

# Carnivores in Europe

# Living together

# The "Dirty Dozen"!

When we, Europeans, think about nature conservation we tend to think in terms of exotic species in faraway places. We often forget that here, in our own continent, we still have beautiful landscapes, complex habitats and a diverse fauna, which also needs help. Living in a modern, industrialized society it is easy to forget that wildlife still survives around us and, in some cases, even thrives. This capacity for survival does not mean we should be complacent; often this wildlife is under pressure, hanging on by the merest thread.

Through our activities habitats are becoming more fragmented and polluted. As carnivores move into "our" space to compensate for this, they become competitors for "our" resources and "our" living space. As a result we no longer respect them or see them as objects of beauty and wonder but rather as pests which damage our profit margins or safety.

At the same time, because carnivores are usually so easily recognizable by the general public (wolf, bear, fox), they make excellent flagships which we can use to focus public attention on conservation needs. They are also a good barometer for the condition of our environment; it goes without saying that an environment where carnivores can thrive is a healthy one.

In Europe, carnivores are confronted by two contrasting groups of problems; one devolving from an increase in carnivore numbers and the other from a decline. The theme of the campaign, "Living Together", encompasses both of these. On the one hand it means acting to facilitate the survival of threatened and endangered carnivores and, on the other, learning to live with those which are actually increasing in number, encroaching our territory and generating conflicts. We need strategies to integrate the presence of (large) carnivores into our modern life in a crowded continent.

Carnivores often have a negative image (e.g. the wolf in the "little red riding-hood story) which predisposes people to prejudice. A good education and awareness campaign can counteract this and encourage people to recognize the positive benefits of carnivores. Such a campaign will make the public aware both of the important function which carnivores have in the environment as well as the special role they have had in shaping our folklore and culture.

Europe is home to a number of carnivores both large and small. It is impossible for a campaign to focus on them all and so we have selected twelve of the most charismatic, threatened species as our campaign flagships:

**Arctic fox** (*Alopex lagopus*)

**Brown bear** (*Ursus arctos*)

**Eurasian otter** (*Lutra lutra*)

**Eurasian lynx** (*Lynx lynx*)

**Eurasian wildcat** (*Felis silvestris*)

**European mink** (*Mustela lutreola*)

**Golden jackal** (*Canis aureus*)

**Grey wolf** (*Canis lupus*)

**Iberian lynx** (*Lynx pardinus*)

**Marbled polecat** (*Vormela peregusna*)

**Polar bear** (*Ursus maritimus*)

**Wolverine** (*Gulo gulo*)

# The campaign aims

# Get involved

1. To make people conscious of the diversity of wildlife that still survives both in their own country and continent;
2. To increase public awareness and acceptance of the expansion in both numbers and range of a number of large carnivore species;
3. To draw attention to the way in which our life styles and activities endanger the future of many of our rare and endangered carnivore species;
4. To explain why the presence of carnivores is a good indicator of the health of our environment;
5. To teach EAZA members and the public that conservation is needed in our own countries and not just in the far flung corners of the earth.

The campaign will also raise funds in support of various conservation projects. The projects which have been selected are distributed throughout Europe, cover all our “Dirty Dozen” species and have a link to the campaign theme “Living Together”. To realise all these projects, the European Carnivore Campaign aims to achieve or better still exceed, the target of €750,000.

Visit the campaign website

[www.carnivorecampaign.eu](http://www.carnivorecampaign.eu)

to get more information about the campaign, the projects, news and updates.

Register online and get access to:

-  High resolution photos
-  Carnivore fact sheets
-  Poster templates
-  Education material
-  Fundraising activities
-  Events



A special thanks to Leap Media for creating the campaign logo and to Tom Svensson, Alex Sliwa, Tiit Maran, Miha Krofel, Astrid Schute, Tropical Wings, and Peter Cairns/toothandclaw.org.uk for providing the cover photos.