When the wolves come to town.
Urban reactions to new neighbors

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New kids on the block

- In the winter 2012/2013 a wolf pair settled in a protected forest area that is partly within the city limits of Oslo. Wolf pups were born in 2013, and again in 2014.
- The area is widely used for recreational activities.
- This presented an opportunity to explore the reactions of city people when they finally have wolves on their doorstep – always the dream of rural wolf opponents.
Østmarka between the urban and the (semi-)rural
The study

- General population sample of 1400.
- 900 from the boroughs Alna og Østensjø in Oslo.
- 500 from the municipalities Enebakk and Rælingen.
- Telephone survey. Stratified by gender and age to mirror the actual gender and age distribution.
Like or dislike that there are wolves in Østmarka

“Strongly dislike it” to “Like it very much”
«I hope the wolves will have pups»

“Strongly disagree” to “Strongly agree” + “Don’t know”
Participated in discussions about the wolves in Østmarka
«I try to obtain information about the wolves in Østmarka»

“Strongly disagree” to “Strongly agree” + “Don’t know”
Cross-country skiing: Like or dislike wolves in Østmarka

![Bar chart showing the distribution of preferences for cross-country skiing in Østmarka, with 'Strongly dislike' (1) to 'like very much' (5) on the y-axis and frequency of skiing (3 times/week, 1-2 times/week, 1-3 times/month, More seldom, Never) on the x-axis.]

- Strongly dislike (1) to like very much (5)
- Frequency ranges:
  - 3 times/week
  - 1-2 times/week
  - 1-3 times/month
  - More seldom
  - Never

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Skiing: “I hope the wolves will have pups”

![Bar chart showing responses to a question about skiing frequency and suggestions for wolf pup numbers.]

- **3 times/week +**: More responses in range 3-4 (strongly agree) for AØ and ER.
- **1-2 times/week**: Responses are mostly concentrated around 2 (neither agree or disagree) for AØ and 1-3 (agree) for ER.
- **1-3 times/month**: Responses are generally higher (3-4) for AØ, with ER showing a similar trend.
- **More seldom**: Responses are slightly lower (2-3) for both AØ and ER.
- **Never**: Responses are at the lower end (1-2) for both AØ and ER.

Respondents can choose from "Strongly disagree" (1) to "Strongly agree" (5).
Back-country camping: Like or dislike wolves in Østmarka

"Strongly dislike" (1) to "like very much" (5)

- 3 times/month +
- More seldom
- Never
Back-country camping: “I hope the wolves will have pups”
Picking berries:
Like or dislike wolves in Østmarka

![Bar chart showing the frequency of berry picking and rating of wolves.](chart.png)
Picking berries: “I hope the wolves will have pups”

- 3 times/week +
- 1-2 times/week
- 1-3 times/month
- More seldom
- Never

"Strongly disagree" (1) to "Strongly agree" (5)

AØ
ER
An urban-rural divide in miniature

- There had been very few encounters between recreationists and wolves before the survey, so personal experience did hardly play a big part.
- It is more reasonable to see this as a reminder that attitudes to wolves are embedded in cultural packages that may be sorted into a typically rural and a typically urban variety.
Never forget the cultural context

- Interest in the wolf situation is more common in rural areas, even when the wolves are as close to the urban residents.
- Outdoor recreation activities that on the surface appear to be the same, may be embedded in cultural packages that imply different connotations, both for the activities themselves and the wolves.
Cooperation and expertise for a sustainable future

Photo: P. Jordhøy, J. Thomassen, E. B. Thorstad, A. Staverløkk, T. Aarvak, B. Løken/Samfoto