

Abstract

After an absence of more than 90 years, the first wolf returned to Germany in 1996. Today, 23 years later 89 packs are inhabiting Germany again and their presence has caused a heated debate on how to integrate large carnivores into a densely populated country like Germany. One of the main aspects of the debate is the depredation on livestock that burdens many livestock owners financially and emotionally. To mitigate the conflict, the German federal states established wolf management plans and institutions that should, amongst other things, support livestock owners to deal with all issues caused by wolves. This thesis analyzes how livestock owners perceive the wolf management and how it could be further developed in order to better support livestock owners. I chose a qualitative empirical approach and conducted twelve semi-structured interviews with livestock owners in Baden-Württemberg and Saxony, two federal states that strongly differ within their experience with wolves. Furthermore, I analyzed and compared the wolf management in both states. The respondents generally reported a strong dissatisfaction with the wolf management. They criticized that the wolf management is mainly focused on the financial damages, rather than the emotional burden that the wolf causes. The main wish that the respondents expressed was to establish some kind of population control such as a limitation of population numbers or wolf-free zones. Thus, I suggest the general consideration of population control in the wolf management and developed six further improvement options that could help to adjust the wolf management to the needs of livestock owners and thereby mitigate the wolf-livestock-conflict. Thereby, not only the livestock owners could be supported but also the long-term establishment of the wolf.