

farmers. Up to now 41 cheetahs have been caught legally.

These cheetah then get relocated by the NCMP into approved conservation areas in SA. The NCMP requires a minimum donation of R 15,000 per cheetah from the new owner. This donation gets paid directly into the Compensation Fund. Any expenditure such as veterinary expenses, transport expenses etc then gets covered out of this additional R 5,000. Any additional funds remain in the Compensation Fund to keep it self sustaining. The NCMP may also use these additional funds to sponsor cheetah related conservation projects. In this way, "problem" cheetah are paying for themselves to be relocated into approved safe conservation area in SA, the farmers rather capture these cheetah alive due to the "financial" value that the cheetah now has, and additional funds that is generated gets put back into cheetah conservation projects in SA.

The NCMP believes that this is a short term solution and that it is not sustainable over the long term. This gives the NCMP time to investigate and to implement long term solutions that will ensure the survival of the wild cheetah on farmland areas outside of formally protected areas in SA.

A short-lived wolf depredation compensation program in Israel

by

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Synopsis

A compensation program in Israel ran for only one year, and was discontinued because no sponsor was found to continue to subsidize the compensation payments. Ranchers felt that compensation rates were very low relative to actual losses, but that it was at least better than nothing. Today ranchers receive subsidies to purchase fences and livestock guarding dogs instead.

Background

During the 1970's and 1980's the Golan Heights region in northern Israel experienced a rise in depredation on sheep and calves mainly by golden jackals, *Canis aureus* (Yom-Tov, Ashkenazi & Viner, 1995). During the 1990's there was a marked increase in

depredation rates by wolves (*Canis lupus*), too. There was a strict policy in place at that time outlawing any killing of the wolves; the estimated population size was about 50 at that time, but has since grown to about 150 (Reichman 2002).

The conflict reached a peak in July 1998, when in a tragic event, 28 rare griffon vultures (*Gyps fulvus*) died from eating poisoned bait that was set out by disgruntled ranchers trying to kill wolves. After this event, a Ministerial commission was established to investigate the wolf-livestock problem and to suggest methods for its resolution. The commission recommended, among other steps, to compensate ranchers for losses from wolves, at least until alternative protective measures (such as fences and livestock guarding dogs) could be put into place.

The compensation program was viewed as a means to better protect the wolves from the ranchers.

The compensation program

One-quarter of the compensation program was paid for by the federal government, and the rest was covered by Tnuva, a large cooperative for marketing agricultural products, which is owned by the kibbutz and moshav farmers in Israel. The ranchers did not pay a premium to join the compensation program, but there was a deductible required, as mentioned below.

Payment was made to the ranchers once every 6 months for all documented and approved cases of wolf depredation. Each case had to be approved by a government wildlife ranger (from the Israel Nature & Parks Authority), who determined if the animal was killed by a wolf, or if a calf had indeed been taken by a wolf.

Compensation was paid at 100% if the rancher had an electric fence and/or trained guard dogs in place (4 dogs per 250 head), and a dead animal was available for examination. Compensation was paid at 80% if the herd was not fully protected. Approved cases of missing calves were also compensated for at the 80% rate.

The 100% compensation rates were (in US\$):

Calves up to 60 days old (plus US\$2 for each additional day)	200
Pregnant heifer	800
Cow	500
Lamb	100
Sheep	200

Each cattle rancher had a deductible as follows:

herds of up to 200 heads	first animal killed or missing per year
herds of 201-500 heads	first two animals killed or missing per year
herds of 501-800 heads	first four animals killed or missing per year
herds over 800 heads	first five animals killed or missing per year

Each sheep rancher had a deductible as follows:

herds of up to 300 head	first one animal killed or missing per year
herds over 300 head	first two animals killed or missing per year

The program lasted one year (July 1998 – August 1999), and a total of NIS 160,000 (about US\$ 48,000) was paid out in compensation.

The program was discontinued after Tnuva withdrew its support, deciding instead, to help subsidize the purchase of fences and guard dogs. Tnuva felt that its money would be better spent on protection rather than compensation. The government subsequently decided to direct its support to these ends too.

The ranchers have since received substantial government subsidies to purchase electric and conventional fences, and trained livestock guarding dogs, and these are in wide use today. They are very effective in reducing wolf depredation on sheep; their efficacy for protecting cattle against wolves is highly variable.

The ranchers' point of view

The ranchers felt that compensation rates were very low compared to the actual losses they incurred, but they felt that the program was better than no compensation at all. The ranchers also were left with the impression that they were not paid for many cases of what they felt was wolf depredation, but which were not approved as such by the wildlife ranger.

LIFE Starter Project about Wildlife-Agriculture Conflicts

The LIFE Starter program funds 10-month projects that aim at gathering the background information needed for preparing LIFE III proposals. The Institute of Applied Ecology (IEA) of Rome has received funds for the project: Wildlife and Agriculture: Minimizing the Conflict through Damage Prevention. The co-ordinators of the project are Annette Mertens and Valeria Salvatori. The aim of the project is to gain insight into the extent and distribution of the major conflicts between wildlife (large carnivores, large herbivores, golden jackal and porcupine) in the European Mediterranean (Portugal, Spain, France, Italy, Croatia and Greece). A second step is the analysis of possible strategies to reduce these conflicts. Our local partners are 1. Luis Pinto de Andrade, University of Castelo Branco, Portugal, 2. Juan Carlos Blanco, Fundacio Oso Pardo, Spain, 3. ONCFS, France, 4. Djuro Huber, University of Zagreb, Croatia and 5. Constantinos Godes, Arcturos, Greece. They will provide data about wildlife-agriculture conflicts in their countries. Together we will then identify special conflict situations in target areas for which to design conflict resolution strategies. A more in-depth research and the implementation of the strategies will be the contents of a LIFE III proposal we will submit in summer 2003. In this proposal each partner organisation will then be responsible for the implementation of the management strategy in the own country, as well as monitoring the status of conflicts. IEA will be responsible for the implementation of the project in Italy and the overall coordination.

As we are still in an initial phase we are looking for input for the project, which can be an exchange of opinions or the participation of additional organisations on the local level. We will be happy about any kind of input you can give!

Many thanks!

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