

WOLFWATCH EUROPE

NEWSLETTER

1A - FEBRUARY 2026



ANALYSIS

2026, Italy. **Io non ho paura del lupo** (<https://www.iononhopauradellupo.it/>) unveils the data on the **mortality of the wolf** (*Canis lupus*) in Italy in the period 2019-2023 (under the legal regime of strict protection). The data collected for this analysis was obtained from the competent national and regional authorities and may be underestimated. **1,639 wolves found dead in the 5 year period** of the analysis, with 449 wolves found dead only in the year 2023 (more than one wolf found dead per single day).

Read the study:

<https://www.iononhopauradellupo.it/wp-content/uploads/2025/12/Wolf-Canis-lupus-Mortality-in-Italy-in-the-period-2019%E2%80%932023.pdf>

WolfWatch Europe is a new initiative launched in response to the recent EU decision to downgrade the protection status of the wolf. It serves as an information gateway dedicated to wolf-related developments across Europe. The platform provides updates on scientific research, science diplomacy, legal frameworks, litigation cases at both EU and Member State level, emerging policies, key events, economic analysis and cultural perspectives.

Curated by **Green Impact**, the platform supports informed stakeholder dialogue and evidence-based decision-making by bringing together reliable, cross-sector information on wolf conservation and management across Europe. It is designed to evolve in a participatory manner, actively encouraging contributions and engagement from a diverse range of stakeholders.

LEGAL EUROPEAN UNION

- **Case T-563/25**; Green Impact and other Associations, Appeal before the European Court of Justice (EUCJ) to annul the 2025 EU act of downlisting of the Wolf. Represented by: L. D'Agostino and M. Giovinazzo, lawyers. **READ** the Appeal: https://greenimpact.it/wp-content/uploads/2025/10/OJ_C_202505359_EN_TXT.pdf
- **Discover** the list of Associations which contributed with an **act of intervention**: <https://www.greenimpact.it/wp-content/uploads/2025/12/PDF-Appellants-Acts-of-Intervention.pdf>

SCIENCE DIPLOMACY

Science, 30 Oct 2025, Vol 390, Issue 6772, pp. 452-453

Restore strict protection for Wolves in Europe

Ettore Randi, Hugh Jansman, Josip Kusak, Michela Pacifici, Gianluca Piovesan, Urmaz Saarma, Krzysztof Schmidt, and Geraldine Werhahn

Extract: With the monitoring currently in place, reliability estimating the number of wolves in Europe is not possible. The available demographic data are heterogeneous, approximate, largely qualitative, and unverifiable. Wolves have not yet reached a favorable conservation status in most European countries. Up to half of European wolf population do not meet the effective population size criterion required for long-term genetic and demographic sustainability.

Read the full text on :

<https://www.science.org/doi/10.1126/science.aeb0660>

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LETTERS

NGOs Letters addressed to Member States authorities about **Wolf downlisting**:

December 2025. NGOs call on EU States to keep wolves strictly protected. signed by 200+ Associations
<https://eeb.org/en/library/over-200-ngos-call-on-national-ministers-to-uphold-wolf-protection/>

August 2025. Trust Science, Stand with Wolves, Reject the downlisting. Signed by 100+ Associations and Foundations
<https://greenimpact.it/wp-content/uploads/2025/08/New-version-August-2025-Letter-to-EU-27-Member-States-Wolf-downlisting.pdf>

April 2025. Letter to the EU Polish Presidency on the wolf downlisting. Signed by 53 Associations and Foundations
<https://greenimpact.it/wp-content/uploads/2025/04/15-April-2025-Update-Letter-to-Polish-Presidency.pdf>

January 2025. Letter to Swedish Gov. on Wolf killing. Signed by 78 Associations
https://greenimpact.it/wp-content/uploads/2025/02/Lettera-Lupi_Sweden.pdf

November, 2024. Letter To the Bern Convention: The EU Proposal on Wolf downlisting is unlawful and therefore unfit for being voted. Signed by 6 Associations
https://greenimpact.it/wp-content/uploads/2024/11/VERSIONE-29-11_Open-Letter-26-November-2024_compressed.pdf

- **Case T-634/24**; Green Impact and other Associations Appeal before the European Court of Justice (EUCJ) to annul the 2024 EU Council Decision proposing the Wolf downlisting at the Bern Convention. Represented by: L. D'Agostino, lawyer. **READ** the Appeal: https://greenimpact.it/wp-content/uploads/2025/02/OJ_C_202500922_EN_TXT.pdf

- **Discover** the list of Associations which contributed with an **act of intervention**: <https://greenimpact.it/wp-content/uploads/2025/06/2025-LUPI-Caso-Corte-UE.-Lista-Ricorrenti-e-Atto-di-intervento.pdf>

NEWS FROM FRANCE

2025, December. **FERUS** (<https://www.ferus.fr/>) **has won an unprecedented and decisive legal victory for the protection of wolves** in France. In a major decision, the Council of State explicitly recognises the French State obligation to comply with European law on the conservation of the species, particularly at the local level. This decision marks a turning point in the defence of wolves and paves the way for a fundamental review of the lethal shooting policies pursued to date.

Read the judgement:

<https://www.ferus.fr/wp-content/uploads/2025/12/CE-loups-echelle-locale.pdf>

Restore strict protection for wolves in Europe

After centuries of persecution that drove wolf (*Canis lupus*) populations to the brink of extinction in most European countries (1), conservation measures and changes in land use have allowed the species to start slowly recovering (2). However, on 5 June, the Council of Europe approved the decision of the European Commission (EC) to downgrade the legal status of wolves in the Habitats Directive from Strictly Protected to Protected (3). Wolves classified as Strictly Protected could only be removed by derogation and on an individual basis, whereas wolves with Protected status could be removed as a result of culling plans, which puts population recovery in jeopardy (4). Given the gaps in knowledge about wolf populations and continued threats to the species in Europe, wolves should remain Strictly Protected.

With the monitoring currently in place, reliably estimating the number of wolves in Europe is not possible. The available demographic data are heterogeneous, approximate, largely qualitative, and unverifiable (5). Wolves have not yet reached a favorable

conservation status in most European countries (4). Up to half of European wolf populations do not meet the effective population size criterion required for long-term genetic and demographic sustainability (6).

Wolf populations across Europe are primarily threatened by overhunting (including illegal killing), conflicts driven by livestock depredation, and political pressures from interest groups such as hunters and farmers to reduce population numbers through lethal removal (4). New threats are emerging as eastern and southern European countries erect border fences. This growing network of physical barriers, covering thousands of kilometers, has fragmented habitats and disrupted the genetic connectivity of wildlife species, including wolves (7).

The proposal to downgrade the wolf's status was based on a non-peer-reviewed technical report commissioned by the EC (8) and concerns about wolves' socioeconomic impact (3). However, the economic impact of wolf depredation is marginal and can be substantially mitigated by effective prevention programs (5), whereas lethal removal has been ineffective (9).

LIFE IN SCIENCE



The Coronation Chair of Denmark was crafted from narwhal tusks in the 17th century.

A legendary request for narwhal DNA

The Coronation Chair of Denmark, displayed at Rosenborg Castle, a museum in central Copenhagen, is a national treasure that was used in the coronation of Danish kings from 1671 to 1840 (1). The throne is pearly white with gold accents, a regal piece befitting its noble history. In 2007, as a PhD student, I called the curator of the museum to request access to the chair. I wanted to drill holes in it.

King Frederik III commissioned the throne in about 1660. According to legend, the chair was made of unicorn

horns—rare mythical objects that had healing powers. In fact, the king had sent an expedition to Greenland to collect the spiraled tusks of male narwhals.

I hoped to collect samples from the 350-year-old tusks to investigate why narwhals have lower genetic diversity compared with other marine mammals of the polar north, but I feared that my request would be met with horror. To my astonishment, the curator found the project fascinating and said that my timing was perfect: The throne had been disassembled to undergo restoration.

We arranged for me to visit with my equipment—a dental drill, plastic gloves,

and sample tubes. The throne's parts were laid out in a former royal horse stable. Centuries after being cut, the narwhal tusks' distinctive structure had continued to twist into a spiral, so the pieces that formed the backrest and front were soaking in a solution to straighten them. I drilled tiny holes in the large tusk segments that form the throne's pillars. Later, the chair was reassembled, and the holes are now invisible to viewers.

Unlike narwhals in the 17th century, today's narwhal populations face substantial changes to their arctic habitat driven by anthropogenic climate change. The data that I collected could provide information that improves management and conservation policies. I hope that my unusual request will ultimately help safeguard this legendary species.

Eva Garde

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CALL FOR SUBMISSIONS

Life in Science is an occasional feature highlighting some of the humorous or unusual day-to-day realities that face our readers. Can you top this? Submit your story to www.submit2science.org.

To remain consistent with the European Nature Restoration Law, which places ecosystem health above economic and stakeholder interests (10), Europe should restore strict protection for wolves and implement reliable population monitoring and policies that recognize their ecological role. Priorities should include cross-species ecosystem recovery, ecological corridors, and livestock depredation mitigation. The EC should integrate science-based information on wolf behavioral ecology into nature conservation programs, considering ecosystem health and resilience as well as human well-being, and should also combat illegal killing and other threats to biodiversity. A full wolf recovery would restore the ability of this top predator to regulate and maintain the health of prey populations and promote reforestation, landscape heterogeneity, and biodiversity, all of which are achieved by both natural and assisted recolonization of wolves in Europe and elsewhere (11, 12).

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Call for Nominations: Scolnick Prize in Neuroscience

The McGovern Institute for Brain Research is accepting nominations for the 22nd annual Edward M. Scolnick Prize in Neuroscience. The Prize recognizes an outstanding discovery or significant advance in the field of neuroscience. The prize is \$225,000. The recipient presents a public lecture at MIT, hosted by the McGovern Institute and followed by a dinner in Spring 2026.

Nomination Deadline:
December 15, 2025

Nomination procedures:

Candidates for the award must be nominated by individuals affiliated with universities, hospitals, medical schools, or research institutes, with a background in neuroscience. Self-nomination is not permitted. Each nomination should include:

- A biosketch or CV of the nominee;
- A letter of nomination with a summary and analysis of the major contributions of the nominee to the field of neuroscience.
- Up to two representative reprints will be accepted.

Selection Procedure:

- Members of the selection committee and faculty affiliated with MIT are not eligible.
- Announcement of the award recipient will be made in January 2026.
- Recipient must attend all events to be awarded the prize.

Past Scolnick Prize Recipients:

2025: Leslie Vosshall, HHMI, The Rockefeller University; 2024: Margaret Livingstone, Harvard University; 2023: Yang Dan, HHMI, University of California, Berkeley; 2022: David Ginty, Harvard University; 2020: Joshua Sanes, Harvard University; 2019: Richard Huganir, Johns Hopkins University; 2018: David J. Anderson, HHMI, Caltech; 2017: Catherine Dulac, HHMI, Harvard University; 2016: Cornelia Bargmann, HHMI, The Rockefeller University; 2015: Charles Gilbert, The Rockefeller University; 2014: Huda Zoghbi, HHMI, Baylor University; 2013: Thomas Jessell, HHMI, Columbia University; 2012: Roger Nicoll, UCSF; 2011: Bruce McEwen, The Rockefeller University; 2010: Lily and Yuh-Nung Jan, UCSF; 2009: Jeremy Nathans, Johns Hopkins University; 2008: Michael Davis, Emory University; 2007: David Julius, UCSF; 2006: Michael Greenberg, Children's Hospital/HMS; 2005: Judith Rapoport, NIH; 2004: Masakazu Konishi, CalTech

Send nomination packet to:
gwolf@mit.edu