Wolf management from transboundary perspective

Harri Norberg
Finnish Wildlife Agency

EU Platform on Coexistence between People and Large Carnivores
Regional Workshop, Rovaniemi, Finland, 8th October 2015
The 10 wolf populations of Europe

Most populations are shared by several Member States!

POPULATIONS (individuals):
- Finnish-Karelian: 220-245
- Scandinavian: ca. 460
- Baltic: 900-1400 (ca. 5000 with Belarus and Russia)
- Central European Lowlands: > 300 (Poland and Germany), increasing esp. in Germany…
- Carpathians: ca. 3500
- Dinaric-Balkan: ca. 4-5000
- Italian Peninsula: ca. 800
- Alpine: > 160
- NW Iberia: ca. 2500
- Sierra Morena: 1 pack

EUROPE: >10 000 wolves
(RUSSIA: ca. 50 000 wolves)*


Wolf populations in Nordic countries

Last report:
49 family packs, ca. 460 wolves, of which ca. 415 in Sweden

Last report:
27 family packs (+8 border packs), 220-245 wolves, 240-268 if all ind. in border packs are also included
Transboundary perspective?

• Crossing boundaries (=cross-boundary), borders, frontiers, which divide one entity or political unit from another

• With respect to wolf management in Finland and Nordic countries, transboundary perspective refers here to the management actions and/or cooperation across country borders, or between different administrational regimes

• In the report ”Key actions for LC populations in Europe”, Action 5 of cross cutting actions* calls for Improved trans-boundary coordination of large carnivore management:
  
  • ”There is a need to coordinate management between the different administrative units that share a population and ensure that connectivity between populations is enhanced.”

*(across species and populations)
Cooperation in Nordic countries

• Sweden and Norway share a common Scandinavian wolf population, founded just by few immigrants from Finnish-Karelian-Russian population in 1983: lots of cooperation (Sweden/Norway), but very different political regimes.

• With respect to management of all four large carnivore species in Nordic countries, there are traditions for cooperation and constant exchange of information between Finland, Sweden and Norway on all administrative levels: personnel operating in the field, administrative officials, research programs / networks of scientists (e.g. Skandulv).

• Information exchange includes e.g. informing neighbours of possible immigrants approaching national borders => readiness to respond to genetically valuable immigrants.
Immigration to Scandinavian population

The reindeer herding areas both in Finland and Sweden separate the populations, but do not in fact close the route for wolves to migrate from Finland to Sweden or Norway, or vice versa, from Scandinavia to Finland.

- Young dispersing wolves can migrate to the west especially during spring and summer (practically nobody noticing them…)
- In 2014 there were three wolves of Finnish-Russian origin observed in Sweden, of which two (one male in Prästskogen and one female in Tiveden) reproduced in spring 2014.
- In eight of 49 reproductions during 2014 (orange circles in the map), one of the parents was offspring (F1) of Finnish-Russian origin wolves ⇔ positive for the population!

* male and female were translocated from close to Finnish border in February 2013

Why is immigration important?

• **Short version: to decrease the level of inbreeding**
• Inbreeding coefficient value 0.25 = offspring of siblings
• Inbreeding coefficient value 0.13 = offspring of cousins
Good practices in Nordic cooperation

• In case there is a migrating wolf or wolves observed in the vicinity of Swedish border (in western Finnish Lapland), this information is shared asap with Swedish authorities.

• There is readiness to collect DNA-samples of migrating wolves already in western Finnish Lapland to analyze if the individual is of eastern origin (and genetically valuable); sample tubes distributed from Finnish Wildlife Agency to the large carnivore contact persons in the area.

• Meetings are organized in different administrational levels: this way information on monitoring results can be shared, and most importantly: **good personal contacts can be created and maintained** to facilitate flow of information on everyday, or in practice, at least on a monthly basis.
Comparison of large carnivore observations (also DNA), damages and LC harvest/mortality (damage based kills, management hunt and other mortality)
According to the updated Finnish wolf management plan, Finland is also ready to cooperate with Sweden to translocate wolves from Finland to Central Sweden, in case the genetical diversity cannot be secured based on natural migration.

The plan includes also targets to enhance and train the large carnivore contact person network especially in the Finnish reindeer management area: **reindeer herders know the area, and are thus key stakeholders in monitoring the presence of all large carnivores.**
Transboundary cooperation in the future?

• continuing the active work of the existing Nordic networks

• open (in some cases revive) new directions and contacts for cooperation (i.e. Russia)

• securing resources for transboundary cooperation

"Across four countries"

Thank you for your attention!