

INTRODUCTION

- Hybridization - a threat to wolf conservation in areas where small wolf populations coexist with high numbers of feral dogs.
- Genetic testing has ascertained the presence of hybrids throughout the Italian wolf range.
- 2010 project "LIFE10NAT/IT/265 Ibrewolf", aimed at developing techniques to identify hybrids and limit their presence.
- Study objective: investigate stakeholder knowledge and attitudes toward wolves, feral dogs and hybrids.

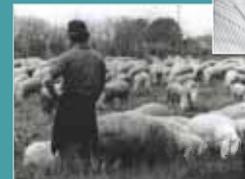
STUDY AREA



STAKEHOLDER GROUPS

744 structured interviews
(time period: May - September 2012)

- Local residents (n=400)
- Livestock breeders (n=97)
- Hunters (n=71)
- High school students (n=176)



THE QUESTIONNAIRE

Opinions regarding the presence and management of

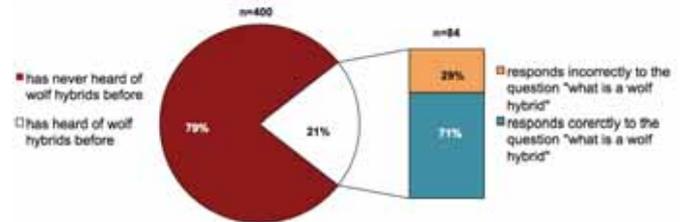
- Wolves
- Feral dogs
- Wolf-dog hybrids

Knowledge of wolves and hybrids

Socio-demographic background



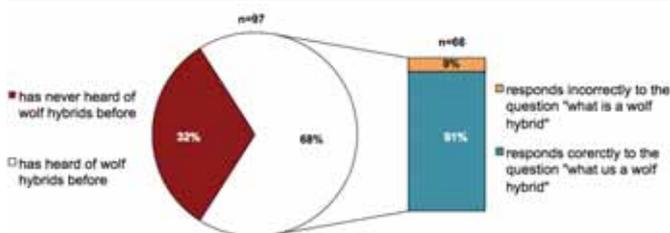
RESULTS: local residents' knowledge of wolf-dog hybrids



After being provided with a definition of hybrids...

- 53% of respondents perceived them as a threat to wolf conservation

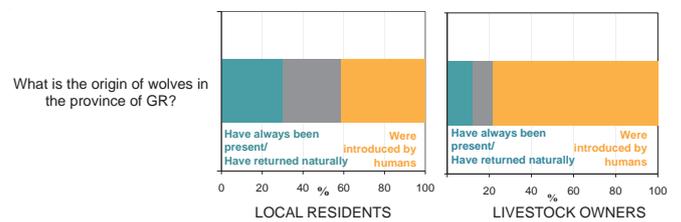
RESULTS: livestock owners' knowledge of wolf-dog hybrids



- 46% of livestock owners perceived hybrids to be present in the territory in abundant numbers

"...they are not pure wolves, they are (mixed) with dogs, so can you tell me, what is the point of conserving them?"

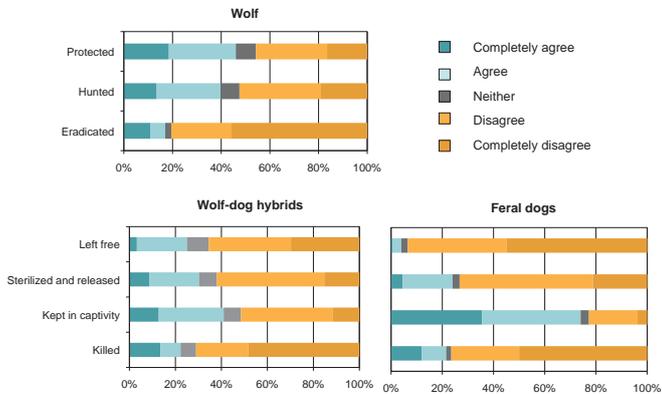
RESULTS: knowledge of the origin of wolves



"... (wolves) should be found only in the right habitat ... and they should not be introduced"

"Since wolves have been introduced (livestock owners) should not pay to be insured against something that is not part of the local environment".

RESULTS: Management opinions of local residents



MODEL RESULTS

y= hybrids should be left free (1-5)

Coefficients:

	Standardized coefficient	standard error	t value	p value	
(Intercept)	0.22	12.31	< 0.001	***	
livestock owner	-0.16	0.09	-5.09	< 0.001	***
hunter	-0.15	0.09	-4.73	< 0.001	***
age	-0.13	2e-03	-3.54	< 0.001	***
hybrids are a threat to wolves	-0.08	0.03	-2.60	< 0.05	*
it is important to conserve wolves for future generations	0.26	0.03	7.13	< 0.001	***
perceived threat of hybrids	-0.30	0.04	-9.00	< 0.001	***
education level	-0.09	0.05	-2.42	< 0.05	*

Multiple R-squared: 0.4491

Adjusted R-squared: 0.4437

F-statistic: 83.84 on 7 and 720 DF, p-value: <0.001

CONCLUSIONS

- 📌 Information campaigns to increase awareness of
 - 📌 wolf conservation
 - 📌 responsible dog ownership
- 📌 Communication strategies
 - 📌 that promote trust and cooperation between wildlife managers and those most affected by wolf presence
- 📌 Management interventions
 - 📌 aimed at reducing conflict and alleviating the costs of wolf damages for those who bear them