6. Wolf Management as Affect Management

The affective dynamics of wolf management

In the last chapter, I outlined the subjective experience of wolf-related feelings for different actors and placed them within the larger intersubjective affective structures (ethos, sentiments) of the respective social movement or community of practice. This has allowed me to show how attitudes and opinions about wolves are affectively coloured and how conflicts with wolves and about wolves are subject to affective dynamics.

The purpose of this chapter is to clarify the extent to which these affects outlined above are not only structurally shaped by ethos and sentiments but are also 'made' in a very different way. For affects are not only subjectively experienced as something given with a vital dynamic of its own; they can also become an object (to be controlled), something that can be modulated, directed, transformed, governed. In other words, the affective dynamic becomes something that can be intervened by means of management measures. Accordingly, the aim here is to describe and understand wolf management and its practices as a kind of affect management.

In Germany, wolf management is organised at state level under the overall guidance of the Federal Ministry for the Environment, Nature Conservation and Nuclear Safety (BMUV) and the Federal Agency for Nature Conservation (BfN). Overall, the legal framework is based on the strict protection status of Annex IV of the EU Habitats Directive, which has so far been strictly adhered to (in contrast to Sweden and France). The reasons for this German approach can be found firstly in the high value placed on nature conservation in general and wolves in particular (in contrast to most Eastern European countries); secondly, and on this basis, Germany was one of the main drivers of the Habitats Directive and had a vested interest in seeing it applied to the letter; and thirdly, it was discussed and signed in the late 1980s, early 1990s, when wolves (and po-

tential conflicts) were still unthinkable in Germany. This strict approach is also reflected in the general, unquantified objective of wolf management, which is to achieve a 'favourable conservation status', i.e. to establish and maintain a viable wolf population (in contrast to Norway, Sweden and France, which have defined a maximum number of wolves). Germany also has a coexistence or land-sharing policy (partly in contrast to the Fenno-Scandinavian countries with their 'wolf-free' reindeer areas), based on the belief that wolves and livestock farming should be possible with a minimum of conflict. Although the details vary from federal state to federal state, it can generally be said that wolf management uses a mix of instruments to ensure coexistence, focusing mainly on subsidies for the implementation of protection measures, compensation for livestock losses and guidelines for dealing with potential 'problem wolves', including their 'lethal removal'.

As can be seen from this summary, wolf management is a deeply political endeavour that must address and reconcile not only species conservation but also conflict resolution. Wolf management is political not only in the narrower sense (i.e. as part of an institutionalised political field, operated by professional political actors), but above all in the broader sense, as part of a broadly conceived sphere of the political, "where human individuals and collectives determine—either jointly or adversely—what their finite earthly existence will ultimately look like: the how of their living together and relating to one another".[1] Wolf management is a special case, however, because it is not only human existence that is being negotiated, but also a more-than-human coexistence between humans and animals. In these negotiations, power relations (both between human actors and between these actors and the wolves) and ideas about cultural norms and values are manifested. In the words of Jonas Bens and colleagues: "The political usually entails negotiating, debating, or at least positioning oneself with regard to 'right' and 'wrong' or 'good' and 'bad' in a given context".[2] Accordingly, in wolf management (or in society as a whole) there is much room for negotiation and interpretation about how wolves and humans should live together. However, in contrast to the Fenno-Scandinavian countries in particular, the German *Länder* have so far been reluctant to adopt participatory models of co-management that would involve stakeholders in decision-

1 Slaby, Jan/Bens, Jonas: 'Political Affect', in: J. Slaby/C. v. Scheve (eds.), Affective Societies, p. 349.

2 Bens, Jonas et al.: The Politics of Affective Societies – An Interdisciplinary Essay. Bielefeld: transcript 2019, p. 19, https://doi.org/10.14361/9783839447628.

making processes. There are consultation mechanisms, such as informal round tables, to which the ministries invite, but overall, the opportunities to have a real influence on institutionalised wolf management are very limited.

The power of wolf management in Germany can thus be seen as concentrated in the hands of state institutions. In some previous work on wolf management, governance and policy in countries such as Switzerland, Norway or the USA, 'official' (state-institutionalised) wolf management is often understood in Foucauldian terms as a disciplinary regime of power and surveillance, and wolves as more or less passive 'objects' of power.[3] The practice of wolf monitoring is used as an example to show how wolves are made visible through the collection of scientific data, through methods of classification and categorisation, and made controllable and thus governable through such regimes of knowledge that feed into concrete management actions. When wolf management is thus seen as part of a broader biopolitical (in terms of wildlife population management) or necropolitical (in terms of hunting or removal of wildlife) regime, one might get the impression that a wolf management regime has total control over wolves and that their management is merely a translation of theory (policy) into practice. However, the state wolf management regimes in Germany share certain characteristics that are hard to reconcile with such a pronounced claim to power on the part of the state: few staff, centralised (rather than locally dispersed) administration, outsourcing of work to volunteers, a passive monitoring regime, hardly any GPS-collared wolves, hardly any dietary analysis of wolf scat, hardly any scientific wolf research, and so on. Ultimately, the strength of wolf management depends largely on the allocation of resources, as wolf management is only one element in a suite of conservation measures, as the ecologist Nicolas Schoof and his colleagues have recently argued.[4]

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3 See Rinfret, Sara: 'Controlling animals: Power, Foucault, and species management', in: Society and Natural Resources 22 (2009), pp. 571–578, https://doi.org/10.1080/08941920802029375; Nustad, Karin/Swanson, Heather: 'Political ecology and the Foucault effect: A need to diversify disciplinary approaches to ecological management?', in: Environment and Planning E: Nature and Space, 5 (2022), pp. 924–946. https://doi.org/10.1177/25148486211015044; Stokland, Håkon: 'Conserving Wolves by Transforming Them? The Transformative Effects of Technologies of Government in Biodiversity Conservation', in: Society and Animals 29 (2020), pp. 1–21.

4 Schoof, Nicolas et al.: 'Der Wolf in Deutschland. Herausforderungen für weidebasierte Tierhaltungen und den praktischen Naturschutz', in: Naturschutz und Landschaftsplanung 53.1 (2021), p. 10–19, https://doi.org/10.1399/NuL.2021.01.01.

A spokesman for the Rhineland-Palatinate Ministry of the Environment described the situation at a public event as follows:

> With regard to scenarios, I can tell you that we were of course surprised—and you know this—by the return of the wolf to Germany and Rhineland-Palatinate. It is also a fact that we basically—and here I also speak for the other federal states—that we basically don't know what the wolves are doing 95 percent of the time in the federal states—because you have to remember that not all wolves have transmitters … That means they move around in our landscape, they move around in the forests, they are also inconspicuous 95 percent of the time. We don't see them. Even if a wolf is encountered from time to time, is detected by a wildlife camera, those are the only points where we see them. So we cannot say that this and that is the scenario of how they [the wolf population] will develop. Retrospectively, it's easy to show that when you recapitulate the data you have. But many of the occurrences of wolves are sudden. For example, there was the one alpine wolf that appeared in the national park a few weeks ago and has since disappeared. We don't know where the animal is, if it has migrated to Belgium, […] and Wolf Billy has been run over or shot in France, I think […] we always find out about that much later. In that respect, such scenarios […] would imply that one has a detailed overview all the time, and quite frankly one does not have that.[5]

If we want to better understand human-wolf conflicts in Germany, we must therefore turn the previous power- and knowledge-focused perspectives on their head: While it seems conclusive that the production of knowledge about wolves feeds into regimes of power over and management of wolves, we must acknowledge how patchy and incomplete this knowledge is. The wolf management regime faces the challenge of establishing governability largely on the basis of scarce scientific knowledge and scarce resources. In relation to wolves, this means that management institutions have difficulty accessing wolves at all. Any access is primarily a challenge to those exercising power, not to the ('resisting') wolves!

If we want to stay with a Foucauldian concept of power in relation to wolf management, we need a different reading that foregrounds the discontinuities, the fragility, the inconsistencies of political processes, as well

5 Species Protection Officer (*Referent*) of the Rhineland-Palatinate Ministry of the Environment in the Q&A session of a public information event on the wolf in Neitersen, 22.06.2021.

as the need for constant renewal and confirmation or perpetuation of the power structures.[6] This precarious 'order of the discourse', or perhaps more accurately the ordering efforts of discourse, become apparent when we turn to the actual practice of management and emphasise its corporeal and affective foundations. In other words, we need to understand wolf management as affect management.

Such an approach is not only consistent with the conceptual framework that underlies this book but is also crucial to understanding a central problem of wolf management. Affective dynamics have a life of their own and can counteract the goals of management. This destabilising potential of affects is well known to wolf managers and was recognised as a problem early on. For example, a 2007 publication by the Federal Agency for Nature Conservation (Bundesamt für Naturschutz, BfN) summarised the social acceptance of wolves as follows:

The vast majority of the population has a positive attitude towards wolves. There is little public interest in wolves in Germany, the level of knowledge is low, and the interest in further information on wolves is not very high. The overwhelmingly positive opinion of the respondents is not very consolidated and there is a *risk that the mood will tip into the negative if major problems arise.*[7]

We can therefore see that wolf management is always confronted with an affective dynamic that has the potential to jeopardise the conservation of wolves and therefore requires some form of management or, one might say, *affective governance.*[8]

Affect management as *affective governance* is primarily an attempt to establish governability by taming 'negative' and promoting 'positive' affective dynamics. In doing so, wolf management proceeds in an immersive-spreading manner, i.e. it attempts to establish its field of power over a large area by multiplying its control mechanisms over several levels, thereby involving as many of the relevant actors as possible or minimising their power by excluding them. In many federal states, for example, various actors have a say in the development of wolf management through their participation at so-called round ta-

6 See Chrulew, Matthew/Wadiwel, Joseph (eds): Foucault and Animals, Leiden: Brill, 2017.

7 Reinhardt, Ilka/Kluth, Gesa: Leben mit Wölfen – Leitfaden für den Umgang mit einer konfliktträchtigen Tierart in Deutschland (= BfN-Skript 201), Bonn: Bundesamt für Naturschutz 2007 (translated by TG).

8 J. Slaby/J. Bens: Political Affect, p. 345.

bles, to which hunting associations, associations of livestock owners, and nature conservation associations are usually invited. Radical voices, however, are rarely heard. The exclusion of animal welfare organisations such as *Wolfsschutz Deutschland* from the round table has already standardised the range of acceptable intensities of affect. Only moderate affects—those regulated and tamed by reason—are supposed to contribute to rational management and be considered conducive to the goal. In this way, it is hoped that extreme antagonism between the parties involved, which could lead to violent outbursts of affect, can be countered.

As long as there is public support for the return of wolves and the attempt at coexistence, this interest, this opinion, this (precarious and changeable) mood must be stabilised and transformed into lasting dispositions, attitudes, and sentiments. In the words of Jan Slaby and Jonas Bens:

> The wielding of power, either in order to govern or to resist, is fundamentally an affective process. Insofar as politics is about the creation, maintenance and use of power, political actors understand the relevance of the creation of relatively stable affective dynamics to further political projects, both as a target for destabilization when it comes to their political opponents, as well as a goal to achieve for themselves.[9]

This is to be achieved primarily through the construction of general institutionalised legal frameworks, rather than through targeted individual interventions in affects. In this way, the protection of wolves as a species is meant to be removed from the volatility of the affects of individual actors or groups of actors. It is intended to create a 'path dependency' of coexistence-friendly sentiments and moods that, once established, would carry them into the future.[10] The most important of these path-dependent frameworks is the nesting of various nature conservation laws on the wolf as a protected species, ranging from the global level (Bern Convention) to the EU level (Flora-Fauna-Habitat Directive), to the national and state levels (federal and national nature conservation laws). This nesting of legal levels has proven to be particularly successful against applications for the removal of individual 'problem wolves' and has usually led to the rejection of the applications. However, the example of Olaf Lies, the former Environment Minister of Lower Saxony, who pushed through

9 J. Slaby/J. Bens: Political Affect, p. 345f.

10 Krzysztof Niedziałkowski: Between Europeanisation and politicisation.

several permits for the removal of wolves, often on shaky legal grounds, shows that resistance is possible within this *affective governance* regime if only the political will is there. However, this stable legal basis is accompanied by a still ambiguous and unconsolidated interpretation of the law, which can be creatively worked on by willing actors.

Affect management in the legal sphere therefore also includes a) the mere possibility, b) the threat, or c) the actual legal action in court—especially by nature conservation associations.[11] Moreover, it is precisely these possibilities for legal action that indicate that wolf management itself is an affective expression of a socially accepted and normatively understood value of species protection which is to be publicly enforced by the wolf management regime, but which is also open to public criticism if wolf management does not take this value seriously enough. *In a sense, conservation can be understood here as an institutionalised affect—that is, it is Sorge, a German word with two meanings: that of 'concern' or 'worry' (Sorgen-machen) and that of 'caring' (Fürsorge)*. In this reading, wolf management as an affect-led institution aims to socially establish and consolidate concern for the conservation of the wolf species, that is, to 'communitarise' it among citizens, so that they care about wolves and their conservation.[12]

Rationality as a guiding principle

Understanding species conservation as an affective value and wolf management as affect management may, however, be difficult for wolf managers. As in all administrative processes, affects have no real place here and are often ignored in the whole public-political discourse. The political scientist Nicolas Demertzis states:

> The marginalization of emotion in political analysis was to a large degree owed to: (a) the stripping of the dimension of passion from the political because it was associated with romantic and utopian conceptions unrelated to the modern public sphere as well as because of the more or less instrumental and neutral-procedural conception of politics, a popular view at the end of the 1960s as well as today [...]; (b) the supremacy of 'interest' as opposed

11 In Chapter 4 I mentioned the example of the Bautzen Landrat who did not want to order the removal of a wolf because of possible lawsuits from wolf supporters.

12 '[A] certain striving for communalization' of political emotion' (T. Szanto/J. Slaby: Political Emotions, p .14).

> to 'passion' as an explaining factor of political action [...] ; (c) the dominance for many years of the rational choice paradigm across a very large number of political science departments in the United States and Europe, in the context of which emotions are either conceived as irrational elements or are taken as objective traits which do not affect the actor's, by definition, 'rational' thinking [...].[13]

The discomfort of having to deal with affect in a wolf management regime is thus structurally and historically embedded. The value of nature conservation and species conservation underlying wolf management is not understood as an affective value, as suggested earlier, but as a rational value, and is seen to be underpinned by scientific research and knowledge. Thus, the guiding principle of 'rationality' is binding for both wolf management and public discourse on wolves in general. Rationality is a cultural matter of course, a value in itself, and is generally taken for granted by all parties to the wolf conflict, claimed for themselves and denied to the other party. This goes hand in hand with the devaluation of emotionality in any form: it can quickly be used to reprimand participants in the debate, who are then accused of being overly emotional (where any deviation from rationality is usually already considered 'overly' emotional). Rationality thus frames and shapes the discourse, seeking to exclude the irrational, to suppress expressions of emotion, to steer contributions to the debate towards rationality, and to enforce an orientation towards scientific knowledge.

According to this view, wolf conflicts are primarily fuelled by emotion on the one hand, and by a lack of factual knowledge on the other. Conflict resolution strategies in public relations, for example, therefore, often focus on the logical and rational communication of 'factual knowledge' (often referred to as 'education'). But this does not always go down well with wolf critics. The example of a public lecture event in the Westerwald illustrates the problem.

The Heimatverein Holzhausen—a local organisation that aims to promote both the local community and the local *Heimat*, including local nature conservation—has asked a fellow Westerwälder to give a talk on wolves. A retired zoologist and member of the Society for the Protection of Wolves, he had worked with various canids in a local game park and is also a sought-after 'wolf expert'

13 Demertzis, Nicolas (ed.): Emotions in Politics. The Affect Dimension in Political Tension. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan 2013, p. 1f.

for wolf management. He knows the wolf critics in his region from many public debates in which he often engages in heated emotional arguments (albeit on a familiar first-name basis). Wolf experts like him and the anti-wolf and pro-wolf groups in a region usually know each other. You always meet 'old acquaintances' when you go to a wolf event, he told me. His introductory words set the tone for his talk: "Most discussions between so-called wolf opponents and so-called wolf cuddlers […] are very emotional, very heated, but often without knowledge of the facts. And today I just want to give some facts, so that we can have a factual discussion".

Over the course of the evening, he provides a lot of facts on the biology and ecology of wolves, on the history of wolves in the Westerwald, and on herd protection and the impact of wolves on hunting. On the last two topics in particular, he spends more time on the arguments of the wolf critics, refuting them one by one with scientific facts.

From a purely factual point of view, his arguments do not appear to be open to attack, and there is no criticism from the ranks of the wolf opponents present. Only on the subject of herd protection does a concerned horse owner speak up and ask:

> [Horse owner:] I am a horse owner [...] and we are so desperate because we say we would like to fence in but we are not allowed to. The building regulations don't allow us to protect our animals and that's ridiculous. I keep horses that have been rescued from slaughter, bad husbandry, confiscation, and so on....
>
> [Speaker:] How many horses have been killed [by wolves] in Germany?
>
> [Horse owner:] No, it's bad about every single one.
>
> [Speaker:] Yes, of course. Of course, but there is no total protection.
>
> [Horse owner:] Yes, but it must be possible for us to protect our animals.
>
> [Speaker:] How many horses have been killed in Germany?[14]

14 Public information meeting, Holzhausen, 05.03.2020, author's minutes.

The discussion goes on for minutes until the horse owner finally gets so annoyed that she gets up, pushes her way through the narrow row of chairs, and leaves the event.

Such a scene is not uncommon. I have seen similar scenes at other events during my fieldwork. Again and again, it became apparent that rationality and emotionality meet and come into conflict, with rationality prevailing, at least in the short term and superficially, but without being able to convince the affectively irritated. On the contrary, affects rarely seem to be appeased by rationality; they are often intensified precisely by the confrontation with an affect-negating rationality. In the above example, the horse owner's concern at the wolf expert's answers (the constant recourse to the statistics on the number of horses killed by wolves) is intensified into annoyance. In other words: emotions are difficult to explain away—with a few (but important) exceptions.

I have already mentioned the results of an acceptance study which showed that most Germans neither know much about wolves nor are very interested in them. When these people live in areas where wolves then appear for the first time, some of them are affected by the newcomers: they may feel a little insecure (due to the potential danger and their ignorance about wolves) and worried (whether they can still go for a walk in the woods, walk their dog, etc.). At information events, these worried people regularly come to the wolf experts for advice and are usually reassured by factual, science-based answers. This is the group of people who is receptive to this kind of affective public relations work based on rationality.

But when it comes to people with more intense emotions, when the level of concern is higher, mere rationality does not seem to get you very far. It does not help if wolf management has no strategy beyond rational argumentation to address and influence affects in its favour. Wolf management as affect management is usually exhausted in the attempt to de-emotionalise the conflict and is carried out more implicitly than explicitly. This leads to inconsistencies in practice, to a narrowed perspective on what affect management could mean, and therefore leaves a lot of room for *affective resistance*;[15] in other words, affective dynamics can easily evade *affective governance* and go their own way with their own means. An expanded understanding of wolf management as affective management must therefore follow multi-layered and directionally ambivalent dynamics. It must take into account both state actors and an overall situation (an affective arrangement, in other words) in which a variety of actors

15 J. Slaby/J. Bens: Political Affect, p. 345.

attempt to regulate and modulate affects, feelings, atmospheres, moods—on both small and large scales, by individuals, groups, and society as a whole. I will explore this in more detail below, using the practices of what is known in German as *Sorgen und Ängste ernst nehmen* (taking concerns and fears seriously), *Stimmung machen* (stirring mood), and *Dampf ablassen* (blowing off steam).

"We take your concerns and fears seriously"

A wolf conference in Hachenburg, Westerwald, in August 2019. After the first resident female wolf was confirmed in the Westerwald in early 2019, there was a need for discussion in the region. Wolf management organised a wolf conference to bring together experts and local residents to discuss wolf issues. In the workshop 'Wolf and Society', questions could be asked to a wolf biologist. A Ministry of the Environment spokeswoman, who moderated the workshop, introduced it as follows:

> Of course, you should be able to tell us your concerns and fears. [...] The ultimate goal for me would be to perhaps get an impression of the mood here. You now have the wolf at your door now, so to speak, but that's not the case in Mainz [the state capital and seat of the ministry], and maybe we're missing some things that are going on here. Please be honest, tell us your concerns and we will see that we include them.[16]

A long discussion ensued about whether you could still go hiking in the forests, whether you had to be even more careful when disposing of sandwiches at rest areas, whether there were special rules of conduct for dog owners, whether children could still camp in the garden, and so on.

'Taking concerns and fears seriously' has recently, at least since the so-called refugee crisis in 2015, become a maxim for action for many politicians and administrations and is now applied in all kinds of policy areas—including, and especially, in matters concerning wolves. Behind this maxim, however, there was initially a rhetorical trick by right-wing populist parties to reinterpret negative, socially sanctioned affects—such as hatred—as socially recognised affects—such as concern and fear. As Ulrich Bröckling has noted:

16 Wolf conference, Hachenburg, 09.09.2019, minutes of the author.

> As a speech act, the sentence 'I am afraid of foreigners' has different effects from the phrase 'I hate them': those who refer to their fear claim to be taken seriously; but no politician, no matter how concerned, would think of demanding that we take people's hatred seriously and therefore tighten up refugee laws.[17]

I mentioned in Chapter 5 that (the public expression of) hatred of wolves is rare among sheep farmers or hunters. Although it can be assumed that it is certainly present among some wolf opponents, it is not expressed publicly, because hatred—unlike fear—does not find social acceptance and support. In the course of my research, I have often experienced how even wolf friends who are actively involved in wolf conservation do not know how to deal with the concerns and fears of wolf critics. These emotions are there, they cannot be argued away. This makes them a 'killer argument' and gives those concerned a strategic advantage: "Those who play the fear card undermine any criticism. He cannot be refuted because he insists on the authenticity of his feelings. To every objection he replies: 'But I *have* my fear! Who would want to deny it to me? Affect immunises against facts".[18] What is lost in this way of looking at affects is the fact that affects can be managed, even by those who are affected.[19] They are not a given natural fact.

The wolf conference in Hachenburg shows that wolf management has an ambivalent relationship with the concerns and fears of the public. On the one hand, efforts are being made to acknowledge them. On the other hand, it is already evident that a distinction is being made between justified and unjustified concerns—namely on the basis of their 'factuality'. In their view, unjustified concerns are based on misinformation, on 'wolf myths' and 'fairy tales', and should be countered by communicating scientific facts. This was the tenor of the whole 'Wolf and Society' workshop. Unjustified concerns (i.e., those that stand up to the facts), on the other hand, should be reduced through management measures, such as herd protection or financial compensation for losses.

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17 Bröckling, Ulrich: 'Man will Angst haben', in: Mittelweg 36 (2016), pp. 3–7, here p. 5, translated by TG.

18 U. Bröckling: Man will Angst haben, S. 4, translated by TG.

19 Brezger, Jan: 'Muss man die Ängste und Sorgen der BürgerInnen ernst nehmen? Die aktuelle Asyl-Debatte und der Fall Bremgarten', Theorieblog, 19.08.2013, https://www.theorieblog.de/index.php/2013/08/muss-man-die-aengste-und-sorgen-der-buergerinnen-ernst-nehmen-die-aktuelle-asyl-debatte-und-der-fall-bremgarten/ (accessed: 30.04.2024).

But there is a third way of dealing with concerns and fears, especially when it is difficult to determine exactly what is justified: when taking concerns and fears seriously becomes a method of affect management itself. It consists of three explicit and one implicit stage. First, it means an openness on the part of wolf managers to become affected by the voiced concerns and fears. This is done by providing a space where these feelings can be expressed. Secondly, it is about making people feel that they are being listened to. Third, understanding is expressed, and the authenticity of their feelings is acknowledged. In the logic of the person concerned, a fourth step should follow from this, namely that this recognition should lead to an action that takes care of their concerns so that, as a result, all the concerns are dealt with. The fact that this 'promise' is implicitly and potentially held out without being explicitly promised is what makes it so attractive for politicians and wolf managers. After all, you are not really promising anything if you take the concerns and fears seriously, and if this is so (positively) received by those affected, then it is a useful side-effect in addition to the goodwill shown to them.

It is doubtful that this method can be effective in terms of affect management if the fourth step is not explicitly followed up. However, I would argue that wolf management in general does not even attempt to address all concerns and fears. On the contrary, a certain undercurrent of negative affect is accepted as an inevitable part of any political negotiation process. It is the large outliers of affective intensity that need to be appeased.

In any case, the method has a significant side effect: the very focus on negative affect as something that needs to be given space, listened to, and acknowledged, has the effect of framing many public debates in a negative way. The primary mode in which wolves are discussed is as a problem and a conflict, and thus a trigger for negative emotions. Even in presentations by wolf management or conservation organisations, a considerable amount of time is spent discussing concerns and fears, even if only to show them to be unfounded in a completely 'rational' way. At the end of such an event, however, it is still mainly concerns and fears that have been discussed, and not much else. Taking these feelings seriously is therefore a double-edged sword: on the one hand, wolf management tries to manage affects this way. On the other hand, wolf critics definitely manage to set the coordinates of the debate in their favour.[20]

This is what happened, for example, with the so-called wolf resolution of the municipality of Asbach in the Westerwald. To briefly continue the story of

20 Ibid.

the return of the wolves to the Westerwald: It turned out that the male of the former Neuwied Pack, GW1159m, had indeed formed a new pack with the female GW1415f in the Leuscheider Wald area. Shortly afterwards, however, he disappeared and was replaced by the now 'notorious' male GW1896m. He had already attracted attention during his migration through several federal states by regularly killing sheep. Finally settling in the Leuscheider Wald in the spring of 2021, he began a series of sheep kills (all but one on unprotected sheep) that continued as of this writing (January 2024). The sheer number and consistent regularity of these kills, occurring almost every week, caused lasting anxiety and discontent among livestock owners in the region.

In an online information event organised by the municipality of Asbach, the official wolf management, in the form of two representatives of the newly founded Lynx and Wolf Coordination Centre (KLUWO), tried for almost four hours to answer all the questions of the local residents and to allay most of their concerns. But the wolf critics in the region apparently felt that they were not being taken seriously enough and kept up the pressure, flooding the mayor with concerned letters. Eventually, the municipal council met to pass an (anti-)wolf resolution, which was passed unanimously. The resolution states:

> In recent weeks and months, there have been an increasing number of wolf sightings and wolf attacks in the area of the Asbach municipality. These developments and circumstances have not left our population unscathed. Farmers, hunters, livestock owners, as well as walkers and other members of the public have contacted us as a municipality to express their justified fears, worries, and concerns as well as a multitude of questions about the wolf issue. We have received a large number of photos and some video footage from members of the public clearly showing the wolf in the municipality of Asbach both during the day and at night. The municipality of Asbach takes the concerns and needs of the population very seriously and sees itself in this situation as a representative of the interests of agriculture, livestock farmers, walkers, and all people who are concerned about the wolf.[21]

As we can see, taking concerns and fears seriously is indeed an important part of wolf management and is indeed demanded by those concerned. However, if

21 Resolution of the Association Municipality of Asbach/Westerwald, https://www.vg-asbach.de/nachrichten/2022/03/vg-ratsitzung-03-03-2022/resolution-wolf-vg-asbach.pdf?cid=ldm (accessed: 10.08.2022, translated by TG, no longer available).

the crucial fourth step of taking concerns seriously is missing, affective resistance will form. People try to find alternative caretakers. In the case of the wolf resolution, these were sympathetic local politicians who were unwilling to distinguish between justified and unjustified concerns and fears; a former professional shepherd organised a heterogeneous group called 'Colleagues helping Colleagues', consisting of livestock keepers, representatives of wolf organisations (WikiWolves, NABU and GzSdW), and others to offer livestock owners quick and unbureaucratic support in protecting their flocks and herds; other livestock keepers networked in a WhatsApp group to exchange 'factual' information on the wolf issue, as they felt they were not taken seriously by the wolf management; an alternative wolf expert addressed livestock farmers' concerns about 'dubious' results of the genetic sampling of kills ordered by the ministry and offered her services.

Attempts to manage affects thus criss-cross society and in turn send affective impulses into wolf management. It seems almost impossible to keep track of such a confusing situation, and even more impossible to manage it. However, I would like to conclude this section with an example from my fieldwork in Saxony that shows what I consider to be successful affective management. To be more precise, it is about affect micromanagement.

A few years ago, the region around the village of Krauschwitz in Lusatia repeatedly made the headlines for several wolf attacks on dogs and other domestic animals. Between Christmas and New Year 2017–18, a wolf had killed two dogs, one of which was tethered in a yard and the other running free near the house. The wolf was then killed or 'lethally removed' and the necropsy revealed that it was seriously ill. Then, in August 2019, another wolf killed a dog 200 metres from a farmhouse. A month later, a neighbour of Mrs. S. saw a wolf running along her garden fence in the afternoon.

Mrs. S. lived with her husband and three dogs on the outskirts of Krauschwitz, in the last house in the village bordering the forest. She used to walk her dogs in the forest every day, but not any more. Her neighbour across the road had seen a wolf and just a week later she had a strange experience that frightened her. Her husband was out of town and she was expecting a friend to visit her that evening. By the time she heard her friend's car outside the house it was already dark, so she took a solar garden torch and went to the gate to greet her. As the two women met at the gate, they suddenly heard a menacing 'wolf-like' growl from behind the hedge and were so frightened by it that they quickly ran back into the house.

The next day, Mrs S. contacted the LUPUS Institute for help and advice. Someone came and set up photo traps in the garden and outside the house to see if there really was a wolf prowling around. Over the next few weeks, a LUPUS biologist checked the photo traps with her again and again, but no wolf could be photographed. In the meantime, Mrs S. had installed more solar lights in her garden, stopped taking her dogs into the woods (other dog owners had confirmed to her that they had sometimes seen a wolf on their walks), and even kept her youngest and oldest dogs on a lead when they played in her garden.

The situation was so scary, she told me when I visited her together with a LUPUS biologist. She still has no idea what it was. Was it really a wolf? What else could it have been? She had not imagined the sound. After all, these attacks on dogs had happened nearby before and her neighbour had seen a wolf right over there. Yes, of course, the dog owners in the area are worried. But on the other hand, she says, it is also a bit exciting to find out if there is a wolf around. In fact, she always looks forward to checking the pictures from the photo traps. She has also seen foxes in her garden and wild boar in the hedgerows. No, she would not be frightened if a wolf was actually photographed in her garden. In fact, she would be happy. After all, she loves animals.

Whether the threatening growl that evening was really a wolf is unclear. But the LUPUS biologists had to react. As the official partner in Saxony's wolf management, they have to follow up and investigate reports like the one from Mrs S. If a wolf shows threatening behaviour in close proximity to a human, this would possibly be interpreted as problematic and dangerous behaviour, making the wolf a 'problem wolf' that might have to be lethally removed. As there was no evidence to support such an interpretation, the case could have been closed fairly quickly. But there was more to do than possibly identifying a problem wolf.

It struck me that the LUPUS biologists were spending a lot of time on this case, which did not seem particularly serious to me. They spent many hours visiting Mrs S., setting up photo traps, talking to her. What they were doing could be described as *affective micromanagement.* According to the biologist I accompanied, they are always on the lookout for such cases and try to allay peoples' concerns and fears by listening, talking and, above all, acting. By treating the small 'seeds of anxiety', she said, they can prevent them from growing and spreading.

Wolf management practices can therefore be found at a number of levels: from the international to the national, state, regional and local. Wolf management 'on the ground', in the midst of people's lives, seems particularly challeng-

ing, and yet this is where many wolf-related affects arise and need to be recognised and 'managed'. Mrs. S's story shows how a small incident, embedded in a wolf atmosphere of several previous incidents, can affect the everyday lives of people in the countryside: small changes in garden lighting, changes in dog walking routes, an unsettling feeling in their familiar lifeworld. But it could have been worse if no one had intervened and taken them seriously. Not being taken seriously, not seeing anyone taking preventative measures and 'caring', could easily have turned into anger at wolf management, the creation of wolf-critical WhatsApp or Facebook groups, the signing of anti-wolf petitions, and so on.

But such small-scale interventions involving micromanagement of affects are rather rare. In Saxony, the LUPUS Institute has been commissioned to deal with such issues and is equipped with the necessary human and financial resources. In Rhineland-Palatinate (as in other states), the wolf management regime does not have these resources and in some cases does not see the need to micromanage affects.[22] Before I went to the public lecture by the well-known wolf opponent in the Hunsrück, described in Chapter 3, I received a phone call from someone from the official wolf management asking me if I would go and tell them how it went. They themselves, as described above, did not want to send a representative there because the situation was 'too heated' for them, and they suspected that their presence would have a counterproductive effect and only add fuel to the fire. Would they talk to the people in person and offer help, I asked? No, they would only act if asked—for the same reasons.

Whether affects are officially recognised and managed or not, they have an impact on human-wolf coexistence. When wolf kill experts in Saxony arrive at the scene of a sheep kill in their big, white, expensive-looking SUV, they make an impression. When another expert measures a sheep farmer's fences with perfect accuracy and finds that one point is just one or two centimetres short of the specified height that determines compensation for a killed sheep, his behaviour also makes an impression. If, as described above, hunters report a roebuck killed by a wolf and want the Large Carnivore Officer (LCO) to take the whole carcass for genetic analysis, contrary to the usual regulations, and

22 In Rhineland-Palatinate, this has changed with the establishment of the *Koordinationszentrum Luchs und Wolf* (KLUWO) in 2021. For the first time, there are employees who are able to work and act exclusively on wolves and lynx.

the LCO gives in to the situation and leaves the carcass temporarily in the forest, where the hunters unfortunately find it again, then the LCO has created a story that will haunt him even years later. When an amateur nature photographer in the Westerwald started tracking and photographing the new Leuscheid Pack a little too enthusiastically, the wolf management discussed whether they should intervene—especially since the stalking of wolves is against nature conservation law. The photographer then received a call from a local LCO he knew, asking him to tone down his enthusiasm and leave the wolves alone.

Both the success of wolf management and the acceptance of wolves stand or fall with each of these small management interventions. The general mood of society as a whole towards wolves is largely fed by the successes and failures of this affective micro-management, both on a small and a large scale. It seems inevitable that a wolf management regime will usually not have the capacity for an all-encompassing affective micromanagement, with the result that smaller negative swings on the mood barometer will be accepted—if only the overall mood does not change. The latter, in turn, tends to be steered by special framework conditions (preventive measures, compensation, legal regulations) into calmer waters where individual outbursts of affect make fewer waves. Whether such a management strategy can prevail in the long run seems at least doubtful in view of the challenges and conflicts with and about the wolf—especially since the official management wants to deal with the conflicts in an emphatically 'factual' and rational manner, and thus marginalising or even ignoring the power of the affective dynamics inherent in the conflict. However, the fact that affects can combine to form larger intersubjective atmospheres and moods should serve as a warning: Affective dynamics at the micro level of individual local cases can affect the macro level of societal affect management as a whole. This is the subject of the next section.

"You also have to stir the mood"

Fifteenth of January 2020, Wiesbaden/Hesse. Shepherds and other livestock owners from Hesse and neighbouring states announced a demonstration for animal husbandry and against wolves for that day. About 200 demonstrators marched loudly, with whistles and cowbells, from the train station to near the Hessian parliament, where a stage had been set up for the final rally. The demonstrators held up signs that read:

Wolves!—Tormented sheep—sleepless nights—unbearable costs
Is one species above all others?
We love our animals!
Wolf—we don't need you here!
The wolf comes ... we go
Wolf no thanks—Who protects our animals?

Next to the stage, a pen was set up with sheep in it and signs emblazoned with photos of killed sheep and captions such as: "Are we the next wolf food?" and "Where's my mum?" One livestock owner had brought his alpacas. On stage, there were greetings and political demands from various livestock owners' associations, which were greeted with applause and cheers from the demonstrators. A young shepherdess read a poem about wolves:

Dear people, if it were only hunger,
he would take just one and then go wander.
But the grey hound in the night kills without a single thought.
He rips the first one's throat apart, grabs the second from behind.
Blood is everywhere, the lambs are crying.
So he kills five little ones besides.
Plays the game till he can't catch his breath
and tomorrow the next twenty will meet their death.
Herd protection is priority one, but no solution seems to come.
Higher nets, solid fences, preferably a stall at night,
Dogs to guard, or why not the shepherd himself, alright?
Pain in the soul and financial ruin
Your own idiocy will lead you there soon.

One of the following speakers, a representative of the farmers' association, then got to the heart of why they were all there and what such a demonstration was for:

We are here today to create a mood among the masses. And when I was asked, when we as the farmers' association were asked, we clearly said of course, also as the farmers' association we are clearly behind the shepherds, behind the livestock owners, because today, we as the farmers' association have also learned, it's not enough to talk all the time, *you also have to create a mood* [...].

The Hessian Minister for the Environment then had to find out exactly what this meant when she took to the stage to explain the state's policy on wolves on stage and answer questions from the demonstrators—mostly amid persistent boos, whistles, and the ringing of cowbells. [23]

This example shows that a demonstration is never only—in the literal sense of the word—about making one's opinion known publicly and thus contributing to a public rational discourse. The quote from the representative of the farmers' association shows that a demonstration is also an affective practice that does not seek to convince through argumentation; rather, by creating a mood, it seeks an alternative way of influencing public opinion and generating political pressure for action through the affective dynamics of the mood.[24]

But what is a mood anyway and how are moods produced? In Chapter 4, I already introduced (with reference to Gernot Böhme) the concept of atmosphere as an intersubjective, diffuse affective arrangement that colours the subjective experience of those affected by it emotionally in a specific way. In the relevant literature, the terms atmosphere and mood are usually used synonymously. When we speak of mood here, I mean a special form of atmosphere that is predominantly produced and experienced by people, requires an effort (of stirring or producing or performing), and that therefore has a more intense and condensed affective impact than atmospheres. Producing moods then refers to the conscious production of an affective intensity in which the mood itself becomes the object to be worked on, which in turn is also to be experienced subjectively by the producers. However, creating a mood can also take on a performative character, as in the case of the demonstration described above, aimed at affecting an audience which becomes affectively 'tuned' by this mood. The mood is thus much more than a mere experience or entertainment; its affective dynamics are heightened to the point of producing tangible effects: The minister is supposed to be 'shaken' by the concentrated anger of the animal owners and to be transformed in her attitude towards the wolf in the light of this anger. The affective attitude of the livestock owners

23 Field notes and photo documentation, 15.01.2020.

24 There are parallels here to the media strategies of right-wing populism. The media scientist Christian Helge Peters summarises these with the phrase, 'why use facts when you can use affects?', Peters, Christian Helge: 'Medienökologie II. Wozu Fakten, wenn es auch Affekte tun? Zur Medienökologie des Rechtspopulismus und seinen Strategien der Affizierung', in: Behrendt, Gianna/Henkel, Anna (eds.), 10 Minuten Soziologie: Fakten (= 10 Minuten Soziologie 2), Bielefeld: transcript 2018, pp. 97–108, here p. 97, https://doi.org/10.14361/9783839443620-008.

should rub off on the minister. Ultimately, this felt mood should create in her the affective urge to become active on their behalf.

As can be seen from this example, creating a mood has an inherently ambivalent character: the fact that the mood is created rather than just occurring naturally always raises the question of the motivation, the purpose, and thus the 'authenticity' of the performance (is it all just an act?). In the demonstration in Wiesbaden, at least two levels come together: Affects that were already present in the individual participants before the event in various compositions and weightings (the feelings and sentiments, the ethos) are bundled, selected, and concentrated into a collectively produced and directed mood. The mood is thus never a simple reflection of the participants' affects on a larger scale, but an ephemeral affective re-arrangement adapted to the specific moment, which also has its own idiosyncratic dynamics.

The moods present in the wolf conflict are therefore best approached with a critical attitude. They are not only experienced subjectively, but also used as a political tool.[25] In Chapter 3, this was expressed in the WhatsApp message of the district hunting master, who wanted to prove the imminent danger of wolves with increased evidence of wolves and thus create pressure for action. As shown in Chapter 4, wolf critics from Rosenthal tried to use fear of wolf attacks (rather than actual wolf attacks) as a means of obtaining a 'removal' permit. In this chapter we have seen how anti-wolf sentiment was stirred up in the municipality of Asbach, which eventually led to the formulation of a 'wolf resolution'. Only rarely do the actors reveal their motives, as the representative of the farmers' association did at the demonstration in Wiesbaden. All these examples are isolated, local manifestations of moods. But moods can be contagious and become more persistent. Like the forms of *affective governance*, the *affective resistance* of the anti-wolf groups aims to achieve lasting changes in affective structures. It is one thing to generate political pressure to obtain individual removal permits for the wolf Marie in Lusatia or GW1896m in the Westerwald. Achieving lasting changes in the law, such as the regular hunting of wolves and the downgrading of the wolf's protection status, is another. For this to happen, these isolated, local manifestations of mood would have to combine and spread in order to tilt the overall mood in society towards wolves in a negative direction. To make matters even more difficult, the spread of mood depends on the power of the affective impulse. For example, if a wolf resolution passed by a local council is to have an affective impact on its march through the institutions

25 J. Hiedenpää/J. Pellikka/S. Ojalammi: Meet the parents.

to Brussels, it is not just the resolution as a written document that needs to be transported, but also its affective power—without the affects running out of steam and losing 'pressure'.

However, since moods tend to be ephemeral, it is difficult for wolf critics to perpetuate them. Perpetuating them means performing them over and over again and being able to motivate one's own ranks to do so over a long period of time. This is underpinned by the fact that moods not only affect an audience witnessing it, but also affects the producers themselves. As an *Erregungsgemeinschaft* ('excitement community'),[26] it can modulate the affective states and responses in ways that help to promote affects that are beneficial to its own cause, to foster in-group motivation and group identity. This is the case for both wolf supporters and wolf opponents.

An example of this is a public event in the town of Niedert in the Hunsrück region, which I briefly mentioned in Chapter 3. Following alleged sightings of wolves and the suspected killing of a calf, local livestock farmers organised a wolf information event for farmers in the region. A well-known shepherd and wolf critic from North Rhine-Westphalia was invited as speaker and wolf expert. He gave a two-hour talk in a farmer's barn to an audience of about a hundred people (almost all local farmers and a few hunters).

He began by explaining the biology of wolves. With a shoulder height of 120 centimetres, wolves are huge animals, he said, with long legs that make them excellent runners, with top speeds of up to 65 kilometres per hour and the ability to jump 4 metres high. They are also excellent swimmers. They can smell up to 2.8 kilometres against the wind, hear up to 15 kilometres in open country, have excellent night vision, and a wide field of vision. This animal surpasses all other predators. It can do anything, the speaker concluded his introduction.

As predators, wolves are even more dangerous, he continued, because they typically do not hunt alone, but in packs. And although humans are not their typical prey, they can certainly become prey—as has been shown in other parts of the world. They even use diversionary tactics, and some packs in eastern Germany specialise in tracking down game killed by hunters and claiming it before hunters get there—leading to critical situations during the hunt.

These predators are spreading rapidly, and are hardly an endangered species, he said (there are 400,000 wolves in the world!). With a series of calculations, he showed that Germany would soon be overrun by wolf packs. If you want to walk your dog then, it won't be very nice". Later in his talk, he

26 U. Bröckling: Man will Angst haben, p. 5.

returned to the subject of wolf population growth. He cited several ecological studies modelling potential wolf habitats in Germany. He showed that the Hunsrück region was considered an ideal habitat, and that 1400 packs could live in Germany.[27] He repeated: "You won't be able to go outside anymore!"

He then debunked several 'myths' propagated by wolf management and conservationists about the ecological value of wolves and their supposed positive role in maintaining ecosystems. Instead, he stressed that wolves mainly prey on domestic animals, as shown by studies in Italy, the Alps, and France (where 15,000 domestic animals were killed there in 2019!).

Another problem was wolf hybrids, he continued. It is not so much the hybrids themselves that are a problem (both wolves and wolf hybrids are dangerous to domestic animals), but the fact that wolf management denies that there are any in Germany. The Senckenberg Institute has a monopoly for the genetic identification of hybrids and alternative investigations by laboratories such as the private ForGen Institute in Hamburg are not officially recognised. In this way, the wolf management tries to prevent competing statements and findings about hybrids in order to retain the sole authority to decide whether a domestic animal has been killed by a wolf or a hybrid.

This fits into the larger framework of what wolf management is really about, he said. It is not about managing wolves (they can do whatever they want), it is about managing people. They use 'framing' methods to tell their lies without anyone noticing ("I hate this!"), such as using the word 'wolf management' when "it's us they really want to manage!" They used the word 'wolf advisers' when they obviously do not advise the wolves. The wolf kill experts are not really experts in the legal sense. Finally, they lie about 'the favourable conservation status' of wolves: "Only when every village has its own wolf will the favourable conservation status be achieved".

The last point of his speech was a criticism of herd protection measures. "I'll show you the only thing that really helps". And behind him on the screen appeared the image of a sheep with a helmet and a big gun in its hooves. Fences? Wolves can jump. You'd have to make them higher and higher, but that wouldn't really help. Llamas or donkeys? They would soon be eaten. Dogs? Well, there are more than 7,000 guard dogs in France and it still doesn't work. But what does work then, someone in the audience asked. Again, he referred to France and

27 He refers here to the following study: Kramer-Schadt, Stephanie et al. Habitatmodellierung und Abschätzung der potentiellen Anzahl von Wolfsterritorien in Deutschland, Federal Agency for Nature Conservation (=BfN-Skripten 556) 2020.

its principle of 'reciprocity'. Wolves have to learn that it is dangerous for them to attack domestic animals. Shepherds there have the right to shoot them.

Wolf management would have to change drastically. National management plans would have to be drawn up, internationally coordinated monitoring regulations and much more. And if nothing changes?

> Then there will be an uprising. I think in military terms. You have to make a fist. […] You have to show what we can do and what our power is. […] I would put it a little more cleverly. I would say: The rural population must take the solution to their problems back into their own hands. If someone says: 'What do you mean?' Then I say: 'You know what I mean'. The state has a monopoly on force. If they don't help us, if they don't protect our property, which is their constitutional duty, then they need to be reminded of that. […] Perhaps we are heading for such times. […] I don't know what would happen then […].[28]

If we look at the content of this talk, we see the same typical topics that appear in most talks about wolves, regardless of who is actually giving the talk: wolf biology and ecology, reproduction, habitats and territories, food, problems of wolf hybrids, wolf management, and herd protection. However, a look at the rhetoric of this lecture shows that these topics are presented in such a way as to lead the audience to a particular solution through a series of affective impulses. As there were no other 'wolf experts' in the audience, no one could really question or refute the interpretation of the facts. Was the audience logically convinced by the speaker's argument? Hard to say. But we should interpret his talk not only in terms of content, but also in terms of rhetorical affect. The story that was told that evening might go something like this:

The wolf is a dangerous super-predator to be feared. This super predator will soon be everywhere and in large numbers in your area. You will no longer be safe outdoors and your animals will be in danger. If you think the authorities will help you, you are on the wrong track. They cannot be trusted, they lie and are not interested in helping you. Instead, they see you as a problem to be dealt with. They will not protect you and you cannot protect your animals by any means. Nothing works, nothing helps. It is all hopeless. There is only one solution left. Only one way out …

The lecture thus creates a mood of danger and fear, destroys trust in institutions, invokes a sense of hopelessness and despair, and finally offers only one

28 Public wolf event, Niedert, 04.07.2020, minutes and audio recording.

way of hope and one solution to the conflict. The audience was ready to listen and be affected by what the wolf expert had to say. They trusted him. He was introduced by the organisers as 'one of us'. He was a shepherd and farmer, but one with a university degree, which made him both a colleague and a trusted 'expert'. But he was not quite 'one of us'. He was a shepherd, and the audience was mainly (cattle) farmers. As explained in Chapter 5, there are different types of livestock owners and there is also a hierarchy among them, with shepherds being a rather marginalised group within this community. Perhaps this was the reason why the audience did not really warm up to his 'one and only' solution and did not feel as affected as he intended. Although the audience seemed to respond to the sense of danger, the fear of wolves and the distrust of institutions (which farmers knew from their experience of agricultural politics), as farmers they had other options: the Farmers' Union, a powerful lobby. So their response to his call to arms was not to reach for the pitchforks, but to ask if and how the farmers' association could help.

Letting off steam, taking pressure out of the system

How does state wolf management deal with such attempts at *affective resistance*? If appeals to rationality or taking concerns and fears seriously in all their forms do not work, other means have to be found to counteract the stirring up of moods and the resulting political pressure to act. A wolf manager from Rhineland-Palatinate gave me a crucial hint as to how this might work.

An information event on the subject of wolves was held in Neitersen, Westerwald. Experts were invited to give presentations, followed by a question-and-answer session in which the experts on the panel answered questions from the audience. After the event, I spoke to one of the wolf managers about how the evening had gone. Everything was as expected, including the emotional outbursts at the end. That was normal at such events, he said. Discussions always follow a pattern. In the first phase, people come forward with real questions and also want to hear real answers. When all the real questions have been answered, the discussion shifts to the second phase, where people just want to vent their anger. No real answers are expected; it is just a matter of 'letting off steam'. But that is what such events are good for.

In other words, such information events are not only about conveying information, but also about providing a public space where not only opinions but also feelings can and even should be expressed. However, this should not be

done in any form and with any intensity, but within the framework of socially accepted norms of public discourse (rationality, politeness, respectful interaction, etc.) and to a socially acceptable degree. Not all expressions of emotion are considered appropriate (concern or anger yes, rage and hatred rather not), and only some are considered 'not excessive' (*expression* of feelings yes, *outburst* of feelings rather not).

At this information event, for example, a horse owner whose farm lies in the core zone of the Leuscheider Wald Pack spoke up. Wolves regularly pass by her farm, and a wolf is said to have attacked one of her horses. A long discussion ensued about the genetic samples, which apparently only proved that a 'dog-like animal' (canid) had attacked, but not clearly that it was a wolf. The Ministry spokesman then explained how genetic testing works, but the horse owner refused to believe it and continued to doubt the results. The moderator then intervened and ended the discussion:

> [Moderator:] All right, I'll take it from here: genetic evidence takes precedence over conjecture.
>
> [Horse owner:] No, but the results showed it wasn't a dog but a dog-like animal.
>
> [Moderator:] But genetics were found and there is a result and we'll leave it at that for now.
>
> [Horse owner:] No, no. [gets louder]
>
> [Moderator:] The gentleman in front here is next.
>
> [Horse owner:] You get shut down here when you say a wolf is a dog-like animal! [now shouting]
>
> [Moderator:] We take note of that. OK, now the gentleman here up front is next.

One can see here how the moderator of the event not only moderates and modulates the course of the evening, but also its affective dynamics, guiding it into rational channels, cutting off 'exaggerated' outbursts, and generally ensuring that the rules of social interaction also apply to the conflict about the wolf. He

was supported in this by the panel of experts in the background and by the audience in general—as representatives of social values and norms, so to speak.

The idea that such events are also about letting off steam is also supported by the timing of these events. After all, they do not take place at just any time and in any place, but precisely when and where tempers are running high and moods are boiling up or threatening to boil over—as in the area of the Leuscheider Wald, where the wolf GW1896m has proven its affective agency again and again with almost weekly kills. Preventive information events in areas without wolves were almost non-existent during my fieldwork.

The motivation for wolf management to provide such spaces for the expression of feelings is, of course, to maintain some control over the public mood and its affective dynamics. If livestock owners themselves organise an information event by and for livestock owners with their own wolf expert (as happened in the Hunsrück region, described in the last section), the wolf management has no influence on the affective dynamics on the ground: expressions of feelings can turn into escalating outbursts, concern can turn into anger, rage, or hatred, and the event can ultimately also provide incentives for illegal actions. Nevertheless, wolf management felt that it had also intervened here in a regulating way by deliberately not being present in order not to escalate the affective dynamics of the event. But even the absence of wolf management representatives can affect the dynamics: at many events I have been told by livestock owners that it would have been nice if wolf management representatives had 'dared to come here'. They would have expected nothing less, but a visit would have been received positively. The same goes for wolf supporters. Whether or not representatives of NABU, the Society for the Protection of Wolves, or similar organisations attend events organised by livestock owners always has some kind of affective impact.

But when even non-presence and non-action have an affective impact, it is easy to see in detail how complex and difficult affect management can become. The very concept of management itself suggests that we are dealing with controllable situations and processes, but we must be aware that the return of wolves to Germany always produces an *excess of affects* that poses a major challenge to any attempt at management. While it is possible to intervene selectively in affective dynamics, their multiple entangled directions, scales, participants, and unintended consequences as an affective arrangement guarantee that affect management is an interplay of various forms of *affective governance* and *affective resistance*, and that the results of management attempts are always only short-term, unstable, and in transformation. The same applies to the wolf-

induced mood of society as a whole, which is crucial for securing public support for the protection of the wolf species in Germany.

Ultimately, the central challenge of wolf management as affect management is a question of temporality. On the one hand, it is a matter of selective, timely intervention in (still) locally limited affects. On the other hand, it is about taming the volatility and 'wildness' of affect, of civilising it and transforming it into durable, stable affects and values that are favourable to species conservation. But wouldn't this also require managing the affects of the wolves themselves?

EXCURSUS: affect management of wolves

To what extent can wolf management also be understood as a form of managing wolf affects?[29] In this section I want to look at various common management measures and how they can be seen to affect wolves, i.e. to alter their behaviour or at least to try to communicate to them what we want.[30] When using the term 'management' for these measures, it is implied that it is a one-way process, from humans down to wolves as passive recipients. If, however, wolves are really active agents of a shared more-than-human society, affect management becomes more of a two-way process, a negotiation, or in the words of philosopher Baptiste Morizot, a diplomatic mission[31]. But how diplomatic is wolf management in Germany? In this context, it is worth looking at how so-called problem wolves are dealt with. Problem wolves are declared a problem because of 'conspicuous' behaviour. The official DBBW guideline, *How to deal with bold wolves*, defines this type of behaviour as follows:

29 For an encompassing recent assessment of different management interventions on large carnivore behaviour, see Lorand, Charlotte/Robert, Alexandre/Gastineau, Adrienne/Mihoub, Jean-Baptiste/Bessa-Gomes, Carmen: 'Effectiveness of interventions for managing human-large carnivore conflicts worldwide: Scare them off, don't remove them', in: Science of the Total Environment, Volume 838, Part 2 (2022), 156195.

30 See von Essen, Erica/Drenthen, Martin/Bhardwaj, Manisha: 'How fences communicate interspecies codes of conduct in the landscape: toward bidirectional communication?', in: Wildlife Biology (2023): e01146, doi: 10.1002/wlb3.01146.

31 Morizot, Baptiste: Wild Diplomacy: Cohabiting with Wolves on a New Ontological Map, Albany: State University of New York Press 2022.

> Conspicuous behaviour in the sense of this report refers to a behaviour of wolves towards humans that seems to be outside the range of behaviour shown by most individuals of this species. Conspicuous behaviour covers the entire range from unusual or undesirable to bold behaviour. […] Bold (problematic) behaviour in the sense of this report is behaviour which may become dangerous to humans if it escalates. Such behaviour at the least requires attention but can also be deemed serious or critical […].[32]

So, we see that conspicuous behaviour always has an (inconspicuous) background against which it can first be noticed as something unusual. But how can someone who encounters a wolf correctly assess wolf behaviour when encounters are so rare that most people cannot have no clear idea of the range of 'normal' behaviour? Many cases of supposedly conspicuous behaviour therefore resolve themselves as they turn out to be based on a lack of knowledge of 'normal behaviour'. It is in this context that the dual function of wolf monitoring becomes apparent. Not only does it serve to record the (genetic make-up of the) wolf population and its geographical distribution, but 'monitoring is also a useful tool for the early detection of 'bold' wolf behaviour and, if necessary, for taking measures to counteract it'.[33] The collected and documented sighting reports in their entirety represent the range of 'normal' behaviour during encounters, a kind of 'background noise'[34] that can be used for evaluation by experts.

In terms of affect management, this means first of all that wolf affects are only relevant to management when they are directed at humans (including their animals). Wolves are free to act out their affects among themselves and other wild animals, and only need to adhere to the wolf-specific 'discipline' of affects that living together in a pack requires of each individual wolf. *But it is when living together with humans that wolves are expected to keep their affects under control, and a disciplinary regime is in place to ensure that they do*. In the official guideline, *How to deal with bold wolves*,[35] an increasing disciplining of affect can be seen in several steps. The management protocol begins with measures that do not directly affect the wolf. The public is informed about 'normal' wolf behaviour and encouraged to report sightings in order to find and remove potential 'triggers', to correct misconceptions about conspicuous behaviour (e.g.,

32 Reinhardt et al.: How to deal with bold wolves, p. 9.

33 Ibid, p. 17.

34 Ibid.

35 Ibid, p. 22–27.

that an encounter at a distance of less than 30 metres is not 'abnormal') and to communicate rules of behaviour in encounters.

Further interventions to manage wolf affects can then take several forms: a) direct interventions aimed at the wolf itself; b) indirect interventions aimed at the 'conspicuous' wolf, but also at human affects and behaviour; and c) indirect interventions aimed at humans only. The latter include, for example, the various measures presented earlier in this chapter, particularly those targeting public mood. The Protocol confirms that "*public sentiment* also influence[s] the way problematic animals are dealt with. The more people are familiar with the occurrence and behaviour of wolves, the more trust they have in the experts consulted, the more likely they are to accept the experts' recommendations".[36] Ultimately, even in the case of wolf affect management, it is true that on the one hand it is an intervention in the lives of wolves (or the wolf population at large), but on the other hand it is also an intervention in the lives of people and their 'being affected by wolves'.

> The aims of these recommendations are: a) to ensure that people in Germany are not injured or killed by wild wolves; b) to foster and maintain public trust in wolf management authorities in wolf regions; c) to ensure that people's fear of wolves does not increase; and d) to enable wolves to spread further in Germany without causing serious conflicts between wolves and humans.[37]

But how concretely can wolfish affects actually be managed in the sense of being tamed, influenced, disciplined? Here the official guideline draws on the principles of classical ethology. Behaviourism, already criticised in Chapter 2, is used both to explain conspicuous behaviour and to justify management measures. In this scheme, abnormal behaviour is usually explained by excessive 'habituation' or 'positive conditioning' (usually 'food conditioning'). The ethologist Klaus Immelmann defines habituation as "the ability of an animal to become accustomed to and no longer react to repeatedly occurring stimuli that are associated with neither positive nor negative consequences".[38] According to him, positive conditioning refers to the positive stimulus reinforcement of spontaneously occurring behaviour in order to solidify it into a recurring pattern of behaviour.

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36 I. Reinhardt/G. Kluth: Leben mit Wölfen, p. 113 (translated by TG).

37 Reinhardt et al.: How to deal with bold wolves, p. 7.

38 Immelmann 1982, quoted from ibid. (translated by TG).

In both cases, wolves appear as passive, stimulus-driven beings who cannot help but reflexively follow the automatisms of stimulus and response. We have already encountered such arguments in the context of *surplus killing* (Chapter 4). According to this, wolves cannot help but follow the movement impulses of frightened sheep and kill more than they can eat (at once) out of 'lust for murder', a 'killing impulse'. However, I have described the apparent irrationality of this behaviour—and thus the apparent logic of an inherent killing impulse—as being a result of human intervention, which removes the killed animals so that the wolves have no chance of returning to them, thus constructing the 'irrationality' of the killing in the first place. The same is true of the stimulus-induced 'killing impulse' claimed in this context. The framing of conspicuous wolf behaviour in classical ethological terminology thus has consequences that can directly affect the perception of conspicuous behaviour. For if wolves are indeed 'affect-driven' and these affects can be escalated through the smallest stimuli (according to the rules of habituation or conditioning), how is it possible to control conspicuous behaviour at all?

The answer is again couched in classic ethological terminology. Problematic habituation or positive conditioning can be changed with 'aversive conditioning', i.e. by repeated exposure to 'punishing stimuli' (shooting with rubber bullets, setting off firecrackers or rocket flares, etc.). However, this 'hazing' is anything but easy to implement, as it has to follow the undesired behaviour directly as a negative stimulus (in its original temporal and spatial context) in order to elicit an appropriate response and behavioural adjustment from the wolf. Furthermore, to be effective as conditioning, it must be repeated. In other words, to be *effective*, deterrents must be *affective*, not only in the sense that they must be 'noticeable' to the wolf, but also that the affective dynamics of the deterrence must be evident: the wolf must be affected, and it must be clear by whom.

Communication scientist (and hunter) Michael Gibbert explains this problem in an interview using the example of the so-called Lupara, a sawed-off shotgun traditionally used in Italy to ward off wolves.[39] At close range (less than 30 metres), it can be lethal. At longer ranges, the lethality of lead pellets decreases rapidly, but they can still hurt and can therefore theoretically (though not necessarily legally) be used to scare away wolves. Unlike a long-distance

39 Duchet, Laura/Gibbert, Michael: 'Managing a "Wicked Problem": A Conversation with Michael Gibbert', in: Marlis Heyer/Susanne Hose (eds.), Encounters with Wolves: Dynamics and Futures, Sorbisches Institut: Bautzen 2020.

shot from the cover of a hunting blind, when a wolf is shot with a Lupara, it is always clear to the wolf who is causing it pain. Hazing with the Lupara could therefore act as negative conditioning.

This raises the question of whether people outside official wolf management are also using deterrent measures to discipline wolves according to their own ideas. For example, some hunters in the Westerwald appeared to be considering the possibility of using hazing to drive out the local pack. In a (presumably half-serious) WhatsApp message with the title "We will visit our wolf pack on 24.04.2021 please be there", they called for people to join them:

> We visit our wolves! A large turnout is requested, pre-registration is not required. Whether on foot or motorised, please be there. Yes, shooting is allowed, but only with the camera, the gun stays in the cupboard. Or loaded with salt, of course. Current location: Leuscheider Wald or forest near Flammersfeld. Time: Dusk to night, so: night vision devices. They [wolf friends] don't have any, so we'll see them before they see us. Have fun.[40]

As research participants from the region later confirmed to me, some wolf critics did indeed turn up, but no action was taken because wolf supporters were also there. However, the call shows that there are other illegal ways to 'teach wolves to fear humans' (a well-known appeal in hunters' circles regarding wolves' alleged lack of shyness) than illegal shooting.

Another form of deterrence is herd protection measures—both in the form of 'wolf-deterrent' fences and guard dogs. Although it is also possible to protect livestock from wolves in the pasture with a fixed fence, which is merely a physical barrier to the wolf's prey, the electric fence is considered to be the most effective form of protection. The electric fence works through its electric shocks and the pain it causes, which is said to negatively condition the wolf. Encounters with guard dogs can also deter wolves through the sheer physical force of the confrontation. But even greater is the affective impact that the presence of the dogs (as a constant aversive stimulus) is supposed to have.

Finally, there is an affective dimension to the last resort in dealing with wolves exhibiting bold behaviour – lethal control. Given the problem in wolf management practice of clearly identifying a particular wolf as a 'problem wolf' at the time of removal, the new legal framework, as amended in 2019, has created the possibility of generally removing wolves in the region in question until

40 A WhatsApp message forwarded to me, received 22.05.2021.

the problem wolf has been killed or until the deterrent effect/affect on the surviving members of the pack is such that the problematic behaviour ceases.[41] In this way, lethal removal can be seen as the ultimate affect management; it is fatal for the wolf in question, but it can and should continue to have an affective impact on the rest of the pack—even after the 'problem wolf' has died.[42]

With all these measures in place, however, the question arises as to whether 'conditioning' as a concept and method does not fall short of understanding wolf behaviour. The management model assumes that there is a) an undesirable behaviour, which b) can be influenced by human intervention, leading to c) a change in wolf behaviour in the future. The wolf's response is clearly determined: Hazing can only lead to an increase of fear of humans. But is this the only possible response? Hunters often point out that wild boar in wolf territory have become more defensive and aggressive, more likely to confront and fight hunting dogs. In this view, wild boar have not simply responded with fear to the stimulus of wolf attacks. For a sentient, affective creature, hunting (by wolves or humans) raises the question of how it affects the animal (and this must be asked not only at the species level, but also for family units and even individuals). An (aggressive) attack may cause fear, but it may also cause counter-aggressions, anger, or a willingness to fight. And the wild boar's affects 'conditioned' through wolves can then also influence not only encounters with wolves, but also with hunting dogs or even with hunters. *Rather than thinking in terms of a rigid causal determinism, it seems more appropriate to consider the possibility of multiple, behaviourally open responses in both boar and wolves. Taking the agency of wolves seriously also means keeping an eye on the variety of possibilities in their complex behaviour.*

41 The four wolves legally removed in Lower Saxony in spring 2021 can serve as an example of this. In all four cases, in four different packs, a wrong wolf was killed. see Information on species protection exemptions and wolf removals in Lower Saxony, Lower Saxony Ministry for the Environment, Energy, Building and Climate Protection, https://www.umwelt.niedersachsen.de/startseite/themen_im_fokus/der_wolf_in_niedersachsen/informationen-zu-wolfsentnahmen-in-niedersachsen-197937.html (accessed: 30.04.2024).

42 This management tool seems to underlie the wolf management regime in Washington State, US, for example. See Anderson, Robert/Charnley, Susan/Epstein, Kathleen/Gaynor, Kaitlyn/Martin, Jeff/McInturff, Alex: 'The socioecology of fear: A critical geographical consideration of human-wolf-livestock conflict', in: Can. Geogr., 67 (2023): 17–34. https://doi.org/10.1111/cag.12808.

Furthermore, we have to consider that there is a high possibility for miscommunication, especially when it comes to attempts to induce a general shyness (towards humans) in wolves through hunting, removal, or hazing. Research in sensory ecology supports this caution, as when Elmer et al. argue that

> Not only do we need to predict what sensory cues and signals an animal will respond to at a particular time, but also how that animal will respond in its given condition and environment.[43]

When the authors here point to the 'given condition' of the animal, we can conclude that behaviour is not only bodily performed but also consciously experienced and processed by the animal. Condition here is not just a physiological condition but also a matter of *what the animal feels like*. Regardless of whether we can gain access to this subjective experience of the animal, the question of what the wolf knows and how it experiences an encounter is one of the most exciting and at the same time fruitless questions that can be asked about animals. And as Thomas Nagel[44] has already convincingly argued, we do not have a satisfactory answer to it. But heuristically, this question helps us to bring something into focus: We may not know *what* a wolf knows, but we know *that* it knows something; we may not know *how* it experiences a situation, but we know *that* it experiences it. In other words, wolves have consciousness and affective awareness; they are rather opaque subjects to us, but they are subjects, nonetheless.

In this context, the philosopher Jens Soentgen reminds us that ecology as a relational science has long been an explanatory ecology of objects, neglecting an ecology of subjects (the 'interior' of ecological relations, as he calls it). He therefore suggests that hermeneutic approaches to ecology should complement explanatory approaches. In this context, he reminds us that in the formative period of ethology, animal psychological models were also part of the fledgling science. In recent years, some ethologists seem to remember this

43 Elmer et al.: 'Exploiting common senses: sensory ecology meets wildlife conservation and management', in: *Conservation Physiology*, Volume 9, Issue 1, 2021, coab002, https://doi.org/10.1093/conphys/coab002, p. 18.

44 Nagel, Thomas: 'What Is It Like To Be A Bat?', in: The Philosophical Review 83.4 (1974), pp. 435–450, https://dx.doi.org/10.2307/2183914.

early alliance and are now paying more attention to *animal personality*, including in relation to the wolf. [45]

However, behavioural research with wild wolves is rare and therefore it is concentrated on a few cases of wolves in captivity. Nevertheless, there seems to be a gradual realisation that the classical ethological behavioural models of habituation and conditioning have reached their limits, and that behaviour needs to be understood differently. In their report on wolf attacks on humans, John Linnell, Ekaterina Kovtun, and Ive Rouart also state that the concept of habituation loses its explanatory power when wolves live in highly anthropogenic landscapes such as those of Europe.[46] The documented wolf attacks also show that habituation is not nuanced enough as a concept to account for the diverse situational conditions of such attacks. Hopes are therefore pinned on animal-psychological *character trait models* to help explain the influence of character types on problematic behaviour. In terms of affective wolf management, these findings should then be used for more differentiated conditioning. Ultimately, however, the authors of the report have to admit that the effectiveness of deterrent measures is still unclear and therefore undetermined.

How will biologists and wolf managers explain and respond to problematic wolf behaviour in the future? Linnell and colleagues seem to present two alternatives at the end of their report: One is to continue with the old explanatory models and advocate the study of even more and more accurate data from GPS-collared wolves. The other alternative, as I understand it, potentially opens up a hermeneutic path that seeks to understand situationally emerging affective dynamics between humans and wolves by analysing accounts (and video footage) of such encounters in much greater detail (see Chapter 2). I

45 Blumstein, Daniel T.: 'Habituation and sensitization: new thoughts about old ideas', in: Animal Behaviour 120 (2016), 255–262, https://doi.org/10.1016/j.anbehav.2016.05.012; Wolf, Max/Weissing, Franz J.: 'Animal personalities: Consequences for ecology and evolution', in: Trends in Ecology and Evolution 27.8 (2012), 452–461, https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tree.2012.05.001; Hansen Wheat, Christina/van der Bijl, Wouter/Temrin, Hans: 'Dogs, but Not Wolves, Lose Their Sensitivity Toward Novelty With Age', in: Frontiers in Psychology 10 (2019), article 2001, https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2019.02001.

46 This is why the wolf biologists Reinhardt and Kluth distinguish strong habituation from normal habituation, in order to distinguish bold, undesirable behaviour as exceptional behaviour, see Reinhardt, Ilka et al: How to deal with bold wolves. See also the scales of habituation in Baker, Rex O./Timm, Robert M.: 'Coyote attacks on humans, 1970–2015: implications for reducing the risks'; in: Human-Wildlife Interactions 11.2 (2017), 120–132, https://doi.org/10.26077/jy37-p271.

hope that this chapter has shown that qualitative interpretations of encounters make sense in a complex behavioural ecology of subjects and need to be recognised in wolf management regimes.