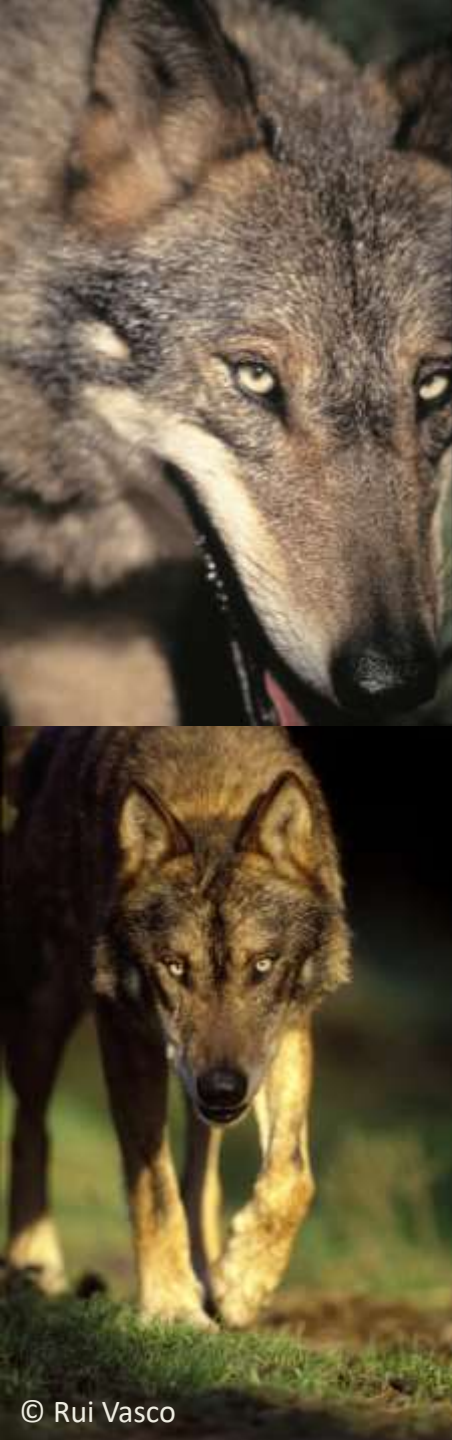




International Symposium on Wildlife Damages Experiences from Abroad Grosseto, 9 Nov. 2017

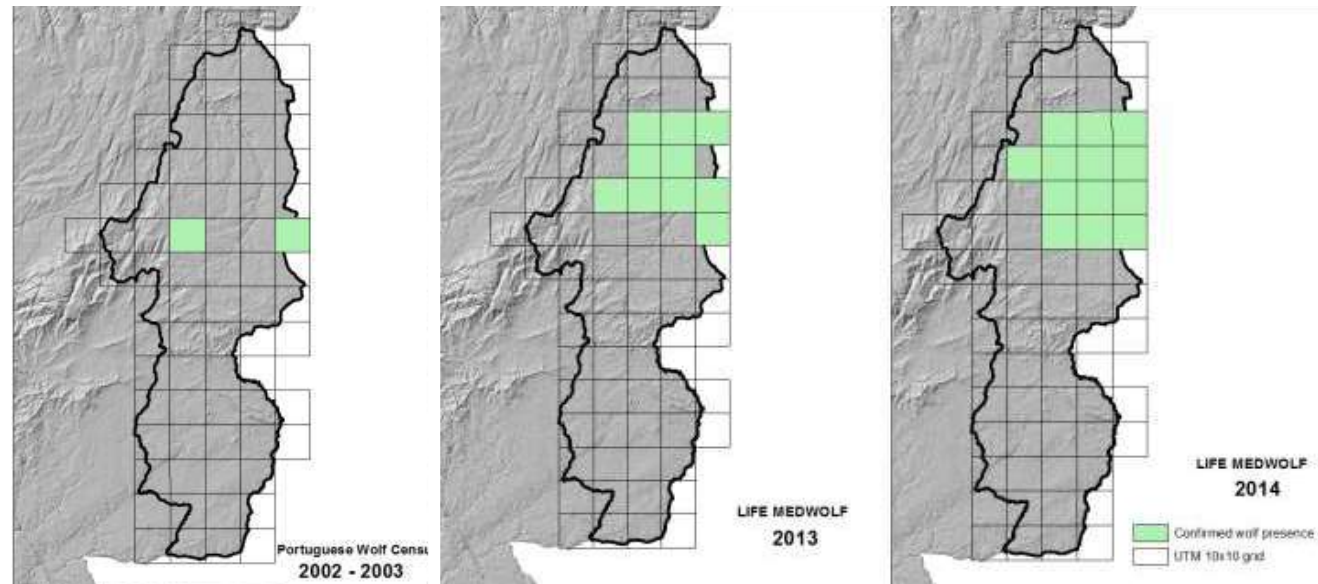
Promoting LGDs
MedWolf Project in Portugal
Silvia Ribeiro





Recent Wolf Trend

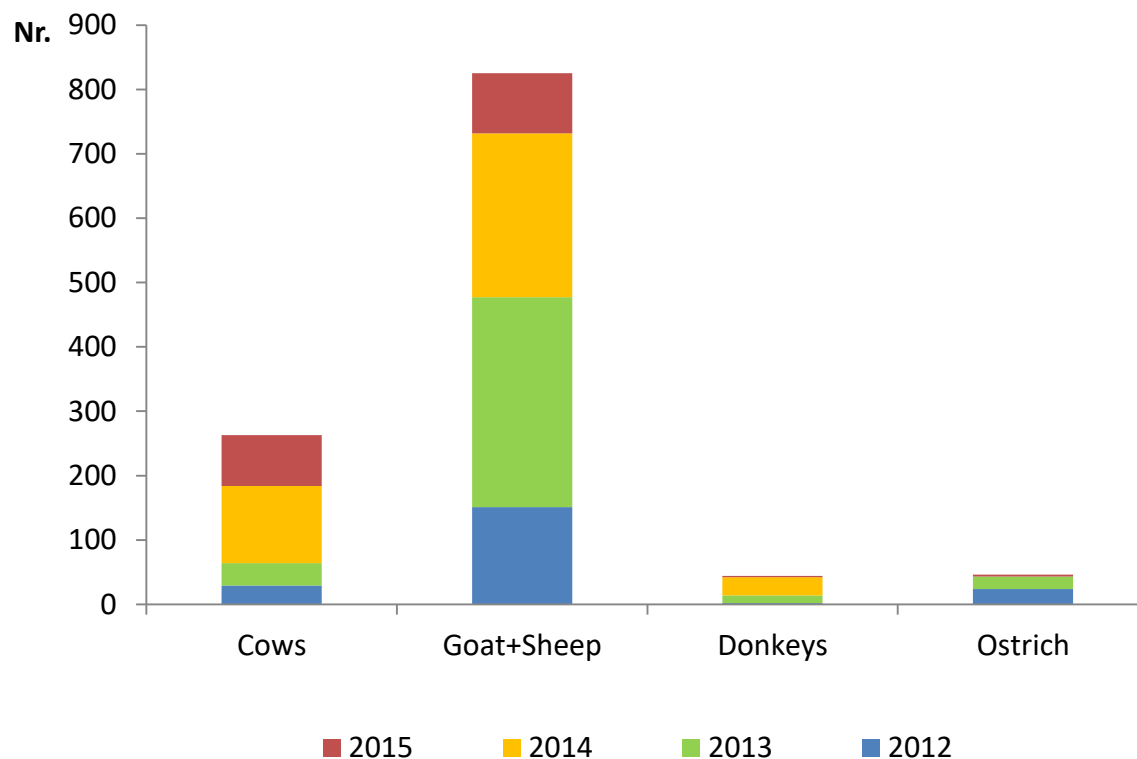
- Episodes of local establishment of packs and re-colonisations, in the last decade
- In the SE region of the south of the Douro nucleus, along the border with Spain, the wolf range increased in 12 years (2002-2014)





Damage Increase

- Wolf damages increased from 2012 to 2015





Recipe for Conflict

Suitable habitat for the wolf

Higher density of livestock and scarcity of wild prey

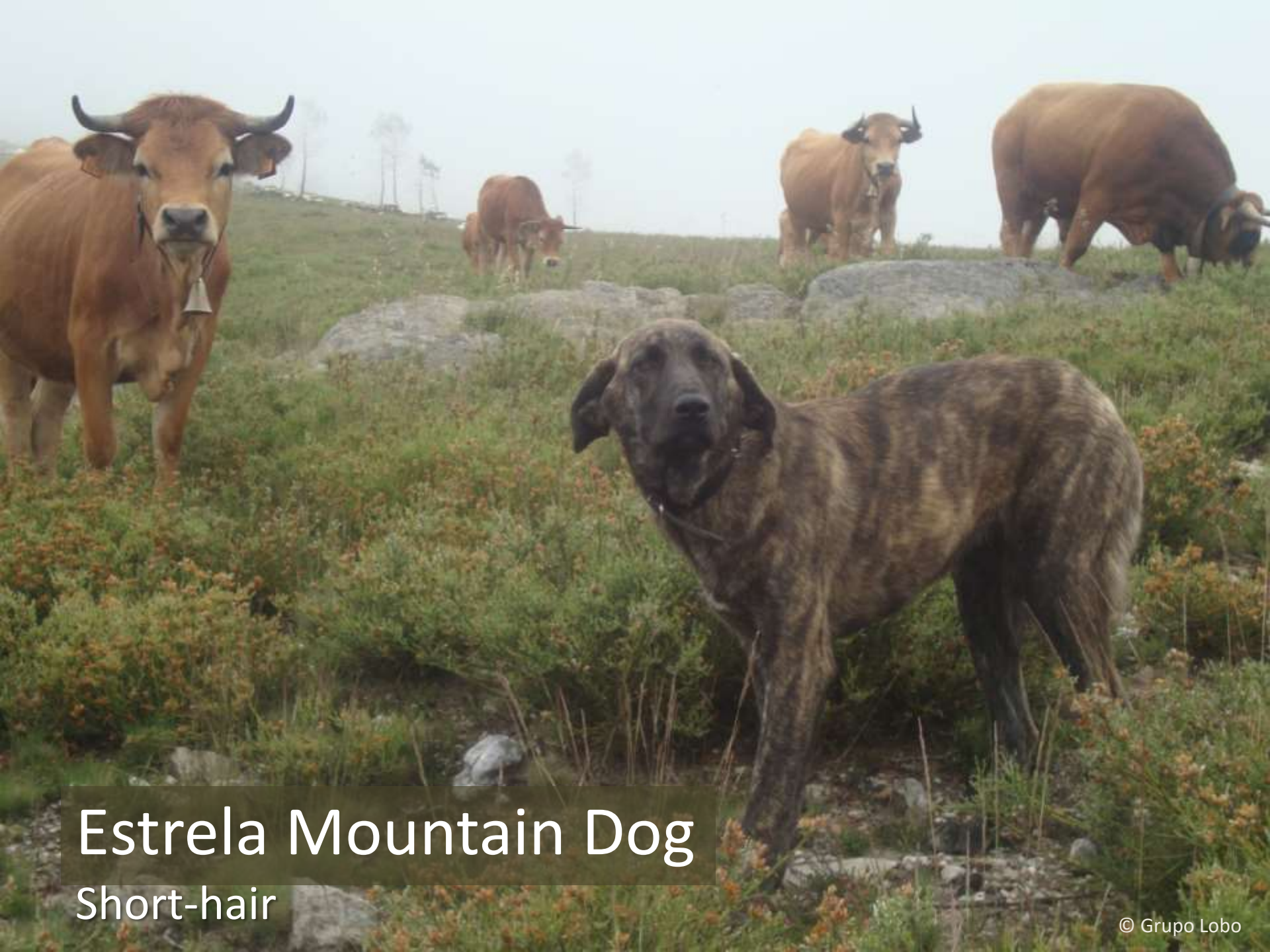
Livestock extensively grazed year-round

Large pastures rudimentary fenced



Estrela Mountain Dog

Long-hair

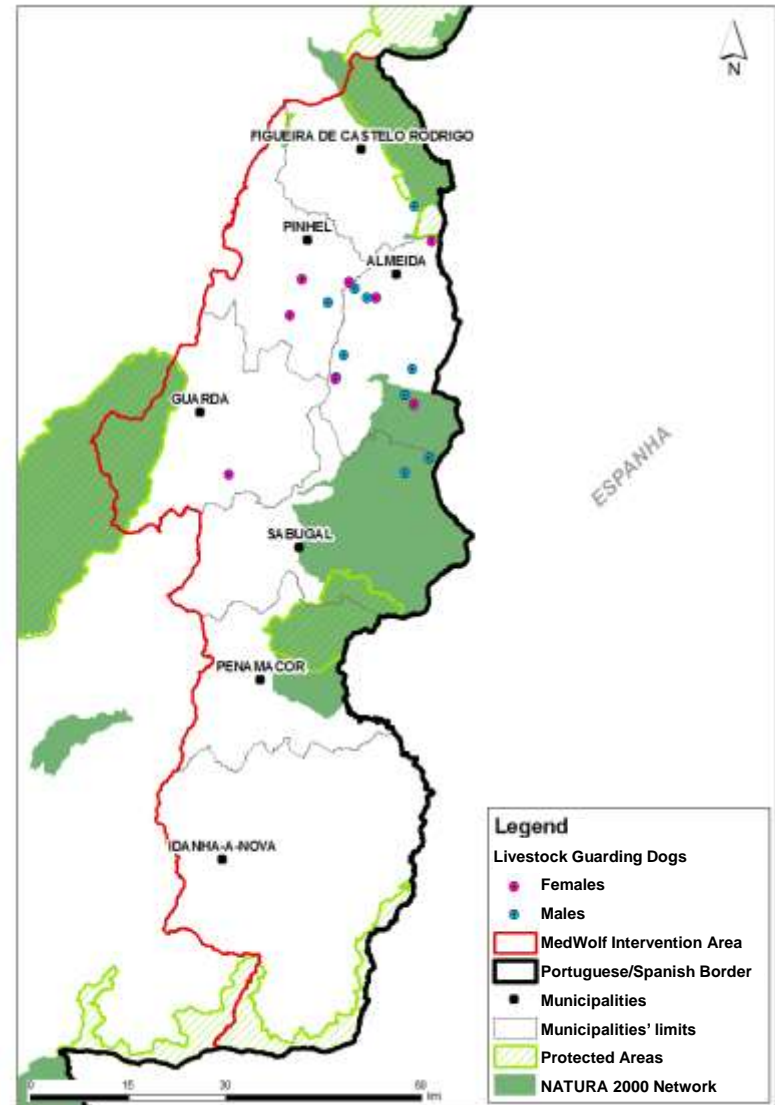


Estrela Mountain Dog
Short-hair



Dogs Donated

- 31 LGDs (16 M+15 F)
- 16 farmers/holdings
 - 1-4 dogs/holding
 - 7 cows (#30-500)
 - 7 sheep (#180-600)
 - 1 goats (#80)
 - 1 donkeys (#8)





Preliminary Results



Damage analysis

- There was a decrease in damage of $\geq 60\%$ in the number of animals killed (ex-ant vs. ex-post comparison)

Behaviour analysis

- Most adult dogs are behaving properly (62%)
Attentive (stay/follow), trustworthy (do not disturb/injure), and protective of livestock

Owner satisfaction

- 64% farmers are satisfied with their adult dogs, and recommend to others



Difficulties



Technical » Extensive cattle grazing

- Reduced bonding opportunities between dogs and cattle
 - year round in pastures, never confined
- Aggressive cattle
 - not used to being handled, harassed by wolves





Difficulties



Technical » Extensive cattle grazing

- Large pastures promote dispersal of herds
- Calving in pastures, throughout the year
 - females move away from the herd to calve







Difficulties



Technical » Extensive cattle grazing

- Large pastures promote dispersal of herds
- Calving in pastures, throughout the year
 - females move away from the herd to calve
- Large and remote pastures, make vigilance difficult
- LGDs and livestock health surveillance
- No shelter for cattle and LGDs
- LGDs breeding control



Difficulties



Economic

- Increased time-effort to train and maintain LGDs
- Costs for LGD maintenance

Social and Cultural

- Lack of affinity with LGDs
- Lack of motivation to use LGDs
- Lack of experience (knowledge/tradition) on the use and proper rearing of LGDs
- LGDs considered as pets not working dogs
- Conflicts with the community
- Legal liability concerns
- Distrust of Project technicians



Best Practices



Economic

- Increase subsidies for LGDs maintenance
(state subsidy active since 2015, but clearly insufficient, maximum 700 euros for 2 dogs/holding/year)

Social and Cultural

- Provide information and technical support
- Awareness raising to the function/use of LGDs
- Demonstration flocks/herds
- Liability insurances



Best Practices



Technical » Extensive cattle grazing

- Slight change in management in the beginning: confine the first pups with cattle/calves or with replacement heifers for a few months (from 2-6 months of the pups' age)





Best Practices



Technical » Extensive cattle grazing

- Place the pups in temporary fences close to the cattle's feeding/bedding site, so that all cows are familiar with the dogs
- Build permanent shelters for cattle or mobile shelters for LGDs, particularly in winter



Best practices



Technical » Extensive cattle grazing

- Reduce size of grazing areas to limit livestock dispersal
- Increase control visits during calving periods
- Examine the dogs' physical condition daily
- Spay/neuter or use contraceptives to control breeding
- Implement GPS collars to better monitor/control LGDs



International Symposium
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Experiences from Abroad
Grosseto, 9 Nov. 2017

The Human Dimension
MedWolf Project in Portugal
Clara Espírito Santo



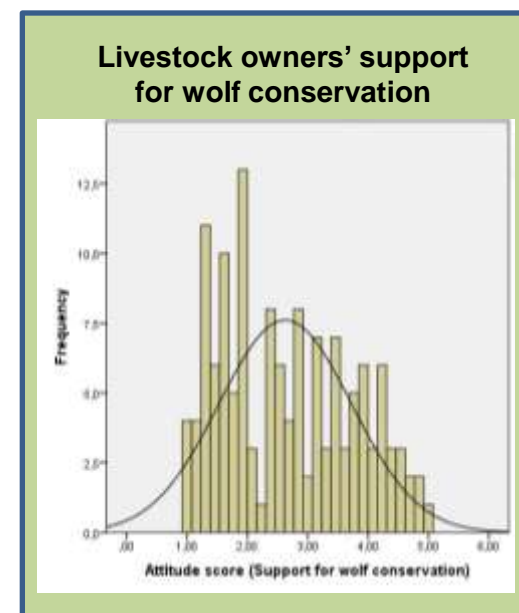
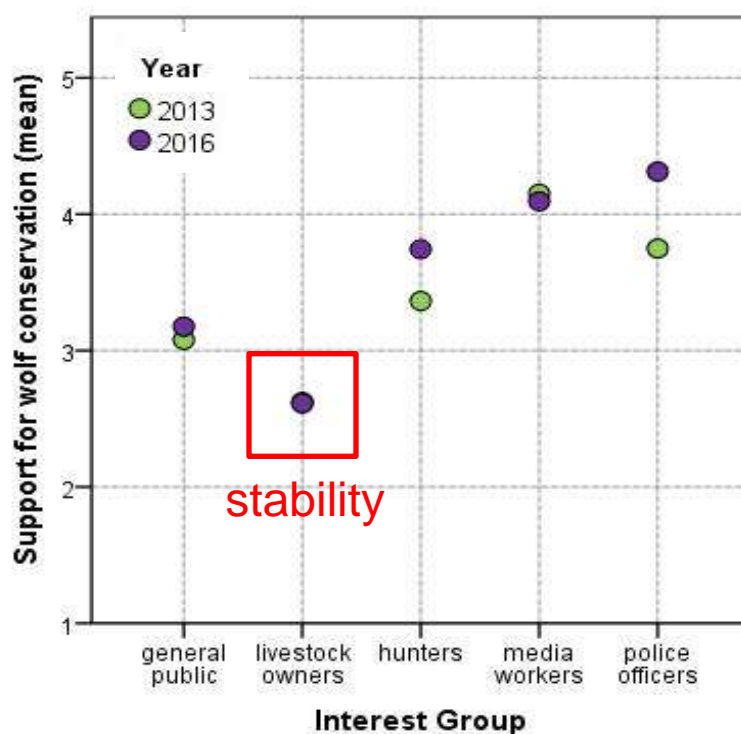


Farmers' Attitudes

Personal interviews: Total: 359 (2013) + 377 (2016)

Farmers: 62 (2013) + 84 (2016)

Support for wolf conservation before and after



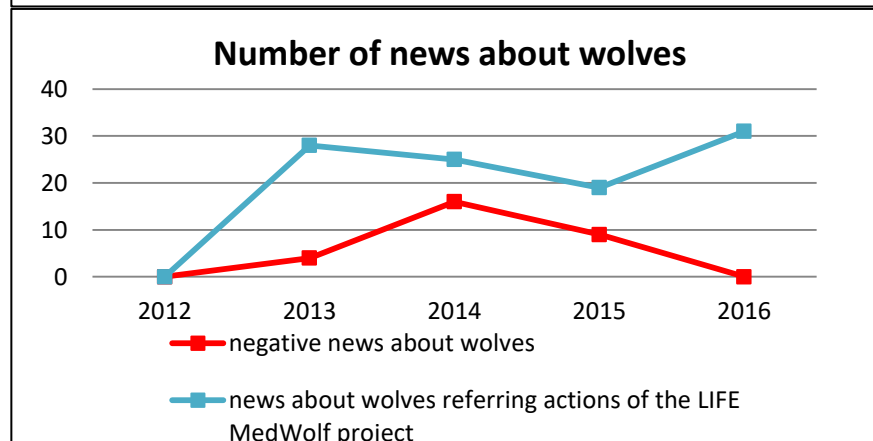
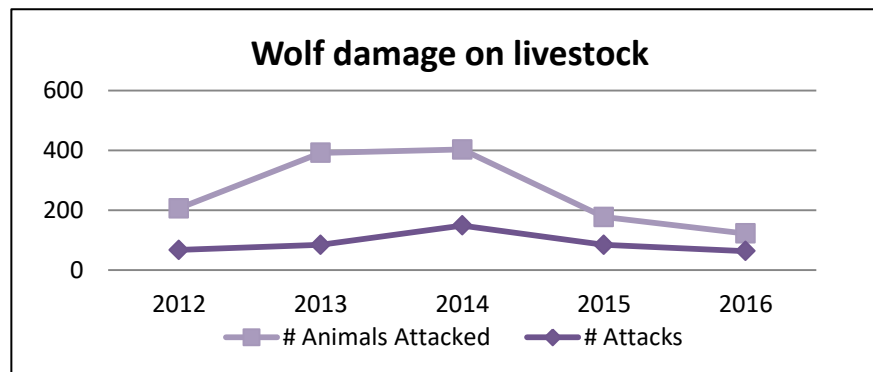


Farmers' Attitudes

What was happening outside the project?

Factors that may have influenced attitudes:

- Peak of damage caused by wolves on livestock;
- Peak of negative news on local press;



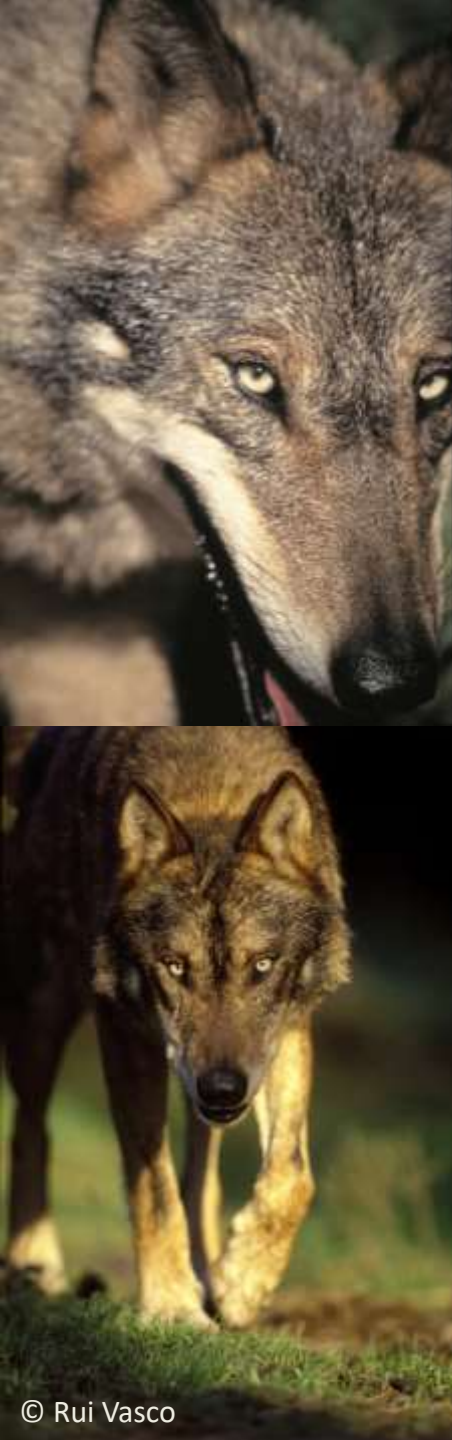


Farmers' Attitudes

What was happening outside the project?

- **Delays in payment of compensations** for damage caused by wolves, by the central administration
- **Low and decreasing value paid for livestock** killed by wolves, in particular for veal calves
- Political rethoric
- **Lack of information regarding the application procedures for subsidies** from the government for **livestock guarding dogs** in wolf areas
- (Common belief that) Wolves are being reintroduced by authorities, researchers or wolf conservationists

Issues based on information provided informally by farmers interviewed in 2016



Final Considerations



- It is difficult to implement new prevention measures in areas recently recolonized by wolves due to social-cultural, economic and technical constraints
- It is important to work the social aspects, implement a participatory approach, provide support and raise awareness
- Husbandry changes may take several years to be accepted and adequately implemented, since they are dependent on the experience gathered, the trust building and the economic incentives available
- The possibility afforded by the LIFE Program to promote concrete actions is a good opportunity to start the process towards a better coexistence with endangered predators, like the wolf

A dramatic landscape featuring a dark, rocky hill in the foreground. Two dogs are silhouetted against the sky as they stand on the ridge of the hill. The sky is filled with soft, grey clouds, and a bright sun is visible at the top center, creating a lens flare effect. A semi-transparent green rectangular box is positioned in the upper middle of the image, containing the text "Thank you!" and "Grazie!".

Thank you!
Grazie!

www.medwolf.eu