

## Questions and discussion following talk by Peter Cairns

### Facing the predator – are we ready?

Q = Question A = Answer S = Statement

**S.** In USA, wolf management will ultimately be returned to individual state control. Montana, Wyoming and Idaho are all presently preparing wolf management plans which will have to be approved by Federal Govt.

**S.** Wolf reintroduction to Yellowstone National Park in 1995 has resulted in a reported \$26m tourism income. This reintroduction happened because of a strong and successful education and marketing campaign.

**S.** Sweden has demonstrated that perceptions on wolves can be changed by having a system of incentives for landowners for hosting wolves on their land.

**Q.** How can people's fears on predators be dealt with?

**A.**

- The biggest fear is of change, and the creature in question can signal change which some people may be wary of.
- Fears of personal safety are not a major factor for most people.
- Threats of a predator to dogs, livestock and horses are a significant concern to some people.

**S.** Perhaps the fear of change in relation to predators and their return, relates to the effects on people's perceptions of their place in the world (eg farmers, foresters, game interests), including their status and their role and influence in the area, and how this might change.

**Q.** Over a period of 8 years in Saxony they have moved from a position of fear at the return of wolves, to a situation where they celebrate and promote wolves – what are the lessons from this?

**A.**

- Their first experience in Saxony was a large sheep kill incident. The State government then moved swiftly to offer compensation and to set up an advice system for wolf management.
- There are still disputes between the State and game interests in Saxony on the effects of wolves.
- Science-based evidence and education has helped to communicate issues about wolf behaviour and has helped the general acceptance of wolves amongst the population in Saxony and beyond in Germany.

**Q.** What are the lessons about tourism associated with predators and how can these be communicated to farmers and landowners?

**A.** Simply ask landowners about the relative income from predator-based tourism and conventional income from game and livestock regimes.

The cultural mind-set of some farmers and landowners can be slow to change, despite the evidence of better income from predator-based tourism.