe precisely because their predations were intolerable in such an environment.

3rd remark

On man-eating wolves in Finland

On Pousette and the wolves which killed 22 children in the Turku area 1880-81

1.

Although there is no direct evidence that these wolves were tame (as in the case of the Gysinge wolf from Sweden), Pousette (2000) indicates that the possibility cannot be ruled out. Apparently during this period the bounty paid for wolf pups during summer was only half that of the bounty paid during winter. Accordingly, many hunters would capture wolf pups in summer at den-sites, and keep them caged until mid-winter. At this time they got the full-bounty and a valuable fur. In this type of situation it is quite possible that a wolf could have escaped, after having lost its fear of people.

Pousette (De människoätande vargarna, 1989) underscores that this is pure speculation, "Det kan ligga till på följande sätt", "it might have happened in the following way". He obviously (incorrectly) assumes that wolves specializing on children is a unique phenomenon and has to have some explanation. The historian Antti Lappalainen who has investigated human victims to wolves in Finland in church and court records and other sources back to 1660, comments as follows:

"Bounty for wolves has been paid in the Nordic countries during centuries, and it has been very common no pay more for a adult wolf than for a pup. Thus, in the Swedish hunting act of 1647, which was applied in Finland, the killer of an adult wolf was promised two riksdalers and that of a pup one riksdaler. The local bounty which later became common may have been relatively much higher, but at the same time local control was intensified. Thus the presented speculation about raising pups in cages is inexplicable and misleading. The operation would certainly have been unprofitable and would have led to court cases. Such cases are, however, unknown in Finland."

The NINA report cites as probable facts something that its source clearly states to be free fantasies.

2.

hunting the wolves that were believed to be responsible. The local and national governments became involved, sending for help from Russian and Lithuanian hunters, and even calling for the involvement of the army. In January 1882 an old bitch with worn teeth was shot, and 12 days later an adult male was poisoned. After these two wolves died there were no further attacks.

The story about bad teeth is to be found in Pousette's book, but it is only half true and insignificant. The old female was in good enough shape to catch, carry and eat children. Mr Lappalainen (see above) and others familiar with the contemporary documentation of the case confirm that three wolves moving together were identified as man-eaters. Each one was identified as a purebred wolf after having been killed. Two of them still remain, one in the hunting museum of Riihimäki, the other in the St Olof's school in Turku where their strong, healthy teeth can be admired. The third wolf ended as a door mat and disappeared but no contemporary source indicates bad teeth, hybrid traits or other abnormalities.

"After these two wolves died there were no further attacks" is grossly misleading.

- These exceptionally successful man-eaters had a long series of predecessors over centuries.
- They were the drop that caused the government to organize and to finance the extermination of wolves in Finland, which succeeded to a point
- Attacks did not stop in eastern Finland where wolves from Russia roam to this day.

The Finnish newspaper Vasabladet recently republished a note from 1907: *"Boy eaten by wolves. (The newspaper) "RajaKarjala" tells that wolves in the Sääminki and Parikkala border area (south eastern Finland) have eaten a 6-year-old boy, the thighbone of whom was found. The wolves, of which a pack of six has been seen, have eaten a summer foal."*

Mr. Onni Kurvinen, a professional hunter who worked for the supply authority in the Ilomantsi - Pielisjärvi area (southeastern Finland) during WWII and who was known as a reliable person, told about the following case: Before independence (in 1917) he also hunted on the Russian side of the border, and once when he was resting in a house in Lupasalmi, a small girl ran in and said that a big dog had taken her little brother. The children had been running down the slope of the stables with sleighs. Mr. Kurvinen followed the tracks and found only a shoe containing the remains of a foot. According to the parents such things sometimes happen.

3.

Pousette also cites Pavlov, 1965 "When children are attacked, it is often old wolves with difficulties to hunt game". In his book "Volk", 1982 Pavlov mentions that the hunting expert Kamenskij in Kirov collected detailed material about man-eating wolves in the area (26 dead in separate incidents or series of incidents in nine counties of the 120.800 km² Kirov administrative area and ten in the 29.000 km² Vladimir administrative area) and first published them in "Ochotnitji prostory", 1965. Pousette does not mention which of Pavlov's 150+ papers he refers to.

In his book Volk, Pavlov enumerates what other Russian scientists have written on the subject and concludes: *"A thorough investigation of the facts I have gathered on wolf attacks on humans shows that it is wrong to claim that these attacks have been made by toothless and generally defective animals. All hunters who have killed wolf families where people have been killed whom I have asked, have stated that the killed wolves have been healthy and not rarely big – over 60 kg. After such wolves have been killed, the predations have ceased. One can therefore claim that in wolf populations especially aggressive individuals occur, which under certain circumstances dare to attack humans."*

Pavlov does not separately point out that the few available hunters were sent to kill these wolves, and only mentions what they found.

The NINA report extensively cites the flimsiest of speculations which seem to support the notion that wolf attacks on humans happen only under very special circumstances which do not prevail here today.

See the 4th to 7th remark below, in which we point out the disgraceful treatment in Scandinavia of Pavlov and his work and how the NINA report supports this base slander.

4.

The #1 Finnish wolf specialist, founding member of the Wolf Specialist Group of the IUCN, professor emeritus, MP, Erkki Pulliainen and his colleagues have left a trail of lies on the man-eating Turku wolves and other issues relating to the danger of wolves to humans:

- In 1985, Mr Pulliainen told the Swedish magazine "Land" that *"The information is very unreliable. The disappearance of the children may just as well have been due to other reasons"*.
- Apparently toeing the line, the conservator of the Turku University commented the Turku wolves to the newspaper "Turun Sanomat" on 27.10.2006: *"he is very suspicious of the beliefs in killer wolves. (..) If a wolf has killed a child, the reason might be that a woman giving birth to a child out of wedlock was such a shame that it even was taken to the woods. it was easy to say that the wolf eat it."* The mean age of the victims of the Turku wolves was 5,9 years and the name of the father of each one is documented in the church records.
- The same day, Mr. Pulliainen told the newspaper "Demari" that, according to current knowledge, the (one) Turku wolf was a wolf-dog hybrid. For facts, see page 5 above.
- Mr Pulliainen told another lie to the newspaper "Demari" on 27.10.2005: *"Pulliainen recently attended an international wolf congress in the US, in which it turned out that no healthy, unhurt wolf has attacked a human anywhere in the world during the last century (..) Pulliainen smiles that the danger of wolves is a well tried method to get transport (paid by the municipality) for the kids from the front door, if the requirement of the law of a five kilometers way to school is not fulfilled."* The contempt of the truth and of the safety of children of this "leading authority on wolves" is remarkable, even by conservationist standards.

Three weeks earlier, 5.10.2005, the historian Dr. Antti Lappalainen had published his findings from studying human victim to wolves in church and court records and other contemporary sources. Nobody active in the field missed this occasion. He had found a total of 193 lethal attacks from 1660 onwards, of which 110 children who fell victim to predatory attacks and 83 adults, all or most of whom fell victim to attacks by rabid wolves. 69 children were killed between 1831 and 1881 – on average one every eight months. Because of the contemporary public outcry fomented by the nascent press, the Agricultural Expedition of the Imperial Senate, the predecessor today's Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry, organized and financed the removal of the wolf from the Finnish living environment.

4th remark

Russia and Pavlov

6.3 Predatory attacks

The most controversial aspects of Pavlov's work concern three post WW2 episodes where wolves were believed to have attacked children in areas around Kirov (**Appendix 3; Figure 4**).

Kirov episode. Between 1944 and 1950, 22 children between the ages of 3 and 17 were killed by wolves. Three more children were attacked, but escaped.

Oritji episode. Between 1951 and 1953, 4 children were killed. Four more were attacked but were rescued.

Vladimir episode. Between 1945 and 1947 there were 10 fatal attacks, mainly on children.

Both these latter sequences apparently ended following the shooting of local wolves. For the Kirov and the Oritji sequence Pavlov provides details of the names and ages of the victims, and the place and circumstances where the attacks occurred, making the descriptions credible. However, because of the almost unprecedented nature of these attacks in the wolf literature, many researchers and conservationists have cast doubt on their truth.

1. *"three episodes where wolves believed to have attacked children"* refers to ten cases where wolves turned to man-eating and managed to kill one or several children or adolescents before getting killed themselves. All cases are well documented and are described in detail on ten of 354 pages in a book about the grey forest wolf.
2. *"because of the almost unprecedented nature of these attacks in the wolf literature, many researchers and conservationists have cast doubt on their truth."* Citing such unfounded doubts is all the more remarkable as the NINA report itself confirms that the attacks were by no means unprecedented.
3. *"...even if the events Pavlov relates to are true..."* After the sentences *"are believed to"* and *"have cast doubt on their truth"* the NINA report itself calls in question the detailed accounts of a member of the academy of science of his country.

Pavlov was a hunter / game manager rather than a scientist, and it is obvious from his chapters on the effects of wolves on game populations that his attitude towards wolves was clearly that they were unwanted vermin that had no place in the modern world. The tone of the work is almost one of a personal crusade on his part to tell "the truth about wolves" i.e. that they are dangerous to humans. These factors do not indicate that Pavlov was an objective and unbiased observer. However, Pavlov him-

"Pavlov was a hunter / game manager rather than a scientist"

Michail Pavlov, born 1920, published over 150 scientific papers in his lifetime and was a member of the Soviet academy of sciences. The fact that he also did practical work, such as managing the all-union institute for hunting and fur-animal farming in Kirov, hardly diminishes his credibility as a scientist.

"His attitude towards wolves...."

Pavlov does call in question the postulate that wolves are good for ungulate populations by killing sick and infirm animals and shows how wolves depletes them by killing numerous calves and pregnant females. The same is being observed wherever wolves are reintroduced and this obvious phenomenon is always vehemently denied by conservationists.

"Vermin that had no place in the modern world"

Pavlov never wrote or said such a thing. The attitude to the wolf in Russia is and has always been pragmatic. Wolf predations on livestock and dogs is a permanent problem and those who suffer losses hate wolves the same way they hate mosquitoes or rats. Wolf hunting is permitted all year and bounty is paid. Wolf hunting is seen as a chore, and when possible, it is combined with military exercises, whereby helicopters with grenade launchers are employed. As soon as hunting efforts are discontinued, losses of livestock and dogs to wolves increase. Exterminating wolves in uninhabited areas is impossible and has never been contemplated. Even the greatest suppression efforts, such as after WW2 when the population was decimated from 200.000 to 50.000, only aim at limiting the losses to wolves.

"these factors do not indicate that Pavlov was an objective and unbiased observer"

The sentence speaks volumes about the attitude of the NINA report.

was an objective and unbiased observer. However, Pavlov himself admits that circumstances during this post-war period were unusual with high wolf populations (control exercises were suspended during the war and post war recovery years), low prey populations and extreme social conditions (the war had just ended, and Stalin's pogroms were ongoing). Therefore, even if the events Pavlov relates are true, they are the only such incidents that he was apparently able to find from Russia. This would indicate that they must be regarded as being unusual events, occurring in a limited area, during a limited time period with special socio-economic and ecological conditions (Nikiti Ovsyanikov pers. comm.). The fact that they occurred after the war, when wolf hunting was probably greatly reduced (adult men were fighting, firearms were not as available) must also be considered. The potential effect of this is that wolf populations could have increased, and that hunting mediated shyness was not reinforced in several wolf generations.

"Even if the events Pavlov relates are true, they are the only such incidents that he was apparently able to find from Russia" (...) occurring in a limited area..."

Pavlov worked in the Kirov district from 1948 where he later became the director of the "All-Union scientific research institute for game management and fur animal husbandry (VNIIOZ)". He described incidents in the area he knew, but he had no capacity to do a nationwide investigation about a subject that covers 10 of the 352 pages in his book on the wolf. Pavlov did, however, cite various written sources on wolf attacks on humans in Russia and made the observation that they seemed to be concentrated to certain areas while none had ever occurred in others. He wrote that the attacks on humans by wolves have been deficiently investigated in Russia. Works like his own do not exist from other parts of Russia, in spite of the prevalence of wolves. Pavlov sees it as a great scientific task to find an answer to the following questions:

1. Was the wolf in the Kirov district abnormal in attacking humans?
2. If it was abnormal, why was it?

Pavlov had knowledge of man-eating wolves in the area where he worked, i.e. the 120.800 km² Kirov (Vjatka) administrative area where man-eating by wolves occurred in nine separate counties over a 9-year period and in the 29.000 km² Vladimir area where one man-eating wolf pack was active. NINA also gives the false impression that Pavlov was looking for man-eating wolves. He did mention the scientific discussion on the subject in Russia, inter alia:

"It cannot be excluded that the idea (that wolves do not attack humans) would have continued without being called in question, had not special conditions arisen as a result of WWII. Numerous people were killed by wolves during the war. Hard measures were necessary. (Professor) Mantejfel led after WWII a commission appointed by the highest

hunting authority of the (Russian) Federal Republic to find out about the wolf problems. He reported 12 cases in which wolves had killed a total of 80 persons, mostly children. In 6 cases before the war 30 had been killed, the rest during and after the war. Man-eating wolves had predated in RSFSR (The Russian Federal Republic) on 7 occasions, on 4 in Belarus, and once in Georgia. Unfortunately the man-eating by wolves was not properly investigated at this time. Those who knew something about such incidents tended to see them as odd and very rare."

The NINA report cites Pavlov inaccurately. He never referred to the political and social conditions of the time as contributing factors to wolf attacks. His analysis of the circumstances leading to the attacks:

"One of the conditions for aggression is that the wolf population increases rapidly – then unafraid and dangerous individuals appear. In the Kirov district wolves were common in all inhabited parts – and in the outskirts of all villages. In the forests about 200 wolf families were found. More than once wolves ran on the streets of the city of Kirov. In daytime, they were sometimes seen resting in a city park. The hunting inspection of Kirov has not forgotten that in 1945, wolves dragged away the dog of the former boss from the yard in the apartment block where he lived."

"During the war years, a rapid increase in the aggressive traits of wolves was promoted by the absence of the otherwise constant suppression of wolves, and the most active forms of hunting. In the Kirov district, this happened because the best hunters had gone to the front and the rest were busy with other war efforts. Eyewitnesses say that during the war, wolves were no more afraid of humans than roaming dogs were. It is precisely this diminished fear of man which becomes decisive in the behaviour of the especially aggressive wolves. When a wolf has made its first successful attack against a human, it quickly learns that man is not only an easy, but also a safe prey, and it starts tracking humans with intent."

The NINA report turns a blind eye to Pavlov's salient point: He describes how wolves get habituated when wolf hunting is discontinued and then turn to man-eating.

The historian Lappalainen notes that man-eating by wolves in Finland has occurred mainly during the absence or semi-absence of wolf hunting. In northern Finland where terrain and climate permits the traditional method of hunting down wolves on ski, man-eating has hardly ever occurred. Another example of man-eating by habituated wolves is found in the report *"Child lifting: Wolves in Hazaribagh, India"* by the Wildlife Institute of India, published by the Swedish Academy of Sciences in the series AMBIO, volume 28, number 2, March, 1999.

5th remark – several to the following text

The extent of wolf attacks on people within the former USSR has been much debated, both by Russian and western scientists and conservationists (Bibikov 1990). Central to the controversy has been a book by Michail Pavlov called "The wolf" published in 1982. Several chapters, including one called "The danger wolves pose to humans" were translated into Norwegian in 1978 (Pålsson 1987). For a variety of administrative reasons, the distribution of the report was halted after publication. This provoked a 22-year debate about the quality of Pavlov's work, the truth of the data presented, and whether the Norwegian government was attempting a cover-up (e.g. Ree 2000).

The debate on wolf attacks in Russia

The problem with the debate is that ironclad "scientific proof" is demanded while wolf attacks on humans have little news value in Russia and usually are neither published nor documented.

The snippets of information available indicate that wolf attack on humans in Russia are not uncommon.

The renowned Swedish zoologist Kjell Kolthoff, an authority in his field at the turn of the 19th to 20th century and the founder the Skansen museum in Stockholm, mentioned in his book *Vårt Vildbråd*, Our Wildlife, (1914) that the Russian government had doubled the premium for killing a wolf to ten roubles after 203 persons had been killed in the European part of Russia in 1889.

The undersigned has received second-hand verbal reports from Russian friends of two child victims to wolves in Russian Carelia and one in Nevelj close to the Estonian border during the last few years.

A journalist's travel report from the Volgograd area published in the web paper Moscow News 12.7.2004.

Excerpt: *"Kolka also told me some details about the recent tragic events in the neighboring village of Tsarevo. A female wolf had attacked an elderly man and then, five days later, a teenager. Although in both instances people rushed to their rescue as soon as they heard their screams for help, making the animal run away, both died of their wounds. These are not the only victims of wolves. The death toll increased especially last fall and this winter. In the Sredneakhtubinsk district, a wolf bit five shepherds. Only two survived the attack. In the village of Glazunovskaya, two wolves attacked a tractor driver as he was trying to repair his machine. The man survived but received severe injuries, becoming a permanent invalid. In the neighboring Astrakhan region, 16 wolf attacks on humans were registered in the same period. Three people died as a result."*

I cited this information in a newspaper article whereupon a conservationist organization symptomatically refuted it with the argument *"unscientific newspaper article"*.

The conservationist demand for ever higher levels of "scientific proof" for the existence of danger to life and limb from wolves in inhabited areas is unique. In all other situations concerning a factor which might influence the safety of the living environment of humans, and especially that of children, the burden of proof is that it is safe, not that it is lethal.

The critic of Pavlov – the background

The story of the controversy around Pavlov is worth telling from the beginning, as it so vividly describes the methods employed in the lobbying which led to the current wolf protection legislation.

In 1984, the Norwegian government wanted to find out if wolves are dangerous. The biologist Ivar Mysterud of Oslo university carried out the task. He contacted the Soviet academy of sciences, which put him into contact with the leading wolf experts of the country, prof. D. Bibikov and Michail Pavlov. First he commissioned Mr. Elis Pålsson to translate *"Povedenie Volka"*, The Behaviour of the Wolf, published in Moscow in 1980 by the Soviet academy of science and edited by prof. D. Bibikov. The Behaviour of the Wolf consisted of 11 scientific papers, some of which mention the fact that wolves cause great damage to livestock and sometimes attack humans. One paper stated that *"At the end of the 1940's and earlier, cases of man-eating by wolves occurred in a number of districts"*.

At the time Mr. Stefan Johansson led the "Wolf Project" of 1971, a grand preparation to re-introduce wolves into Sweden. He wrote in the magazine *"Sveriges Natur"*, Swedish Nature 1985:1. *"Warning of the Behaviour of the Wolf. (...) Let be that the intent of the publisher-translator is commendable, but the result is catastrophic. The Behaviour of the Wolf is a death-blow to the attempts to conduct a serious debate on the biology and right of existence of the wolf, based on facts. In this mish-mash of second hand information, personal opinion and scientific fact it is impossible to discern fact from subjective ideas. (...) when one lays the booklet aside one has the impression to have read a piece of badly edited anti-wolf propaganda, which it well might be."*

In Swedish radio, TV and press, leading conservationists in unison denied that wolves attack humans and even more energetically that they kill them. Such, they said, is fairy-tales. A nationwide campaign "Little Red-Hood lies" was carried out. In 1985, milk cartons were printed: *"The stories about the danger of wolves are exaggerated. Almost only northern Europe has fairy-tales about the big bad wolf."* The leading Swedish wolf expert Mr. Anders Bjärvall wrote in the newspaper Göteborgsposten; *"In no case has it been proven that he wolves in the central Soviet Union really have attacked people. I am not at all convinced by the accuracy of the reports in other aspects."*

In 1987, Mr Ivar Mysterud received a copy of the book "Volk", Wolf by Mr. Michail Pavlov, member of the predator group of the Soviet academy of science and a leading authority on the gray timber wolf with over 150 scientific papers to his credit. Mr Mysterud commissioned Mr Elis Pålsson to translate three chapters: The influence of the wolf on wild game, The damage of the wolf to livestock and The danger of the wolf to humans.

The translation was published in 1987 by the norwegian "Naturvårdsverket", the administration for the protection of nature, under the title "Ulvens Næringssøk og mennesket", the Wolf's Seeking of Nourishment and Man. This caused fury among wolf protagonists in Norway. The magazine "Våre Rovdyr", Our Predators, wrote: *"one of the most grotesque examples of predator hysteria – a gross insult to, among other things, research-ethical norms."* Others wrote in the press inter alia: *"subjective translation", "legendary stories", "Pavlov's work hate-propaganda against the wolf", "the translation should lead to consequences for the persons involved", "the publication should be revoked and destroyed".*

The critic of Pavlov – the case

The *"various administrative reasons"* mentioned in the NINA report are the following:

Three local conservationist NGOs and WWF introduced the demand to "Norska Miljödepartementet", the ministry of the environment, that the distribution of the booklet be stopped immediately, that the copies already distributed be recalled and that all be destroyed. They also demanded that the director and the researcher responsible for the publication be removed from their positions. The demand was fulfilled in so far as the distribution was stopped and all copies disappeared.

Professor juris C.A, Fleischer inspected the case in 2000 and disapproved of the action of the ministry of the environment against the publication. He found it to be illegal and wrote inter alia: *"Reminds of the suppression of information and debate by dictatorships and of the book pyres when the Pope tried to hinder the free exchange of idea by the inquisition and other means."*

6th remark

On the beast of Gévaudan

Summary

for records of such events. The most famous event is from the Gevaudan area in France where historical records indicate that over 100 people were killed in the period 1764-1767. The wolves responsible were believed to be hybrids between wild wolves and large shepherd dogs. From these three regions several hundred people appear to have been killed from 1750 until 1900.

There is no contemporary source that would indicate a hybrid. This belief is of a later age and is apparently based on a report concerning a verbal remark made by an unknown person that there was something particular with one of the wolves. As noted above,

conservationists tend to blame famous cases of man-eating wolves on something else, in the last instance on hybrids. Here, no scientific proof is demanded - the flimsiest rumour is good enough.

Numerous contemporary reports on wolf attacks on humans can be found in the library of the museum of natural history of Orléans, which holds volumes dating back to the 17th century. The earliest report is of wolves killing 14 persons in central Paris in 1439. The French conservator Eirik Granqvist used the library extensively in the 1980's, but did not pay much attention to the stories of wolf attacks on humans. He could not imagine that this would be an issue two decades later.

The fact that the beast of Gévaudan had no fear of fire is held to be proof that it could not be a normal animal. When Mr. Granqvist was collecting specimens for his museum in the Kalahari in the 1970's, game managers asked him to shoot a limping male lion on sight – it had specialized on taking bushmen at their campfires and had once stepped into the fire, which caused a limp but no change in its predation habits.

7th remark

India, predatory attacks

These cases need to be placed into context against the habitat of the area and the general high rates of wild animal mediated deaths in the regions. Most of these areas of India where wolf attacks have been reported are deforested agricultural habitats with a very poor prey base and a very high human population density (>600 km⁻²) living in poor conditions. In a series of transects in Utar Pradesh, unaccompanied children were the most common potential "prey" available to wolves, as wild prey were very rare and all livestock were guarded by shepherds and dogs (Jhala & Sharma 1997). In the Hazaribagh study, during the 6-year period when 90 children were killed by wolves, another 242 people were killed by wild elephants, 50 by sloth bears, 4 by leopards, 2 by tigers and 2 by hyenas (Rajpurohit 1999).

1.

The statement concerning "unaccompanied children" is misleading.

The nature of the attacks is described in the study "Child Lifting: Wolves in Hazaribagh, India, published by the Swedish academy of sciences in the series AMBIO Vol 28, nr 2, March 1999:

All the 92 children taken between April 1989 and April 1995 were lifted from human settlements, usually while they were playing on village commons or in front of their houses. In a few cases, wolves lifted the child from the mother's lap or from a courtyard. Most incidences occurred in March to August; i.e.

In India, a farmer would never leave his sheep or goats unattended outside the village because loss of domestic animals can be economically disastrous for the family. Neither are small children sent alone away from the home. All the recorded cases of wolf attacks on small children show that these attacks were carried out either on the outskirts of the village or even within the village itself. These attacks were carried out on children who had been left temporarily unattended when the father was away from home working in the fields or grazing his animals, and the mother was attending to domestic chores such as collecting firewood or drawing water from the village well. It is unthinkable that parents of small children would purposely leave them in the forest to be killed by wolves.

2.

The fact that the regions where children are being killed by wolves are poor, does not mean that wolves would be less dangerous in rich countries. On the contrary, it demonstrates the necessity to keep children under constant guard in regions with a wolf population.

3.

The fact that more people in India are killed by other species of wild animals is irrelevant to the subject. This attempt to gain acceptance for the killing of a large number of children by wolves, is revolting.

4.

The description of the child lifting of wolves in Hazibaragh is similar to that in Kirov in 1944-53, described by Pavlov.

5.

The experience from India clearly demonstrates that the conservation of wolf populations in inhabited areas presents a mortal danger to humans, especially children. It is incompatible with the right to security written into the European Convention of Human Rights, the EU Charter of Fundamental Rights and the constitution of several countries.

8th remark

11.5 Patterns – temporal changes in numbers of attacks

rally decrease the chances of wolves and people meeting. But a number of other factors must also be considered.

- (1) Children are rarely used as shepherds today.
- (2) Wild prey populations have increased dramatically in most areas.
- (3) Rabies in domestic dogs has been greatly reduced through vaccination and dog control laws.
- (4) The practice of keeping tame wolves and hybrids does not appear to be so common – at least where they occur, the situation is changed and the chances of them escaping are far less.
- (5) Wolves have been so heavily persecuted during the last century that it is highly likely that there has been intense selection against "fearless" wolves or those that are not very shy of humans. In countries where wolves are hunted (legally and illegally) it is unlikely that any will live long once they begin to develop "fearless" behaviour. However, in countries where wolves are protected, management may need to consider response actions (see **section 12**).

It must be pointed out that these five factors in no way make it safe today to have wolf populations *"in the multi-use landscape surrounding houses, farms, villages and cities"*.

1. Children in rural areas still move alone over considerable distances. The absence of accompanying livestock hardly improves their safety. "Safety" as a fundamental right means not only not risking to get hurt or killed but also the right to live one's normal life free from threat and danger.

2. Wild prey populations have increased precisely because of the absence of wolves and through careful wildlife management. In Finland and Sweden, 120.000 moose are harvested annually but in the whole of Russia where one never has managed to control wolf populations, only 16.000. Prey populations can be sustained if the wolf population is strictly limited but this is not possible under the strict protection regime imposed by the EU.

3. Wolves do not take inoculated bait so rabies is a latent threat. Considering the horror of attacks by rabid wolves, harbouring wolves in inhabited areas is undefensible from a public security point of view for this reason alone.

4. Wolves living in inhabited areas occasionally copulate with dogs. Such copulations have been observed on several occasions in Finnish front yards during the past few years. These produces much more hybrids than any reasonable number of escaped domestic hybrids. Pavlov (see above) deduces from pictures that wolves western Europe since long are hybridized. As only an experiences taxonomist can be certain if a wolf is a hybrid, especially in a hunting situation, the culling of hybrids from a strictly protected wolf population is impossible. The inevitable hybridization is a further reason why keeping wolves close to human habitation is irresponsible.

5. There is no evidence whatsoever that the Russian wolves which have established themselves in Finland since 1995 would have the slightest inherited shyness or fear of humans. (See above about wolves sitting on the porch). Across the border in Russian Carelia wolves have depleted the wild prey and mainly live on garbage and domestic animals. In spite of them being hunted all year, they have almost exterminated domestic dogs. A few years ago, a wolf took a dog on the second storey landing in the staircase of an apartment building. Point 5 above is mere wishful thinking, all the more irresponsible as it emanates from scientific authorities and affects the safety of humans.

9th remark

12.2 Reaction planning

Despite the low probability of wolf attacks on humans occurring, the risk is not zero, and wildlife management reaction procedures should be put in place before such incidents occur, in the

- (1) **"Fearless wolves"**. Individual wolves may begin to behave in a way where they are not showing the appropriate level of fear of humans. There should be a management protocol in place to deal with this eventuality. For example, in 2001 Denali National Park in Alaska closed several campsites because the resident wolves had begun to show "fearless" behaviour, approaching campers and stealing food and other objects.

Central to such a protocol is an understanding of what constitutes normal and abnormal wolf behaviour. For example, wolves living in mixed farmland-forest habitats will generally tolerate a very high degree of human activity and human infrastructure. They may even approach houses and kill dogs. Such behaviour must be regarded as "normal" wolf behaviour. Management protocols that define limits for normal behaviour will therefore need to be developed in close consultation with experts on wolf behaviour.

The second part of the text is a pearl! After having established that habituated wolves are dangerous, it tries the hat-trick of suggesting that the concept of habituation be politically redefined to fit wolf conservation "*in multi-use landscapes surrounding houses, farms, villages, and cities*". Nature will not, however, change under political pressure, and danger cannot be politized away.

According to prof. emeritus Valerius Geist, wolves which approach houses and kill dogs are far down a habituation process which culminates in attacks on humans.

Michail Pavlov (see below) accurately describes a habituation process culminating in man-eating in Kirov during WW2. "*Eyewitnesses say that during the war years the wolves were no more afraid of humans than roaming dogs were. Precisely this diminished fear of man becomes decisive in the behaviour of especially aggressive wolves.*"

Antti Lappalainen observes in his book "The Track of the Wolf" that man-eating by wolves has occurred in Finland almost exclusively in areas where wolf hunting had been absent or inefficient for various reasons.

Scientific and lay knowledge agree on this point: The common sense of people who have contact with animals tells them that a large predator which is not afraid of man is dangerous. Global statistics is of little interest in a situation where the danger is obvious.

The NINA report proposes to "*develop management protocols in close consultation with experts on wolf behaviour.*" Experts from the Finnish conservationist NGOs are ready and willing to give advice on how to scare wolves and protect dogs with fences. They consider the risk of kids getting killed to be negligible. Experts not of the conservtionist creed have long since resigned or been fired. Experts on wolf behaviour can be found in Canada and in Russia. All their colleagues in western Europe and USA we know about have contributed to the concocting of conservationsit lies and misleading half-truths about wolf behaviour during the past thirty years in order to lobby the present strict protection regime. In the process, they are likely to have lost both the will and the capacity to give objective expert advice.

10th remark

Summary

When the frequency of wolf attacks on people is compared to that from other large carnivores or wildlife in general it is obvious that wolves are among the least dangerous species for their size and predatory potential. Given the fact that wolves have posed a threat to human safety it is easy to understand why we have a "cultural fear" of wolves, which is reinforced through stories and mythology.

We have found no traces in Finland that stories and mythology would influence peoples' thinking, especially not in the wolf areas. People who start seeing wolves in their surroundings quickly find out about them – there is unbiased literature available. On the other hand, most people who are not yet confronted with wolves do not care about the whole issue. Word-of-mouth also plays a part in the fear of wolves. On November 30th, Ms Sirkka Aro of Mynämäki wrote a letter to the editor abhorring the appearance of a fearless wolf pack in the village. Her grandfather's brother Alexander Gustav Hartman was killed and eaten by a wolf in Mynämäki at the age of 9 on 20th July, 1881.

Claiming that unwanted public opinion is due to stories and mythology is yet another example of conservationist propaganda lies. According to our experience facts are sufficient. Reading just one account of a lethal wolf attack on a child makes anybody fiercely opposed to having wolves in the neighbourhood.

11th remark

Summary

Wolves during our evolutionary past. However, it is apparent that much of the fear of wolves is also dependent on a person's social and cultural situation. In other words, it is a fear of the wolf as a symbol of negative outside influences on local issues. There-

12.3 The human dimension

It is important to realise that much of the fear that is expressed towards wolves may be directed at the wolf as a symbol, rather than actual fear for physical risk (Midgley 2001). In the modern context this symbolism is likely to be associated with a loss of control of local affairs in the face of outside intervention by central authorities and large urban populations (Bjerke et al. 2000;

This claim is similar to the previous one. Of course people become furious when strictly protected wolves start eating sheep and dogs and frequent their front yards - and they are prohibited from killing them. They are also smart enough to realize that such wolves also may attack a child and that the scientists saying the contrary are frauds. Claiming such fears to be a symbol of negative outside influences is preposterous. – And still, it is one of the standard conservationist smoke screens.

12th remark

12.3 The human dimension

The attitude that people have towards wolves is also influenced by their confidence in different sources of knowledge (scientific knowledge versus lay knowledge). Those with confidence in scientific knowledge are likely to be more positive towards wolves, however large segments of rural communities have low confi-

dence in this source of knowledge. There has been a conflict between lay knowledge and scientific knowledge with regards to the danger wolves pose to human safety. Since scientific knowledge holds a hegemonic position to lay knowledge, the contestation of claims that wolves are harmless may be an element in a struggle against the dominance of this form of knowledge.

There is no general lack of confidence in scientific knowledge among people – neither among the urban nor among the rural population. When, however, scientists present results which are contrary to common sense and personal experience, they tend not to be taken at face value. When, as in the case of conservationist scientists – see above – they are exposed as biased or outright fraudulent, the scientists lose public confidence. Such science holds a hegemonic position only for as long as it manages to dupe political decision makers.

Some of the conservationist wolf research is outright ridiculous, such as the attempts to keep wolves away from human habitation with rockets and crackers and of training dogs to avoid wolves. - The dogs in the Kuhmo area are so afraid of wolves that they solidly refuse to leave the house even to relieve themselves in the yard if they can smell or sense a wolf.

13th remark

Summary

We have only included cases where there has been contact, injury or death resulting from a wolf-human encounter. Data concerning wolf attacks on humans is highly fragmented and of very variable quality. As a result it has been impossible to provide a total summary of the numbers of people killed by wolves during any given period. Rather we have compiled a set of case studies that we have judged to be reliable from various parts of North America and Eurasia. Because of the nature of the data, many records need to be treated with caution. We have looked

Spain and Italy. Unfortunately we were not able to recruit a Russian expert as a coauthor, however our colleagues from Poland and the Baltics were able to provide assistance with Russian literature and we have had email discussions with Russian colleagues. Because this report was originally intended to be used in

"We were not able to recruit a Russian co-author": There is quite a number of competent candidates around, the closest being Mr Pjotr Danilov of Petrozavodsk university who is fluent in English and who recently finished a book on the wild game animals of Carelia. It is evident that no serious Russian biologist would put his name under a document such as the NINA report. In Russia, zoology and biology are not politically and ideologically corrupted.

See remark 6 above. Wolf attacks on humans have little news value in Russia and usually are neither published nor centrally documented. It is highly unlikely that Russian scientists would know of cases, as little reliable or even unreliable sources are available and the whole issue is not the subject of scientific interest. All over Russia, people keep wolves at bay as best they can, if possible with helicopters.

Pravda.ru 27.1.1999: *"Director of the "Izhemsky Deer Farm" Ivan Kanev says that every day, 23 deer farming brigades try to defend their livestock against wolf packs, but in vain. To date, the damage caused by wolves to the deer farm is more than one thousand animals. Full-grown wolves are not even afraid of venturing into villages. For instance, wolves have ripped apart 15 watch dogs to pieces in one settlement since beginning of*

the winter. Deer farmers say that the only way to get rid of the wolves is to organize regular helicopter attacks"

NEWS.ru 12.3.2003: *На Ямале медведи и волки начали охоту на людей, On the Yamal peninsula, bears and wolves began hunting people".*

Point 2.2. "Causes of error" analyzes possible causes of documented wolf attacks not being such, but fails to mention the biggest source of error: A large part of wolf attacks in the former Soviet Union and in other Asian countries go undocumented. The NINA report downplays the fact that it obviously misses most attacks in the Eurasian natural range.

of wolf attacks. Through this wide contact net it is highly likely that unrecorded wolf attacks would have been mentioned had they occurred. We have a high degree of confidence in the extent to which we have covered the last 20-40 years – so that this is the period for which we believe that our coverage is relatively complete (at least for Europe and North America). In addition,

The NINA report goes on to make a downright false conclusion:

Unprovoked attacks by non-rabid wolves on people are very rare, and the vast majority of wolves do not regard people as being prey. However, we have found a number of incidents where predatory attacks have occurred. In Europe, the largest

The information gathered does not show that unprovoked attacks by non-rabid wolves on people would be very rare. It only shows that they are a recurring phenomenon of largely unknown frequency, especially as data from the range where over 90% of the Eurasian wolves live are practically absent. If we extrapolate the documented cases in Finland to the whole of Russia from where reports are scant, the figures become horrific. It is likely that they are not, because wolf hunting is efficient and people know to beware. The tragedies in Finland occurred when wolf hunting was discontinued for one reason or the other.

~~some (many?) people have of the wolf.~~ When we consider that a wolf is a highly adaptable large carnivore found from the Arabian deserts to the arctic tundra, capable of killing adult moose weighting many hundreds of kilograms it should not be surprising that wolves, like most other large carnivores, have on occasion killed humans. In many ways it is surprising that wolves have not killed more people during the course of time. The main symbolic conclusion that comes from this study is that it is time to stop viewing the wolf as a devil or a god. A wolf is a wolf. As a species we cannot expect them to not eat humans (an easy and abundant prey) on principle. We should just be glad that they avoid us as much as they do, and manage them to keep it that way.

The number of people killed is no indicator of the danger of wolves. - People in wolf areas simply learn to beware and to adapt their lifestyle to the threat. Forcing willing or unwilling people in Europe and USA to have wolves in their neighbourhood is a recipe for disaster – especially as they are prohibited from killing the wolves.

It is a conservationist mantra that some people see the wolf as a devil. We have never come into contact with such a person. A growing number of people do, however, see the conservationists as a lethal threat to public safety, to grazing and to rural life in general. As people are confronted with large carnivores in their living environment, they start hating conservationists with their guts.

The NINA report adheres to the golden rule of conservationists to claim hatred of themselves to be hatred of the wolf.

"manage them to keep it that way." The NINA report mentions habituation as a factor increasing the risk of wolf attacks and in principle recognizes the wolf for what it is. However, it fails to draw the obvious conclusion that the way to manage wolves so that they avoid us and abstain from killing our children is to shoot any individuals which venture close to human habitation or domestic animals. Such a policy is, however, incompatible with the strict protection regime which conservationists have lobbied through in EU, US and some national legislations. The NINA report obviously fails to make the obvious logical conclusion as it is politically unacceptable to the author.

More and more people realize that conservationists regard the life of their children as an acceptable price for the pleasure of having wolves around. When this happens, they start seeing the conservationists as the inhuman monsters they are, persons who commit treason to their own kind by identifying themselves with its predators.

14th remark

12.3 The human dimension

However, the claim that wolves are harmless is not actually a result of scientific investigation as this is the first serious attempt to review the topic. The results of this review that documents that wolves can present risks to human safety under certain conditions should hopefully go a long way to reconciliation between lay and scientific knowledge on this topic (Bjerke et al. 2001). An honest presentation of facts about wolves (including the negative aspects) is vital to build up trust among different interest groups (Schlickeisen 2001).

"reconciliation between lay and scientific knowledge" is a superb way of saying: "Hi folks, we the undersigned scientists have decided to discontinue trying to dupe you and suppressing the truth which we have been doing for the past thirty years. Now you can trust us. However, the policies you are suffering under and which we have managed to make politicians adopt through duping them, must remain in force."

The different interest groups are mainly two: The organizations who want wolves in inhabited areas, i.e. the conservationists, and the persons who are forced to live with them, i.e. the rural population which is trying to form defense organizations with the help of human rights activists..

The fact that, as in the NINA report, conservationists merely stop telling a few of their traditional lies without abandoning their disastrous policies does not build up trust one bit. The only way to reconciliation is that conservationist start respecting the fundamental rights of the rural population and recognizes it as an important factor for maintaining biodiversity. There is no sign of this happening. The actions of Finnish conservationists are more and more fanatic - they keep lying and try to stop every permit to kill a problem wolf in the legal system. The same is happening in the USA.

15th remark

The strict protection of the wolf in the EU and in USA create the "certain conditions" under which wolves not only can, but do, present risk to human safety.

Highly modified environments. The majority of predatory attacks (pre 20th century Europe and present day India) have occurred in very artificial environments where a number of circumstances have occurred. These include; little or no natural prey, heavy use of garbage and livestock as food by wolves, children often unattended or used as shepherds, poverty among the human population, and limited availability of weapons among people so wolves might not be very shy. We do not believe that there was so little prey that wolves had to feed on children, it is just that the ecology of wolves in these situations brings them into very close contact with people, setting the scene for these rare predation events to occur. Once individual wolves become man-

"We do not believe that there was so little prey that wolves had to feed on children, it is just the ecology..." All along, conservationists have justified wolf protection in inhabited areas by wolves not attacking humans as long as there is wild game. The bill on which current Swedish predator legislation is based ("Regeringens proposition 2000/01:57 Sammanhållen rovdjurspolitik Prop. 2000/01:57) states: *"that also wolves can kill people has been proven. This has, however, not happened in Sweden in modern times. In old times, wolves regularly stayed close to people because they lived on livestock to a large extent, wild prey animals lacking. In consequence, the conditions were in many respects so different that judging the risk of attack in our time on the basis of these cases would be misrepresentative. In other parts of the world where attacks on humans have taken place in modern times, there are similarities with the then conditions in Sweden."*

It is unlikely that the safety-minded Swedish MPs would have passed the bill, had not the wolf-fanatics of the Naturvårdsdepartementet, ministry of protection of nature, managed to dupe them.

It is obvious to anyone except a conservationist that protecting wolves in inhabited areas create the conditions under which predatory attacks on humans become likely.

16th remark

Summary

tional. Although bears (*Ursus* sp.) have long been known to kill and injure people on a regular basis (Swenson et al. 1996, 1999), the level of public fear is far less hysterical than that about wolves. At present there is no accessible overview of wolf

Bears do not kill children from ambush close to their homes or on the porch.

Summary

17th remark

12.2 Reaction planning

Finally, it is important that the public receive information on how to act when confronted with a wolf they believe is acting aggressively, in the same manner that visitors to North American national parks are given information about bear safety. An example of the information provided by the British Columbia National Parks Service is provided in **Appendix 5**.

The advice is based on wishful thinking and is completely useless. The wolf which acts aggressively has not yet completed its habituation to see man as prey. When the habituation is consummated, the wolf attacks lightning-fast from ambush and strikes from behind. The victim, most often a child, has no chance to react, and even less to plan.

18th remark

Appendix 5

If a wolf appears and acts unafraid or aggressive, take the following action as soon as you notice the animal:

Various pieces of advice for campers in parks are enumerated.

Remember, you are a guest in this environment. This is home to the animals that live here.

Also humans have a home where they live and their own living environment.

Conclusion

The right to safety and to property is guaranteed by the constitution of most EU countries as well as in the EU Charter of Fundamental Rights and the European Convention on Human Rights.

The Finnish Chancellor of Justice, the highest legal authority of the Finnish government ruled on a complaint by the municipality of Ruokolahti (pop. 6.000) concerning a bear concentration, decision diary number 11/21/98, issued 13.07.1999: *"The threat posed to humans by predators or at least the real or perceived threat caused by predator observations in areas where people live and move, is such a factor weakening safety, the removal of which is the task of the public powers according to 16 a §, 1st moment of the constitution. (...) I note that the threat of predators cannot be removed in such a way that the biodiversity also of the wilderness areas is endangered. However, neither bear nor wolf belong to the nature of inhabited areas. To this part the authorities must have quick applicable and efficient methods to repulse predators which approach human habitations, population centers or traffic- or walking lanes frequented by humans. (...) On the basis of the previous, it has to be stressed once and for all that maintaining the safety guaranteed as a fundamental right is the primary objective of public authorities. It is therefore their task to prepare for action and to act in such a way that animals causing insecurity are repelled or in serious cases are destroyed. This is possible to fulfill without hurting biodiversity as a predator which disturbs man in his living environment does not represent biodiversity."*

The alinea *"a predator which disturbs man in his living environment does not represent biodiversity"* is consistent with the attitude to a large variety of vira, bacteria, fungi, amoebas, worms, insects, birds and mammals which attack and damage humans, their domestic animals, their crops or their food. In extreme cases, such as with the smallpox virus, biodiversity is maintained by conserving specimens in a safe laboratory environment. The only discernible reason why large predators are excepted from this general rule is that conservationists think it is cool to have them around. Such a reason has never before justified making an exception to the fundamental right to safety.

Although the NINA report mentions number of wolf attacks on humans and correctly identifies habituation as the main triggering factor, it fails to draw the obvious conclusion. In an obvious attempt to justify the postulate of wolf conservation in inhabited areas, it always finds a way to present individual sources as unreliable and the attacks as unique and non-representative. Thus, it manages to dissimulate the obvious causal effect of habituation and the fact that wolf conservation in inhabited areas inevitably will lead to children getting killed and eaten.