

Wolf Wisdom from a Wolf Authority

January 20, 2015 by [James Beers](#) [0 Comments](#)

Dr. Val Geist is a retired Canadian University Professor now living in British Columbia. While his title is “Professor Emeritus of Environmental Science” his field of expertise for which he is internationally recognized is the biology of wildlife and the societal implications of wildlife policy options. I have no greater respect for any academic in the field of predators and predation; two topics of great moment as you read this in North America and Europe.

Below are some very succinct and candid comments by Dr. Geist regarding the controversies and complications swirling around European wolves, their effects on rural Europeans, and the question of what is a wolf. This last question involves the genetic definition of a dog v the genetic definition of a wolf and when is a hybrid one or the other. As I have written many times over the years; I believe a wolf is a dog is a coyote (truly one species using the classical definition of a species) since all three interbreed freely and always produce viable (reproductively capable) offspring. The emerging question of what genetically is a dog or a wolf (or a coyote in North America) is both an academic (i.e. pedantic) determination as well as a value decision by government. The real, everyday aspect of this question is the many current and growing numbers of hybrids that can easily look like one another while carrying vastly different genetic make-ups.

This question of hybrids; which is what, what is protected and what is the government purpose overall is another one of the interminable sidebars that confuse the public and make informed decision-making by the public and government merely a matter of bureaucratic interests, emotions and propaganda fantasies. I would refer you to wolf effects on big game herds like elk and moose; wolves as disease and infection vectors endangering humans, domestic animals and other wildlife; wolf effects on domestic dogs; Red v Gray v Mexican v Timber, etc. wolves; and wolf effects on rural economies and the general welfare of rural residents as all similarly ignored and undefined ramifications of wolves kept totally beyond the control of those forced to live with them by powerful, remote governments.

Dr Geist’s comments are in response to a European proposal – after just sentencing some Finnish hunters to jail for killing some wolves/dogs/hybrids (?) – to legally define just what is a wolf and what is a dog. These comments should be read by everyone involved with or soon to be involved with GI (Government Issued) wolves, dogs, hybrids or “whatevers”. If you agree, PLEASE SHARE THEM FAR AND WIDE. Thanks.

Jim Beers

19 January 2015

Jim Beers is a retired US Fish & Wildlife Service Wildlife Biologist, Special Agent, Refuge Manager, Wetlands Biologist, and Congressional Fellow. He was stationed in North Dakota, Minnesota, Nebraska, New York City, and Washington DC. He also served as a US Navy Line Officer in the western Pacific and on Adak, Alaska in the Aleutian Islands. He has worked for the Utah Fish & Game, Minneapolis Police Department, and as a Security Supervisor in Washington, DC. He testified three times before Congress; twice regarding the theft by the US Fish & Wildlife Service of \$45 to 60 Million from State fish and wildlife funds and once in opposition to expanding Federal Invasive Species authority. He resides in Eagan, Minnesota with his wife of many decades.

Wolves cannot be kept in settled landscapes, because of the impossibility of keeping wolves and dogs apart, and the destruction of the wolf genome by creeping hybridization. While I whole-heartedly agree that there should be no keeping of wolves and wolf hybrids as pets, the sheer size of the “wolf-dog” industry as well as past releases of wolf hybrids will insure further erosion of the genome of free-ranging wolves. Secondly, how is officialdom to

know of wolf hybrids unless wolf numbers are strictly and closely regulated so that plenty of specimens are available for testing. Thirdly, from my experience identifying wolves or dogs from photos sent my way I have serious doubts that European wolf specialists can currently distinguish wolf from dog. Unless limits are set early to wolf numbers – and I see no hint of that – wolf populations will expand to destroy the populations of deer and turn to livestock and humans.

Do the authors of this manifesto really think that they can significantly keep wolves and dogs apart by minimizing the number of free-ranging dogs? Even if they have some success in doing so, are they not aware that lone wolves themselves seek out dogs? Do they really think that lone wolf females in heat will desist from visiting suburbs and farms looking for a mate? Do they think that chained farm dogs will not copulate with a female wolf in heat at night? Has nobody had the experience of holding a young very large male dog in training while they come in contact with an estrus female canid? I had a Bouvier de Flandre on the leash while we came across a small wolf track in the snow – and the Bouvier went wild! He then weighed only about a hundred pounds. I had my hands full! An amorous male wolf threatened my wife when he approached an estrus hunting dog in an enclosure. No neighborhood male dog had been that bold! In short, given wolves with a desire to mate and they will intrude deep into human habitation. There is no way to effectively segregate wolves from dogs in settled landscapes. Moreover, as this is written, there is now way to protect wildlife from marauding packs of dogs either.

As I have said before, all efforts to make wolves compatible with settle landscapes are a waste of time and energy. All marauding canids in settle landscape need to be removed. This raises the question of how to conserve wolves as a species. What we know for certain is that they need to be kept away from people and dogs. In the first instance that means that wolves and other large predators need to be kept where the public has no entry. And such areas need to be large. The very first step is to negotiate internationally for keeping large predators on military and atomic reserves. I doubt that national parks are suitable because the tourist lobby will balk. Secondly, means and ways need to be found to control closely wolf populations in such reserves to insure that the predators do not run out of prey, and leave the reserves for settled landscapes. Well-fed wolves will cause the least problems. Severe trapping and predator control in 20th century North America kept wolves out of settled landscapes, eliminated agricultural losses and disease transmission, retained their genetic integrity, while attacks on humans were unheard of.

Wolf conservation as proposed here (i.e. Europe) is not serious.

Sincerely, Val Geist

Professor Emeritus of Environmental Science