



Photo: J. M. Carstens

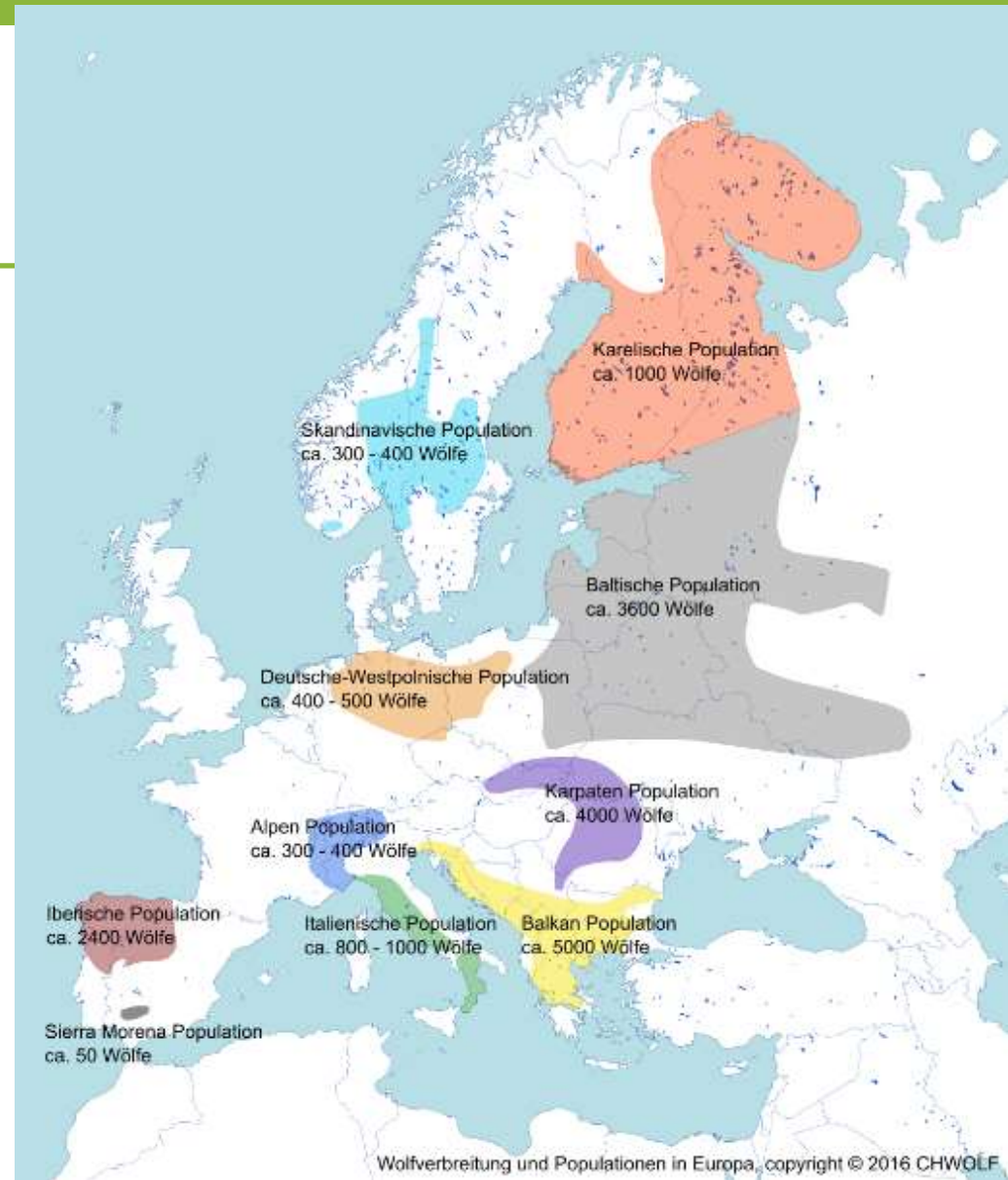
# Livestock protection and wolves in Germany

## Data and facts as a basis for discussion

Bernd Blümlein, DVL / Landcare Germany

# Starting point

- Wolves are living in Germany again since 1996; offspring in Germany since 2000
- Spreading from the German-Polish border area via Saxony, Brandenburg, Saxony-Anhalt, Mecklenburg-Western Pomerania and Lower Saxony to the North Sea coast.
- Individuals also migrate from the Alpine region and the Balkans.
- in 2017 first recorded pack in Bavaria of "mixed origin"



# Starting point II



- In Germany there exists a Federal Nature Conservation Act, but the support for **agriculture and nature conservation** are the responsibility of the individual federal state
- The wolf is **strictly protected** by international and federal law, ...
- but **support for grazing livestock farmers** is in the responsibility of each individual federal state.

# How many wolves live in Germany?



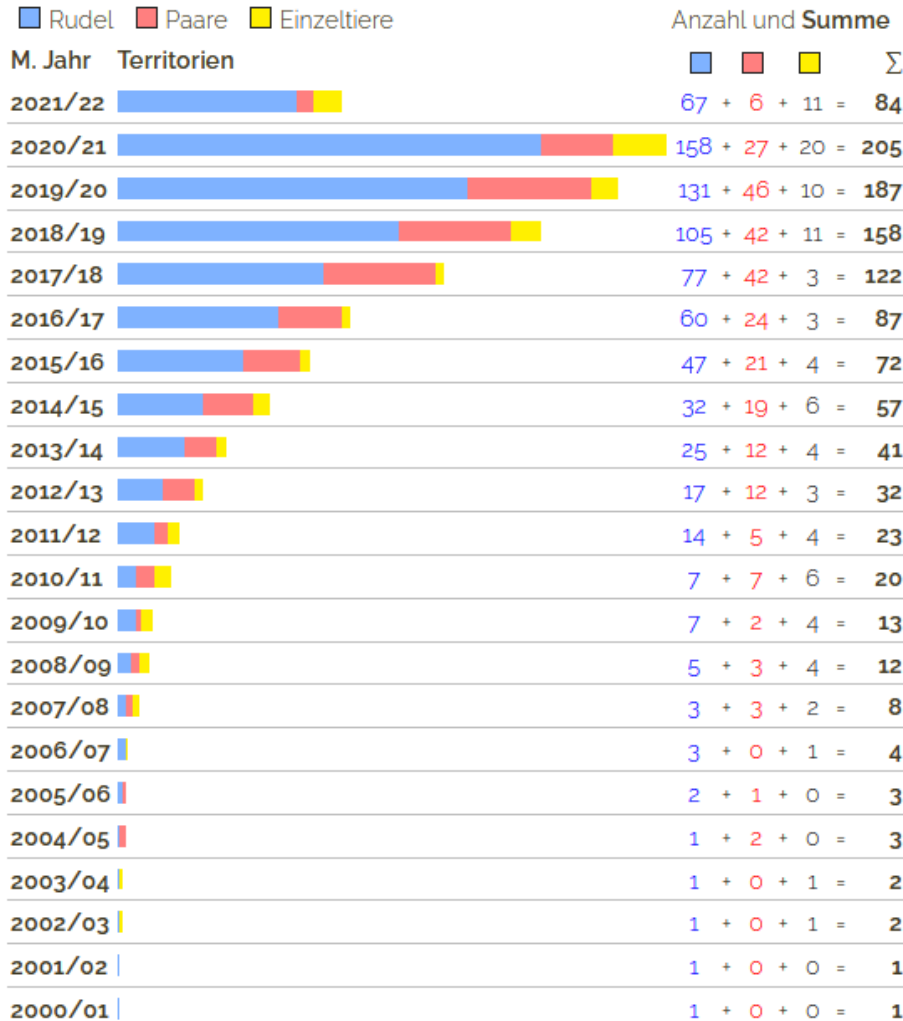
**Occurrence (occupied grid cells) of wolves in Germany in the monitoring year and in 2020/21**

(Period 1.5. to 30.4. of the following year)

Source: DBBW -  
**Dokumentations- und  
Beratungsstelle des  
Bundes zum Thema Wolf**  
<https://www.dbb-wolf.de/>



# How many wolves live in Germany?



Development of occupied territories since 2000

Exponential growth!

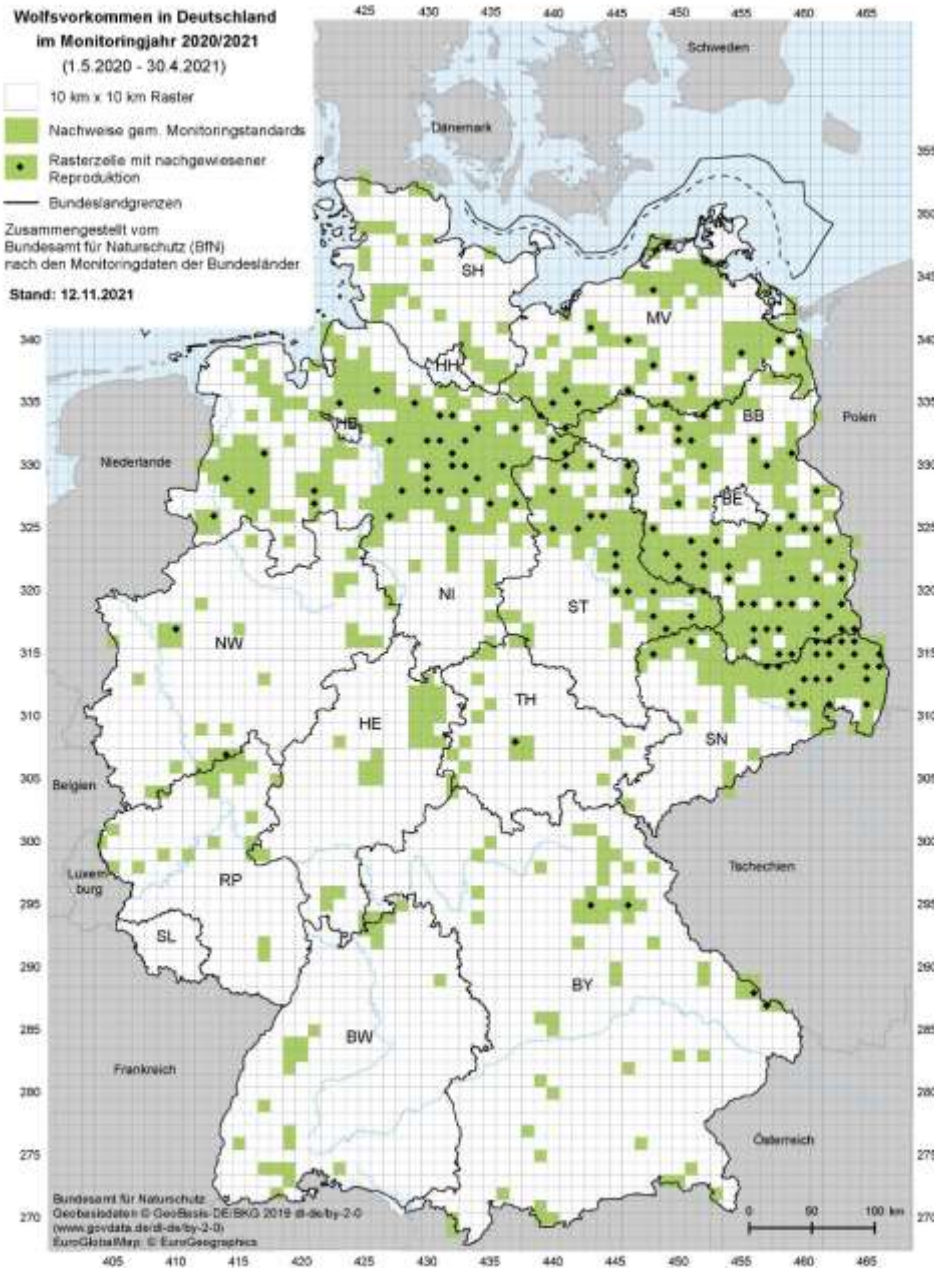
Source: DBBW -  
**Dokumentations- und  
 Beratungsstelle des  
 Bundes zum Thema Wolf**  
<https://www.dbb-wolf.de/>

Quelle: Abfrage der DBBW-Datenbank am 06.07.2022 um 10:08:49

## Wolves in Germany in the monitoring-year 2020/21

Meanwhile wolves live in nearly all German federal states **(except Saarland)**

- Between 7% and 20% of the wolf population does not live in a pack and does not stay permanently in one territory.
- These wolves are in search of new territories and move up to 500 - 1,000 km away from their area of origin to do so.



# Starting point for livestock protection:

- Wolves can travel long distances; up to 75 km in one day.
- Individuals have been found more than 1,000 km away from their parent pack.
- There are also wolves in neighbouring countries (Switzerland, Austria, Czech Republic, Poland, France ...).
- **They can therefore appear all over Germany.**



Source: DBBW - **Dokumentations- und Beratungsstelle des Bundes zum Thema Wolf**  
<https://www.dbb-wolf.de/>

# Opinion: Our intensively used cultivated land is not suitable for wolves

# Incorrect!

- **Wolves do not need wilderness!**
- Experiences from different regions of Germany and abroad show that wolves cope very well in different landscapes....
- .... as long as they offer sufficient prey and retreat opportunities for rearing their offspring.
- In Germany, a wolf territory is between 100 and 350 km<sup>2</sup> in size



Source: DBBW - **Dokumentations- und Beratungsstelle des Bundes zum Thema Wolf**  
<https://www.dbb-wolf.de/>



# Conflict-laden

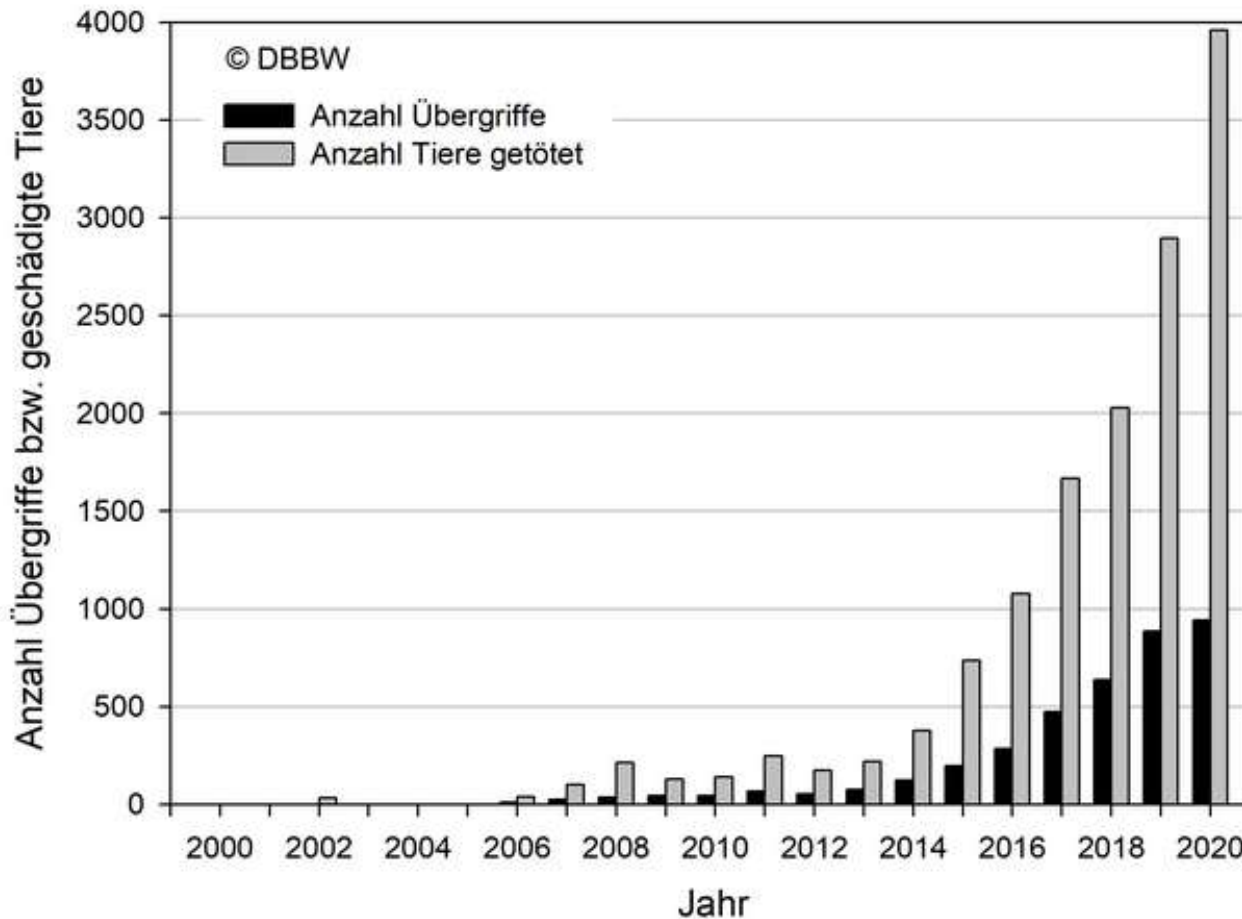
- The return of wolves to Germany is a **success story from a nature conservation perspective.**
- Large parts of society share this view (forsa survey 2015, NABU)
- **This does not tend to apply in rural areas** (farmers / shepherds / hunters).



Source: DBBW - **Dokumentations- und Beratungsstelle des Bundes zum Thema Wolf**  
<https://www.dbb-wolf.de/>

# Livestock damage caused by wolves

Wolfsverursachte Nutztierschäden in Deutschland



Entwicklung der wolfsverursachten Nutztierschäden in Deutschland von 2000 bis 2020.  
Seit 2000 gibt es reproduzierende Wolfsrudel in Deutschland.  
© DBBW Dokumentations- und Beratungsstelle des Bundes zum Thema Wolf

- **Number of wolf-attacks** on livestock (black columns)
- **Number of killed livestock** (grey columns)

Source: DBBW  
<https://www.dbb-wolf.de>

# Which livestock is particularly at risk?



- **Sheep and goats** are killed by wolves significantly more often than larger farm animals
- Of the livestock killed or injured by wolves in Germany from 2002 to 2020, **89.3% were sheep or goats**, 6.3% were **farmed game** and 3.9% were **cattle** (mostly calves).
- **However, older cattle and horses were also killed lately**



Photos Roggenthin / DVL

Source: DBBW  
<https://www.dbb-wolf.de>



# Which livestock is particularly at risk?



**If society demands quality pasture-raised meat produced according to animal welfare standards, the wolf poses a massive problem.**



# Prevention measures in Germany

What works? Does anything work at all?



- **Electric fences** => at least 90 cm high (better 120 cm): Net or strand fence;
- **stranded fences** => min. 5 live strands; first strand max. 20 cm distance from the ground
- **Fixed fence (non-electrified)** => min. 150 cm high; (better higher) and...
- **Under-root protection (for game enclosures)** => approx. 100 cm wide strip of knotted wire laid flat outside in front of the fence.
- **Flutter bands (broadband wire)** - when wolves go over fences => currentless broadband wire is stretched 20-30 cm **above the fence**.

The recommended livestock protection measures effectively reduce damage, **but do not offer 100% protection**, because they represent a compromise between effectiveness and additional financial expenditure.

**And the wolf is extremely adaptive and finds gaps in protection!**

# Prevention measures in Germany

What works? Does anything work at all?



## Livestock guard dogs

=> useful as an additional measure (for large livestock herds);

- guard dogs should be kept in a team (effektiveness!; animal welfare)
- A well-trained livestock guard dog does not attack humans
- **Costs and workload** are considerable (at least 2 - 3 years in advance!)

**Professional guidance in the use of guard dogs is essential for new, inexperienced owners of guard dogs.**

# Prevention measures in Germany

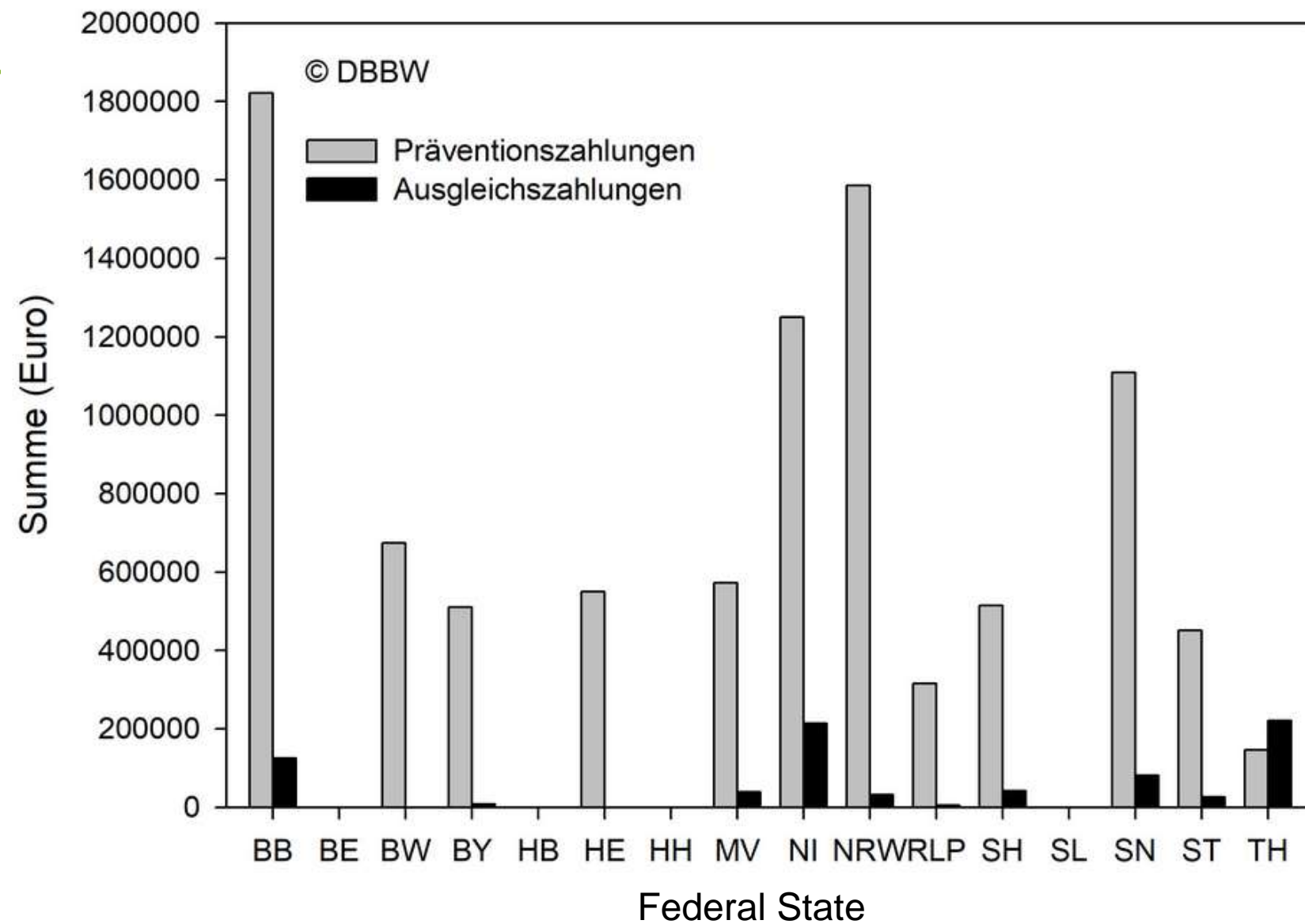
What works? Does anything work at all?

**There are no blanket livestock protection solutions that are equally effective and feasible everywhere!**

**The following always applies:**

- Each protection measure must fit into the overall concept of the farm and be feasible.
- Livestock protection by fences and guard dogs is not possible and reasonable everywhere; for some regions, such as alpine pastures, there is no general livestock protection solution.

# Prevention & Compensation Payments in 2020



Quelle: DBBW  
<https://www.dbb-wolf.de>



# Starting point II



- In Germany, **agriculture and nature conservation** are the responsibility of the individual federal state
- The wolf is **strictly protected** by international and federal law, but **support for grazing livestock farmers** is in the responsibility of each individual federal state.
- The support from the federal states **varies** greatly
- This leads to an almost **unmanageable tangle of regulations and compensation payments**, to injustice and measures that do not achieve their goals.

# Wolves spreading - grazing livestock farmers left as losers? Is this a problem of Landcare associations?



Dairy cattle in the Black Forest  
Photo: Christoph Ziechaus



Photos Roggenthin / DVL



# Wolves spreading - grazing livestock farmers left as losers? Is this a problem of Landcare associations?



Theo Lehmann ist Schäfer mit Leib und Seele, an seiner Seite Kim Ebinger vom Landschaftsentwicklungsverband Mittlerer Schwarzwald (LEV). Foto: Zeger Foto: Schwarzwälder-Bote

*„For Kim Ebinger of the Mittlerer Schwarzwald Landcare Association [...] it's about cooperation, she also sees herself as **a mediator between the two parties**: on the one side the wolf advocates, on the other the opponents. If the Black Forest slopes can no longer be kept open by sheep, goats and other grazing animals, she also sees biodiversity in danger.,,*

Schwarzwälder-Bote 17.12.2017  
– Der Wolf als schwarzes Schaf?

# Conclusion I

1. The “German-example” shows – the phase of re-establishing a wolf population is critical
    - **Knowledge about wolf behaviour and livestock protection measures** must first be rebuilt among grazing livestock owners; also among sideline and hobby farmers.
  2. **Adaptation of grazing livestock management** is imperative **throughout the country**
    - The necessary adaptation measures place a heavy additional financial and technical burden on livestock farmers => **Adequate financial support** is essential
- **Suggestions**
- **Make payments for preventive measures legally secure** (up to 100% made possible by the EU)
  - **Official advice** must be expanded and, if necessary, **support provided by Landcare associations** (LA) be financed
  - **Nature conservation requirements and rules** for conservation grazing projects must be adapted/loosened (e.g. with regard to night pens).



# Conclusion II

## ➤ Further Suggestions

- **Better** and more transparent **monitoring of wolf populations** according to a **standardised scheme** (EU-wide?)
- **Active wolf management (hunting)** to increase acceptance under controlled conditions and scientific research.

**Because insisting on extreme positions will not get us anywhere in society!**



# Thank you very much and have a good discussion!



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