Exploring intergroup conflict over wolf management

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Reintroduction

Status: Endangered (threatened)

Agency: Federal

Decision makers: Scientists

Process: Top down
Expert Opinion
Recovery

Status: Delisted
Agency: State
Decision makers: Scientists, Legislators, Public?
Process: Transactional

How should decisions be made?
Self-categorization

Social Identity Theory (SIT)

Ingroup
Us vs Them

Ingroup

Outgroup

Interpersonal

Competition

Intergroup
Objectives

1. Apply SIT to wolf management
   A. Characterize ingroups
   B. Describe perceptions of outgroups

2. Explore stewardship toward wolves

3. (Examine perceptions of decision-makers and processes)
Methods

- Semi-structured, open-ended key-informant interviews
- August-September 2012
- Digitally recorded
- Analysis via scan, order, review, and compare (LeCompte & Goetz 1983)

Photo credit: J. Sartone, NatGeo
## Results

<table>
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<th>Characteristics</th>
<th>Detail</th>
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<td>Average time</td>
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<td>Bear/coyote hunters</td>
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<tr>
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<td>Biologists</td>
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<td>Livestock owners</td>
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Conservation
- Wise use
- Population
- Humans
- Hunting

Preservation
- Hands off
- Individuals
- Nature
- Protection

Balance

Ingroups

Photo credit: J. Crivello, NatGeo
Perceptions of Outgroups

US: Conservationist

- THEM: Environmental groups, Animal protection advocates
- “Care more about animals than people” [R005]
- “Have a Disney view of nature” [R006]
- “Out of touch with reality” [R005]
- “They have opinions but they don’t have a dog in the hunt.” [R003]
Perceptions of Outgroups

US: Preservationist

- THEM: Hunters, Ranchers
- “Only care about their sustainable consumption” [R012]
- “They’re angry and will take management into their own hands” [R009]
- “Wildlife management is an oxymoron...once they stopped shooting wolves, wolves were fine.” [R010]
Stewardship

- Long-term
- Sustainability
- Bequest values
- Education
- Pride
- Healthy ecosystems
- Existence values
Us vs Them

Ingroup

Interpersonal

Competition

Outgroup

Intergroup

Stewards
Implications

- Communication interventions to focus on stewardship
- Address tyrannies of the minority
- Share power to dissolve hierarchies
“Groups occupy different levels of a hierarchy of status and power, and that intergroup behaviour is driven by people’s ability to be critical of, and to see alternatives to, the status quo. For Tajfel, social identity theory was at its heart a theory of social change.”

Hornsey 2008:207
Acknowledgements

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My key informants

- Riley/Gore Lab, Lissy Goralnik

Photos: Isle Royale Wolf-Moose Study