



Lifelines

NEWS AND IDEAS FOR TEACHERS

Autumn 1999



The WWF
Campaign
for Europe's
Carnivores

Carnivore crusade

Striking a blow for the beautiful beasts

WWF's campaign to protect some of Europe's most majestic and powerful creatures offers a wealth of teaching and classroom aids across the curriculum.

Curriculum

Protecting carnivores can be linked to subjects from English to economics and maths to music.

Competition

Chart-topping S Club 7 and TV star Anthea Turner have teamed up in support of WWF's nationwide competition for schools.

Countryside The UK has its own threatened carnivores: some of the victims of the degradation of our countryside – the theme of WWF's second major campaign of the year.

Opportunity knocks

It seems hard to believe, but not so many years ago bears, wolves and wild cats roamed large areas of Europe. Now only small populations remain. They have been hunted, persecuted and forced out of their natural habitat.

Yet few mourn the demise of animals such as the wolf; fierce creatures that attack humans and plunder our livestock...

or do they?

The WWF Campaign for Europe's Carnivores

The greatest threat facing many of Europe's carnivores is the stereotypical images that are fed to generation after generation, breeding fear and hatred to the point where wolves, bears, wild cats and other carnivores are persecuted, many to the edge of extinction.

For example, the Iberian lynx, found only in pockets of Spain and Portugal, is now the world's most endangered cat species. Even other threatened species that are beginning to expand their ranges are far from safe. Unless public perception is changed – and quickly – conflict with people will inevitably result in these carnivores being the certain losers.

Hope

But there is hope. The blurring of political borders within Europe, resulting in a more unified legal and planning process, has created new and promising opportunities for managing populations of carnivores.

To capitalise on these opportunities, WWF has launched its Campaign for Europe's Carnivores.

The campaign aims to raise awareness of the problems facing carnivores and to challenge people's negative perceptions of wild predators. It builds on other WWF work such as lobbying for improved wildlife protection laws, reform of the discredited Common Agricultural Policy and ensuring that where legislation to protect does exist – such as the *European Habitats and Species Directive* – it is implemented and enforced.

Challenge

So, what does all this have to do with education in schools? The challenge to conserve carnivores involves ecological, economic, institutional, political and cultural factors and as such is a subject rich in opportunity for teachers in English, art, drama and many other subjects.

The classroom is also a good place to challenge young people's pre-conceptions, enabling them to explore the facts behind an issue and reach their own conclusions.

In the supplements accompanying this edition of **Lifelines**, you will find activities and resource ideas to help you bring the issues surrounding the conservation of Europe's carnivores to life.

Allied to this is a competition to develop English and literacy skills among young people, and which helps them to challenge established notions and perceived fact. On the following pages, we concentrate on the launch of this major WWF competition.



“The wolf badly needs friends in Europe, particularly human friends...”

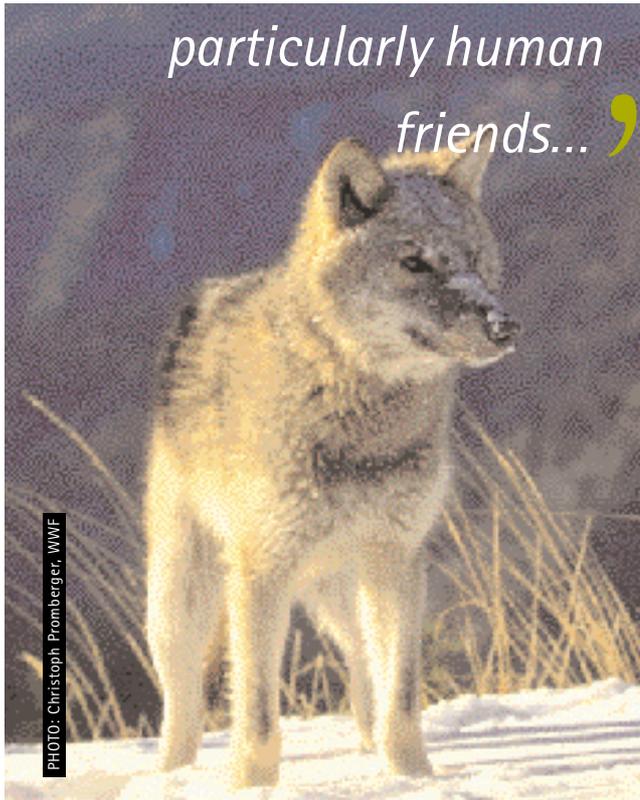


PHOTO: Christoph Promberger, WWF



PHOTO: William Pratesi, WWF-UK

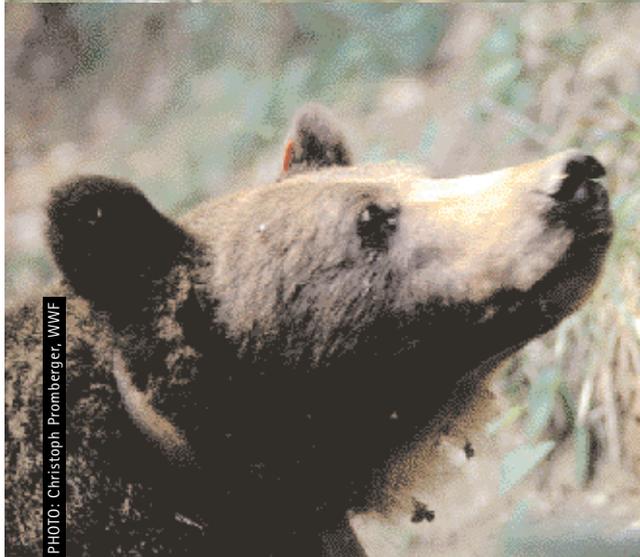


PHOTO: Christoph Promberger, WWF

Why I support

The WWF Campaign for Europe's Carnivores



by Anthea Turner

“In June this year, I ventured into the Italian wilderness on a mission. I had long ago hung up my hats for *Wish You Were Here* and *Blue Peter*. This time I was travelling on a panda passport with WWF, and I was on the trail of Europe's carnivores.

I didn't have to wait long. After only an hour's drive from Rome we came across a huge white bear carved into the side of a mountain. This is the symbol of Abruzzo National Park, the country's most important region for wolves and brown bears. The park offers some protection, which is good, as these animals need all the help they can get. Every year around a quarter of Italy's wolves are killed illegally. But now there is also help from an unlikely source. On this trip I was to find out how the domestic dog has come to the aid of its canine cousins.

At Popoli, a few wolves are kept in large enclosures in their natural environment and I was lucky enough to step inside one for an intimate encounter with a pair of wolves. No, I hadn't taken leave of my senses. Wolves are timid creatures that have learned to fear humans. I always think it's an honour getting close to wildlife – especially an elusive animal like a wolf – and I felt completely at home knowing they were probably more afraid of me than I was of them. They looked like wonderfully sleek dogs, a streamlined version of an Alsation. For me, losing these magnificent animals would be a tragedy for Europe.

Admiration

Now that WWF had inspired my admiration for wolves, it took me to meet some cuddlier canines. On a mountain outside the ancient village of Anversa, local shepherd Nunzio Marcelli has been breeding and training the Abruzzo mastiff. These large, shaggy, white dogs looked incapable of harming a fly but, once trained, they are taken to the Alps where they guard sheep from bears and wolves. Without such dogs to protect their livestock, shepherds would be more likely to kill predators. That's why the dog in Italy is a wolf's best friend.

The wolf badly needs friends in Europe, particularly human friends. Sadly, most of the stories we hear about wolves do little to arouse our respect or pity. Mean, wicked and cruel, they blow down little piggies' houses and gobble up grandmothers and girls in red. Or do they? I hope *WWF's Beautiful Beasts Competition* can challenge the myths that children grow up on and encourage some more realistic stories and poems about our own top predators. I look forward to seeing and judging the entries.”

Anthea Turner is a judge in the **WWF Beautiful Beasts Competition** ►

A creative writing competition for seven to 13 year-olds

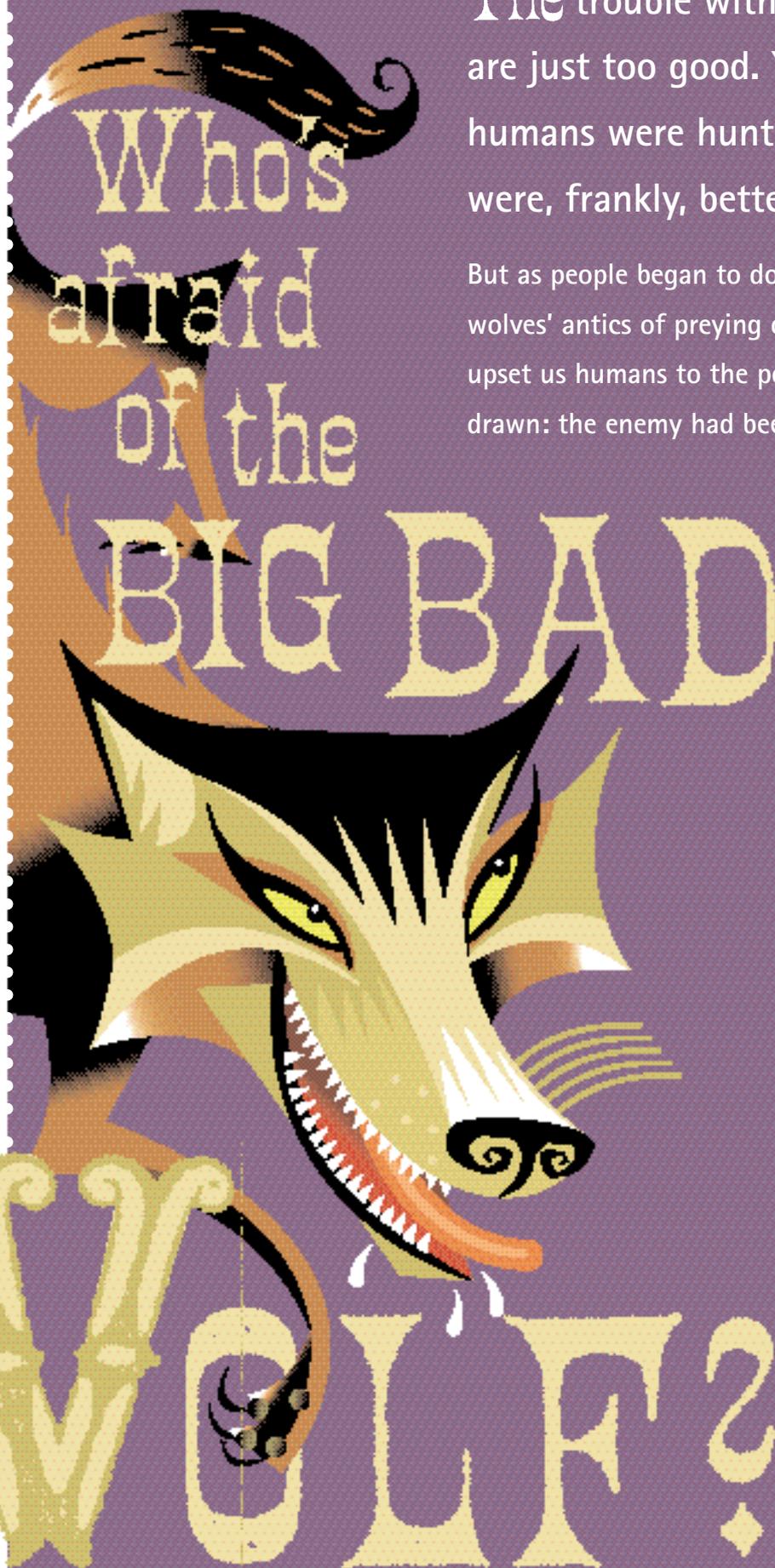
Bad press

For generations, wolves, wild cats and other European carnivores have suffered from a bad press.

But it's more than just their image that has been damaged. Many species are now near to extinction due to human actions fuelled in part by an innate fear and hatred. As part of its wider campaign to raise awareness of these majestic creatures, WWF is launching a competition encouraging pupils to challenge these negative images through creative thought and expression.

The trouble with wolves are just too good. Years ago humans were hunter-gatherers, frankly, better at

But as people began to domesticate wolves' antics of preying on livestock upset us humans to the point where the enemy had been id



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vestock such as sheep
where battlelines were
entified.

Thousands of years of bad
press later, that hatred
and fear of wolves has
developed and is sustained
by the stereotypes dished
up in a diet of nursery
rhymes, legends and
children's tales. None of
that would matter were it
not for the fact that – as a
result – many of these wild
beasts across Europe are
now on the precipice of
extinction. Even in areas
where they are making a
comeback, wolves are
still being killed through
fear and ignorance.

WWF is aiming to reverse
that trend and part of the
bid comes from changing
our preconceptions.

The details...

Who can enter?

The competition is open to children aged 7 to 13 in any school in the UK. Entrants will be judged in three age groups and two categories:

Age groups:

1) 7–9 yrs 2) 9–11 yrs 3) 11–13 yrs

Categories:

1) Creative writing 2) Poetry

How?

Each school can submit handwritten, typed or word processed entries on A4 paper. Each entry must be accompanied by the entry form and include the name, age and school address of the writer. There is no word limit but entrants should remember that creative quality is not judged by length!

The first step is to complete the coupon on the back page to register for an entry pack. The pack includes an entry form, European Carnivore topic brief and, for the first 40 schools to respond, the European Carnivore CD.

What do we have to do?

Throughout children's literature carnivores such as the wolf have been given a bad press: the big bad wolf is a feature in many rhymes and tales. This negative image in traditional myths and legends such as Little Red Riding Hood and The Three Little Pigs has helped fuel the feeling that animals such as wolves, wild cats and other meat-eaters are to be feared and reviled.

WWF wants children to challenge these stereotypes and learn to accept Europe's carnivores for what they are: beautiful and majestic, but persecuted and threatened. In this project, WWF invites teachers to encourage their pupils to use creativity and expression to reassess their own views, and the views portrayed in literature, stories, poetry and other pieces of work.

This could involve rewriting traditional stories as seen through the eyes of the animals, showing issues such as hunting or habitat destruction. Students can also compose their own poems to illustrate, through creative thought and writing, the feelings and expectations of the wild carnivores.

Where do we send entries?

Beautiful Beasts Competition
WWF-UK Education, Panda House,
Weyside Park, Godalming, Surrey GU7 1XR

By when?

14 January 2000.
Winners will be notified in March 2000.

The small print

The decision of the judging panel will be final and legally binding on all entrants. No correspondence concerning judging will be entered into. Entries will not be returned. WWF reserves the right to reproduce entries with due acknowledgement to individual pupils and school.

First prize in each age group and category

- Four tickets and travel to the Millennium Dome
- An *S Club 7* CD, signed by the band
- Certificate
- Wolf book signed by Anthea Turner

For the school with the winning pupil

- £250 worth of WWF resources
- Framed print

Individual prizes

For the top 10 entries in each age group and category:

- Carnivore masks
- Fact sheets
- Key ring
- Poster
- European Carnivore CD (for school)
- Certificate

The judges

Anthea Turner

TV personality and supporter of the European Carnivore Campaign. *"I hope WWF's Beautiful Beasts Competition can challenge the myths that children grow up on and encourage some more realistic stories and poems about our own top predators. I look forward to seeing and judging the entries."*

Linda Cracknell

WWF Scotland's education officer and award-winning author

Brian Moses

Poet, Editor, and Writer-in-schools

Peter Martin

WWF's Head of Education and member of the government advisory panel on Education for Sustainability

S Club 7

Hannah, Jon, Jo, Tina, Paul, Bradley and Rachel from *S Club 7* say: *"Nothing is impossible in the S club. We make things happen. That's why we are delighted to support WWF's competition to help kids understand the beauty and importance of Europe's carnivores."*



The Lifelines supplements offer teaching resources and activities to complement the curriculum and to help stimulate work aimed at supporting WWF's carnivore campaign and competition.

Curriculum lynx

...and bears, and wolves, and cats!

These supplements concentrate on integrating issues linked to carnivore conservation into English language and drama. However, as with all issues surrounding conservation, the environment and sustainable development – such as habitat loss, human encroachment, urbanisation and resource use – links can be made across the range of subjects taught in schools throughout the UK, and in all age groups.

The subjects here are broad and should be interpreted for use in the curricula of England and Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland. ●●●●●●●●

Science/Environmental Studies

The future existence of many species such as the brown bear, lynx, wolf and, in the UK, polecat and otter is under threat from a variety of causes including poaching and pollution. To complement the science curriculum, students could be encouraged to explore the relationships between the various animals (including humans) vying for food supplies and exploring how each adapts (or fails to adapt) to meet its changing habitat.

Politics & economics

When it comes to conservation concerns, a lot of the fault can be placed at the door of the European Union through its Common Agricultural Policy. The CAP has long been the target for reform but due to pressures from within the EU has escaped largely intact. That's good news for many of Europe's food producers but bad news for our wildlife. When studying the institutions and policy-making bodies of such organisations, it is worth examining the impacts these decisions have on everyday lives. Taking the CAP as an example, students can explore how such a centralised farming strategy can have positive and negative impacts.

Geography

The study of environmental change, how people affect the environment and how they seek to manage and sustain the resources around them is the basis of education for sustainability. Using the demise of Europe's carnivores can help focus what can be a wide and daunting topic onto a specific issue: and one that can be related back to the UK. The study of rivers, coasts and woodlands will provide an opening to discussions and study of wildlife and the geographical impacts on it. This will also allow teachers to introduce work linked to WWF's other major campaign for 1999 – the UK countryside. An outline of that campaign can be found on the opposite page and a fuller account will appear in a future edition.

Languages

As the breadth of vocabulary is evidence of a student's grasp of a language, materials from the WWF European carnivore campaign could be used to practise language skills.

Music

The beauty of a wild cat, the power of a brown bear, the stealth of a wolf or the antics of an otter, for example, could be used as the basis for performing and composing music.



Maths

To learn and understand mathematical notions, students require practice and examples. The figures and standard data for such exercises are often incidental to the subject being taught, but they can help heighten the interest and bring maths to life. Figures relating to European carnivores, habitat loss, pollution levels, farming statistics and urbanisation can be used to demonstrate the mathematical elements, while adding to the student's understanding of conservation and environmental issues.



It is one of the rules of teaching: to make the greatest impact, you have to make the subject relevant. It's as true for education for sustainable development as for any other subject and for students across the UK, the European carnivore campaign will have a greater meaning when it is explained that the UK, too, has carnivores under threat: such as the stoat, otter and polecat. That's why WWF's other major initiative in 1999 is to highlight the problems these and many other creatures face.

Extra homework



PHOTO: Jos Korenromp
Oxford Scientific Films

Butterflies, beetles, otters and orchids are just some of the insects, plants and mammals in the UK facing an increasingly bleak future as their natural habitats are eroded and degraded.

Pollution, urbanisation and changes to the uses of the countryside – all damaging habitats and affecting the food chain – are impacting on species such as stag beetles, monarch butterflies, fen orchids, harbour porpoises and grey seals.

One simple way to help ensure the survival of these UK species is to designate large swathes of the nation as special areas of conservation. Hundreds of important sites throughout the UK need to be given such protection under European law.

So why the campaign?

The government has identified just 340 potential Special Areas of Conservation, covering a mere 2.8 per cent of the country. Other countries such as Greece, Spain and Sweden are designating as much as 15 per cent of their national territory for wildlife protection. WWF estimates that a total of 192 extra sites are needed to ensure the protection of our rare and threatened species.

The campaign aims are simple: to persuade the government that many more sites across the UK need protection under European law. This action, together with the species and habitats WWF is seeking to preserve, offer a wealth of teaching aids and resource opportunities in subjects across the curriculum.



PHOTO: Charles Hood, WWF-UK

future edition of **Lifelines**.

WWF has produced a complementary resource brief on British Wildlife to accompany this initiative.

To order your copy, return the coupon on the back page. ►