

Harmless or vicious hunter? The uneasy return of Europe's wolves

Level 1 • Pre-intermediate / Intermediate

1 Warmer

Find and underline these words in the article. Then, match them to the meanings.

- | | |
|------------|---|
| 1. pack | a. baby wolves |
| 2. litter | b. the collective noun for a group of wolves |
| 3. puppies | c. a group of baby animals that are born at the same time |

2 Key words

Match the key words with the definitions. Then, find them in the article to read them in context. The paragraph numbers will help you.

law

cull

protected

endangered

mainland

- a large mass of land that forms the main part of a country or continent but does not include any islands _____ (para 1)
- If animals are _____, the law stops people from harming them. (para 4)
- an official rule that people must obey _____ (para 4)
- the act of killing animals, especially to stop the population from becoming too large _____ (para 4)
- If an animal is _____, it may soon no longer exist. (para 5)

pastures

compensation

adapt

fence

predators

- land covered with grass where sheep, cows etc are kept _____ (para 8)
- a structure made of wood or wire that surrounds an area of land _____ (para 8)
- change your ideas or behaviour so that you can deal with a new situation _____ (para 10)
- money that someone gets because something bad has happened to them _____ (para 11)
- animals that kill and eat other animals _____ (para 17)

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26 January, 2018

- 1 The number of wolves in Europe is increasing. And now, the wolf has finally returned to Belgium, the only mainland European country that had no wolves.
- 2 After crossing the Alps from Italy to France in 1992 and from Poland into Germany at the beginning of this century, the wolf has returned to areas where many people live.
- 3 Experts say the number of wolves in Germany is growing quickly and they are moving into Luxembourg, the Netherlands and Denmark, which discovered its first wolf pack for 200 years in spring, 2017.
- 4 The wolf is protected by EU law but more and more people don't want it so some politicians want to kill the wolves. France agreed a cull of up to 40 wolves after farmers' protests in 2017. When the number of wolf packs in Germany reached 60, the German agriculture minister said that numbers must be controlled by culling. Finland has culled its wolves down to 150 and Norway is culling about half of its 100 wolves.
- 5 People in cities and towns in Norway protested against the cull. The Norwegian government wants no more than four to six litters of wolf puppies each year. "That will reduce the number of wolves back down to a level that would make the wolf endangered. We think that is against the law," said Ingrid Lomelde, conservation director for the animal charity WWF (the World Wide Fund for Nature).
- 6 For Erling Aas-Eng, a farmer in Hedmark, where there are many wolves, attitudes about the wolf show a lack of understanding between town and country. "This distance is growing. Twenty years ago, everybody had a grandmother who lived in the countryside. Now, people in big cities don't know about our lives in the countryside."
- 7 Norway's government gives money to help farmers change from sheep to cattle, which wolves don't attack, but it is difficult for farmers to change, says Aas-Eng.
- 8 Some of Norway's pastures are large and remote so farmers can't keep sheep in small areas with fences like in other European countries. "We need a lot of wires and a lot of electricity and most of the time the wolf finds a way through the fence," said Aas-Eng.
- 9 Many farmers do not want wolves at all in Norway. "We think we shouldn't have wolves in Norway," said Aas-Eng. "It's not a good idea to allow them in."
- 10 Since the first wolf pack arrived in Saxony in 2000, Germany has been trying to adapt to the return of the wolf.
- 11 In many German states, farmers are given electric fences and guard dogs for farm animals. Farmers get money (up to €15,000 over three years in Brandenburg) and lots of compensation for dead animals.
- 12 In Saxony, "problem" wolves that hunt farm animals or get too close to humans get a GPS collar so that people can watch where they go and begin to understand their behaviour. A "problem" wolf is only shot if there is no other solution.
- 13 Public education has helped people accept the wolves. The Wolves in Saxony programme educates local people and visits schools. In 2006, 84% of the people in Saxony were positive or neutral about wolves. But the number of wolves is increasing, so more people are probably negative about them now.
- 14 Valeska de Pellegrini, wolf commissioner in the German state of Brandenburg, is hopeful. "If people are not used to something, they are afraid," she said. "When the wolves are new to an area, people don't like to have the wolf but if they learn to live together over many years, people get more friendly with the wolf."
- 15 The future must be "land sharing", where humans and wolves live together, says Guillaume Chapron from Sweden's University of Agricultural Sciences.
- 16 Chapron says Germany has done well to adapt to the wolf. He also sees that people are happier to live with wolves in southern Europe, especially in Spain and Portugal, where there are 3,000 wolves.
- 17 According to Chapron, Europe must learn from Africa. "It's insulting to the world that one of the richest countries, Norway, cannot have more than 50 wolves but Botswana, Mozambique and other extremely poor countries in Africa are working really very hard to keep their lions. Imagine how angry people would be if those countries wanted to kill half of their lions! We need African countries to teach us rich Europeans how to live with predators."

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3 Summarizing the article

Use the key words from task 2 to complete the statements about the article.

1. Belgium was the only _____ European country with no wolves.
2. Norway plans to _____ half of its wolves.
3. According to the WWF, this will make the wolf an _____ animal again in Norway.
4. Wolves are _____ by _____ in the European Union.
5. Wolves are _____. They eat sheep and deer.
6. Some _____ in Norway do not have a lot of grass or plants so sheep need a big area of land.
7. Wolves are clever and have learnt how to get through electric _____.
8. In Germany, farmers get _____ if wolves kill their sheep.
9. Guillaume Chapron says we must _____ and learn to live with wolves, the way people in Africa live with lions.

4 A useful expression

1. In paragraph 14, Valeska de Pellegrini says, 'If people are not used to something, they are afraid.' What does *be used to* mean in this quote?

- a. do something in the past
- b. be familiar with something

2. Complete the sentences with information about yourself.

I am used to ... but I will never get used to ...

E.g. I am used to getting up at 6.30 every morning but I will never get used to travelling to work by bus – I hate it!

5 Discussion

- How do you feel about the return of wolves to mainland Europe?
- Which big wild animals live within 10km of your home?
 - o Do you ever see them?
 - o How do you know they are there?
 - o What do they eat?
 - o Are any of them predators?
 - o Do they cause problems for farmers or other people?

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6 Webquest

Find the infographic in the online article. How do you think the wolf got to Belgium?

E.g. Maybe it came from ..., then walked across ... into ...

www.theguardian.com/environment/2018/jan/26/harmless-or-vicious-hunter-the-uneasy-return-of-europes-wolves

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KEY

1 Warmer

1. b
2. c
3. a

2 Key words

1. mainland
2. protected
3. law
4. cull
5. endangered
6. pastures
7. fence
8. adapt
9. compensation
10. predators

3 Summarizing the article

1. mainland
2. cull
3. endangered
4. protected; law
5. predators
6. pastures
7. fences
8. compensation
9. adapt

4 A useful expression

- 1.
- b

Teacher's note: You can look at the 'Get it right!' box here to help students understand the ways to use *used to*.

www.macmillandictionary.com/dictionary/british/used-to_1#used-to_1_8