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Fearsome: The European grey wolf is thriving in the Netherlands, Belgium and Germany.

Should we welcome them? Some claim that bringing back wolves would also bring the countryside back to life. But others believe that the risk is too great.

What's happening?

Carlo steps outside his hut in the Italian mountains. Suddenly he notices a dark shape among the trees. A wolf! It stops for a moment; then a strange sound fills the air: "Owww! Owww!" The howling freezes Carlo's blood.

Now, some people hope you could have this experience in Britain too. **Rewilding** campaigners want to bring wolves back to the country. But sheep farmers worry about the danger to their animals.

Find out more

The last wolves in Britain probably died out in the 1700s in Scotland. Campaigners say that wolves are more important than sheep. At the moment, two million deer damage trees in Britain. Wolves could control the number of deer.

Several European countries already have wolf packs. There are about 3,000 wolves in Spain and Portugal.

The animals are protected by **EU law**. But France, Finland and Norway have carried out **culls** to control their numbers. In France around 15,000 farm animals a year are killed by wolves.

In Germany, officials have tried to find a **compromise**. "Wolf commissioners" work with farmers to protect their animals. If their animals are killed by wolves, they are given money to pay for their loss.

Should we welcome them?

Some say

Yes! Nature knows best. It is due to human actions that there are no wolves in Britain. We should return the land to how it was before humans changed it.

Others think

No! Britain needs its farms. The danger to animals is too great. And Britons are simply not ready to find a wolf on their doorstep when they go out in the morning.

Some people say

"All stories are about wolves. All worth repeating, that is. Anything else is sentimental drivel."

Margaret Atwood (1939 –), Canadian writer

What do you think?

Six steps to discovery

1. Connect

How do you feel about this story? - Have you ever seen a wolf? Would you like to walk in a forest with wolves?

2. Wonder

What questions do you have? - For example: How big are wolf packs? How long do wolves live?

3. Investigate

What are the facts? - Pick out one thing we know for certain about this story and one thing we cannot say for sure.

4. Construct

What is your point of view? - You are told that wolves are to be brought back to the countryside near you. Think about what you would say.

5. Express

What do others believe? - Which is the scariest wild animal? Take it in turns to say.

6. Reflect

What might happen next? - Make a poster either in favour of or against bringing wolves back to land near you — or another wild animal of your choice!

Glossary

Rewilding - Returning developed or farmed land to its natural state by reintroducing species that once lived there.

EU - European Union. An economic and political union of 27 countries.

Law - A rule that everyone must follow.

Culls - Purposefully killing animals to bring down their population.

Compromise - Solving a disagreement by both sides agreeing to meet in the middle.