

The Future of Wolf Land

Should Wolves Be Reintroduced into Ireland?
By Faith Jones



01



Background

What did Ireland used to look like?

Early Ireland and Wolves



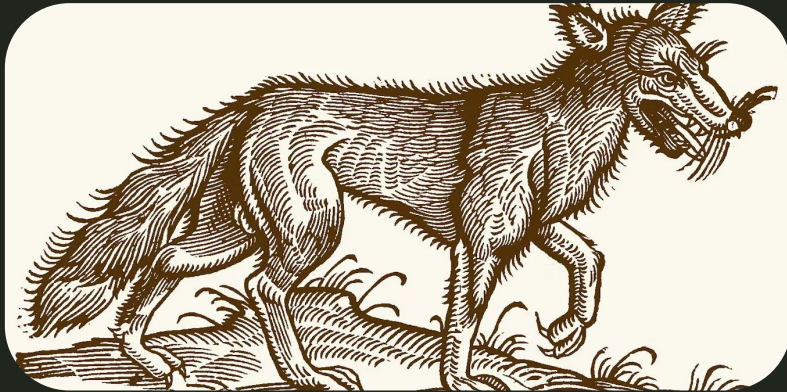
- It is estimated that around 1600, areas could have supported a population of 400 to 600 wolves (Hickey, 2003)

- Wolves recorded in Ireland as early as 655 AD (Wild Ireland)



Early Ireland and Wolves

- Export of wolf skins in the 1500s (Hickey, 2003)
- In the 1650s legislation and bounties were put in place to kill off wolves (Mac Connell, 2009)
- The last wolf was killed in 1786 (Wild Ireland)



02



Current Ireland

What does Ireland look like
without wolves?

Deer Population

- The number of deer shot during hunting season has risen to 40,000 in some years (Cassidy, 2021)



- An increase in Lyme disease could be attributed to the increasing deer population (Maguire, 2022)
- Reintroducing wolves would help control these deer populations, some of which are invasive (McHugh, 2022)

Current Control Methods

- National deer cull (Wild Ireland)
- Deer fences around vegetation are often damaged (Murray, 2022)



03



Impacts

What would Ireland look like with wolves?

Benefits

- Prevent overgrazing and maintain a healthy ecosystem (O'Connor, 2019)
- Restore biodiversity and improve carbon sequestration (Baraniuk, 2021)



Concerns



- Critics say there is no wild place large enough to reintroduce wolves (O'Connor, 2019)
- The reintroduction of wolves raises concerns for human and livestock safety (Baraniuk, 2021)



Public Perception

- **“they’d all be shot”** –The Green Party Minister of State for Land Use and Biodiversity
- **“undermine existing conservation programmes.”** –The Minister for Culture, Heritage, and the Gaeltacht



04



Potential Methods

How could wolves be reintroduced into
the country?

Studies

- In Yellowstone, the reintroduction of wolves is considered to be a success (National Park Service)



- A study found management tactics
 - Reduce livestock depredation
 - Increase deer prey kills (Murphey et al., 2023)

Potential Locations



Wild Nephin



Glenveagh



Wicklow
Mountains



Killarney

Conclusion

- Current population control methods for deer in Ireland are generally not working
- The reintroduction of wolves in other locations has been considered a success
- By using management plans and continuing reforestation efforts, the reintroduction of wolves would be beneficial for Ireland



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