

# How to whitewash a „dark character”-

environmental and cultural education *contra* false stereotypes ruling the relationship between humankind and wolves



„Our common present „ 2016

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# Wolf, Grey Wolf, Canis lupus, Wilk, Vlk



The wolf is incredibly adaptive, intelligent and resilient. Unlike other species at the top of the food chain, the wolf has the added benefit of a pack structure and a cunning ability to attack and hide.

In Europe wolves evoke fear in people not consistent with the actual threat posed .

**Wolves became  
„Anti- Heroes” in the  
popular imagination**

Attitudes and perception of general public towards wolves was shaped not only by observation in nature but also by cultural influences.

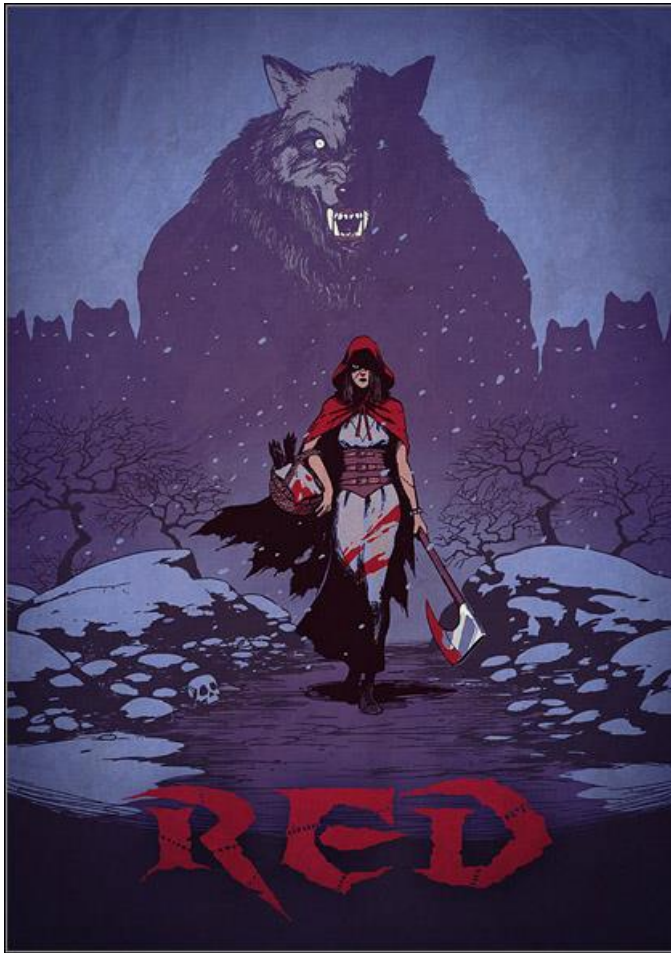
Many European tales repeat the story-plot of girls being hunted down by a bad wolf.



# Red Riding Hood



Highly negative and in fact supernatural traits have been ascribed to wolves.



Werevolves- people who turn into wolves- appeared in folk belief and then crossed over into Gothic-genre novels and horror stories.

Wolves as bloody beast also became a popular subject for painters as Alfred Wierusz Kowalski- Theme of aggressive wolves attacks were explored in his paintings since 1890 to 1910 in hundreds of versions and copies also as albums and popular prints "The Assault"-1890 (National Gallery in Wrocław).

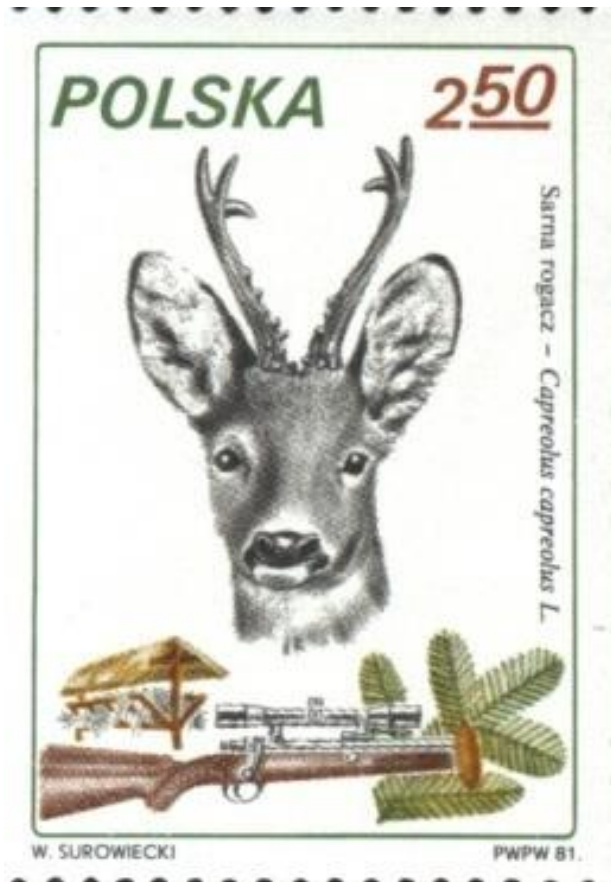


## Alfred Wierusz-Kowalski „Wolves attac sledges”

Hundreds stories of such bloody attacks were and still are repited in Poland – through only very few were ever documented - since begining of the XX. only a couple of cases and mainly ascribable to rabid wolves.



Wolves are regarded by hunters as competitors for game animals. Hunters tend to claim that there are „to many” wolves and they are blamed for declines in numbers of game animals



Influence on the deer population:

*Wolves:* improving the structure of population by choosing old and ill individuals

*Hunters:* eliminating the best individuals for trophies

The harm wolves do to farmers -to compare the equivalent costs imposed on them:

- by game animals – 57 m. zł
- by wolves- 0,5 m. zł



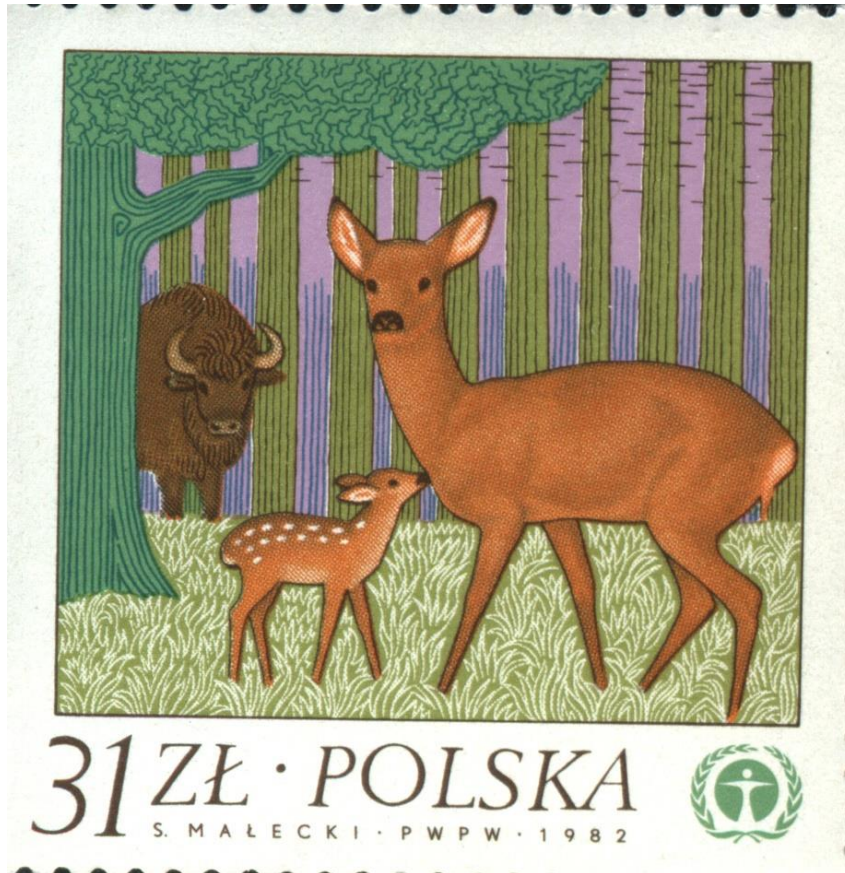
The results of scientific research overturn  
the myth of the „bad wolf”

We now know how the presence of wolves can  
influence the flora and fauna of an ecosystem  
in the positive way

Wolves help support a diversity of small carnivorous and scavengers like ravens sharing with them what is left of the carcasses of prey items



# By controlling numbers of large herbivores wolves prevent over-browsing and help with regeneration of forest



- In Poland the costs of protecting forest from over-browsing by large herbivores are 5 times as great as those associated with protection against pest-insects.

Equivalent cost for harm:

57 m.zł by game animals

0,5 m.zł- by wolves

Wolves help control populations of other „Conflict Species” like beavers, as large animals responsible for collisions on roads and feral dogs



# Status of wolves in Europe-protected or consider as game animal. In the EU countries the wolf is designated as a protected species under:



The Berne Convention on the Conservation of European Wildlife

The EU Council's „Habitat Directive” (1992) and listed in Anex II as : „species of Community interest whose conservation requires the designation of special areas” and in Anex IV: ‘species in need of special areas” Natura 2000.

The Convention on the Trade in Endangered Species CITES

In Poland: since 1998 on the list of strictly protected animals

# Persecution or poaching occurs despite all forms of protection

Fear of wolves enhanced by the influence of culture has ensured that references to the *Canis lupus* in Europe have been negative.

Down the centuries this gave rise and was taken to justify every possible effort to achieve the total elimination of the species. To this day fear obstructs the protection of wolves and provokes resistance to its reintroduction or coming back to former habitats.

In European culture there is a deep rooted negative image of the wolf

It is based on fear of wolf attacks on humans and the loss of livestock and therefore livelihood to wolf depredation.

The secretive lifestyle ensure that wolves evoke fear in people in a maner not consistent with the actual threat posed.

## Das wolves need a good PR?

A change of image for the wolf that facilitate social acceptance for the idea of its protection and return to former habitats will be influenced not only by arguments related to natural history but also by building of the new image in the awareness of the public achievable through:

**MORE POSITIVE PRESENTATION IN A CULTURAL CONTEXT.**



# The Association for Nature WOLF (AfN WOLF)

founded in 1996, in Poland is a non-profit organisation, dedicated to the conservation of mammals, particularly carnivores, and their habitats.



*„Our mission is to protect endangered species and preserve their habitats. We would like to become a centre of excellence in research and education on carnivores and their habitats, working to achieve best practice in their conservation and management in Poland and abroad”*

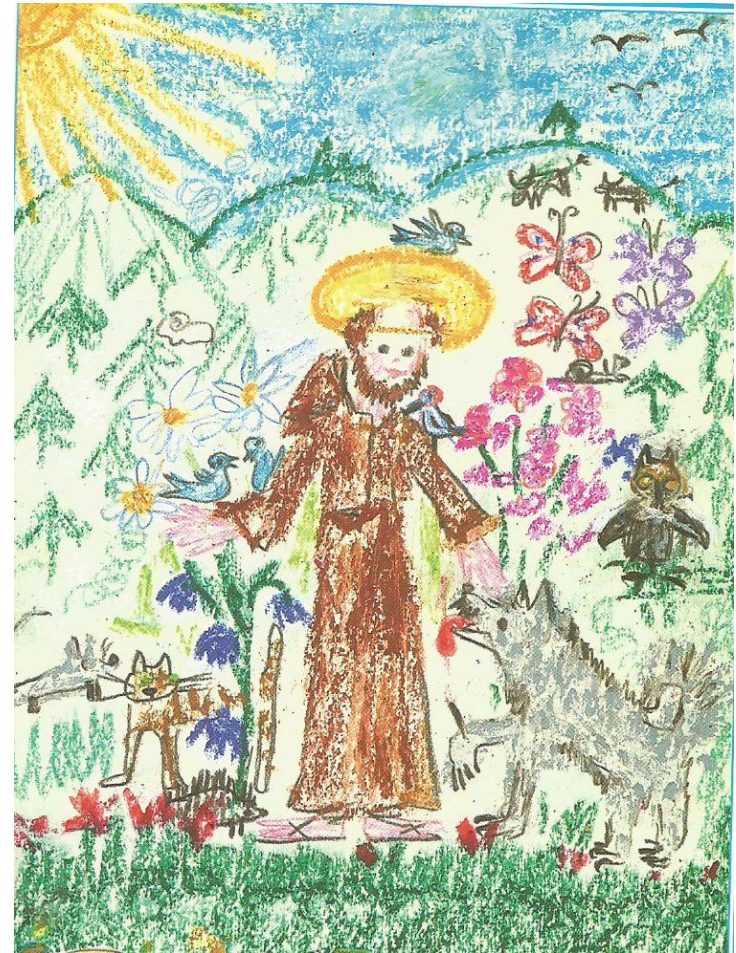
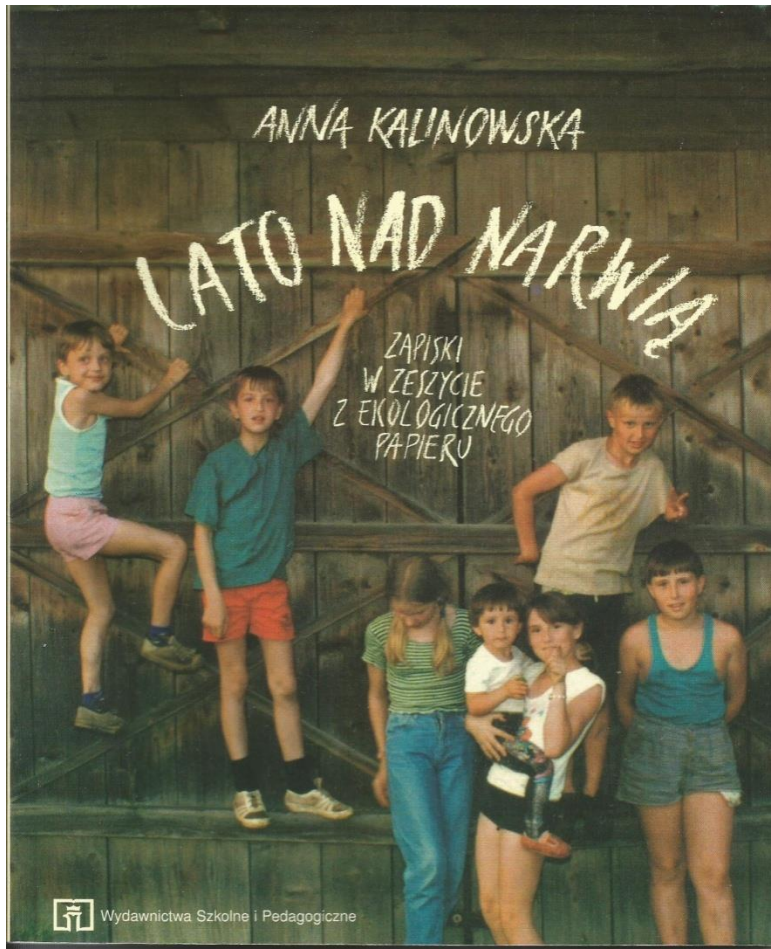
# Saint Francis of Assisi- patron of peace between human beings and wolves



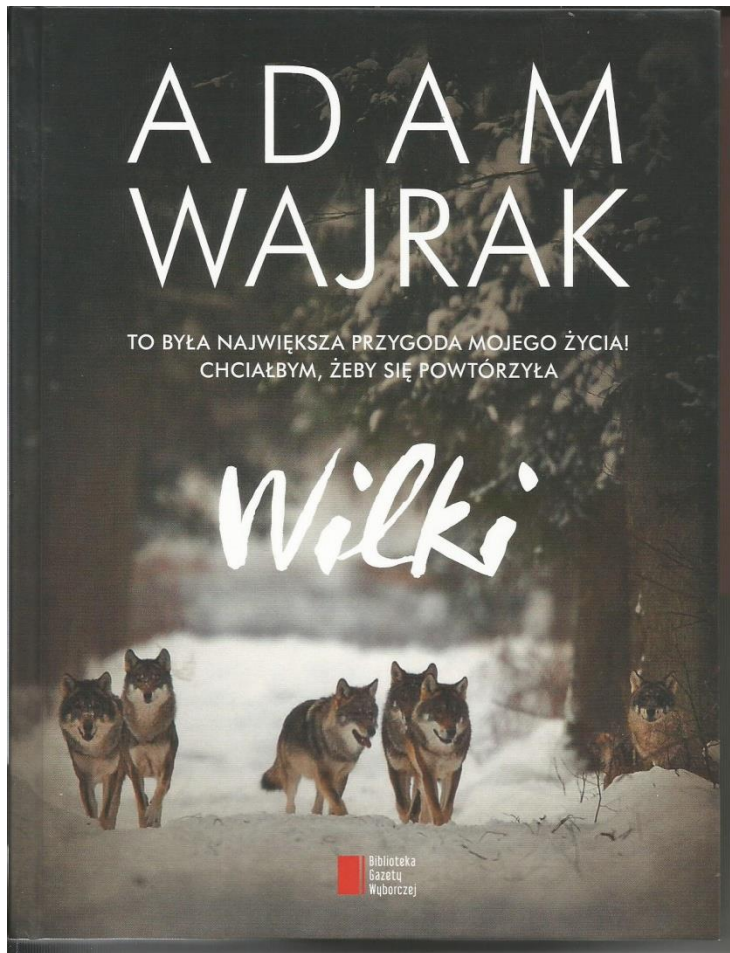
The reputation of wolves is improved by Saint Francis of Assisi. The tale of the wolf from Gubbio helps convince us that co-existence between wolves and people are possible.

The need to respect each manifestation of the Creator's handwork extends to wolves too.

Nice picture of wolves is popularised in story-books and novels for children

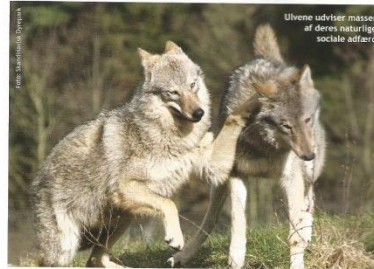


# A change of image of wolves is created by the best-sellers adventure-story



# „Wild-parks” for observation of wolves

undervisning /



## Besøg Skandinavisk Dyrepark med din klasse

Som skoleklasser er der flere muligheder for at lære om ulven under et besøg i Skandinavisk Dyrepark.

- Besøg ulveflokken i ulveparken. De er oftest mest aktive ved den daglige fodring.
- Bestil et foredrag eller en temadag om ulven. Det kan f.eks. være om ulvens sociale adfærd og kommunikation, om ulvens tilbagekomst til Danmark eller hvordan ulven blev til menneskets bedste ven, hunden.
- Kom på guidet morgentur med fokus på ulve.
- Test elevernes viden med en ulvequiz.
- Formidlingsafdelingen arbejder i øjeblikket også på at videreudvikle skolemateriale - f.eks. med adfærdsobservationer af ulvene til de større elever.
- I aktivitetscentret er der mulighed for at rare ved ægte ulveskind og kranier.

Læs mere på:  
[www.skandinaviskdyrepark.dk](http://www.skandinaviskdyrepark.dk)

# Cartoons

DNA-SPOR FRA ULVE ER SVÆRE AT FINDE - AF FLERE FORSKELLIGE ÅRSAGER...

IDÉ OG TEGNING: MYRTHUELARSEN



# Popular souvenirs as calendars and post-cards



# Are wolves good or bad?

The fundamental question is not whether wolves are good or bad, or even whether culling wolves is good or bad. If anything, research is showing how multifaceted the solution needs to be. Careful consideration needs to be given to habitat conservation, land use and species management for the wolf and all species that live together with it.

**FALSE ECOSYSTEMS DON'T WORK !**



**It is typical for us to seek an escape from  
everyday civilisation**

**We like to do it through contact with  
wilderness. But why wilderness?**

**Because we like the smell of danger.**

**Without wolves some of the „smell of  
danger” is lost.**

Thank you for your attention  
Auuuu.. Auuuuu ..Auuuuu!



In the northwestern United States where wolves have been eradicated ungulate populations soared unchecked. This unshere in a domino effect of damage to the local ecosystem,known as „trophic cascade”, reducing the availability of browse and cover the other species. False ecosystems don't **work**. ( Nickel-Lane N.,2015. The big bad wolf? Alberta Conservation Association fall/winter 26-29)