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Forum

Behaviour of protected predators and man

The decline of an alarming proportion of large and medium-sized predatory mammals, down to regional extinction, was followed by a period of total protection of such species in Norway. The single most important cause of the demise of these species was the increasingly efficient persecution of them by man. These populations now slowly revive, and the conflicts are back, as strong as ever, and socially more complex. Absence of the predators has changed the attitudes and behaviour of people, and protection against persecution has changed the attitudes and behaviour of the predators. Agricultural and aquacultural practices that are vulnerable to predator attack have had time to develop.

Not only is there a need for the most vulnerable trades to develop new practices, but also for the predators to regain their former shyness of people and human activities, in order for their presence to become accepted and not feared. The most eager friends of the predators may not be their best friends, as confrontation is not the



Portrait of a protected species

best way to a relatively peaceful coexistence of predators with people. Acceptance will eliminate the most serious threats to the future survival of predator species.

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