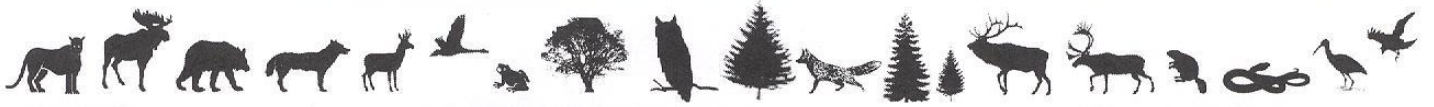

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Editorial

Successful Predator Conservation Must Rely on Scientific Evidence, Effective Management Approaches, and Professionalism

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“A farmer, who had possessed 21 lambs, found one morning that 14 of them had been killed by some destructive animal, and that the murderers had not taken any of the flesh of their victims, but had contended themselves with sucking the blood. On the following night, the remaining 7 were treated in a similar manner, and the destroyers – a pair of pine martens – were seen in the morning taking their departure from the scene of their sanguinary exploits.”

Wood, J. G. 1928. *The new illustrated natural history*.
Published by David McKay, Philadelphia,
Pennsylvania, USA.

Ninety years ago, such an account succeeded in instilling anger in farmers and fear in the public. Retaliations were severe, and not surprisingly, many small carnivores were killed on the basis of such stories. In North America, as in any other European-colonized continent, predators, notably large carnivores, have been severely persecuted and even exterminated throughout most of their range. Nowadays, one could laugh at Wood’s wildlife conflict account and rightfully state that we have come a long way. The wildlife profession has truly progressed over the last decades, and an editorial could not possibly review the accomplishments of

all those wildlife biologists who have dedicated themselves to the understanding and conservation of wildlife species.

Unfortunately, in spite of all that wildlife biologists have accomplished in the past, false accounts continue to adulterate the views of some wildlife biologists and agencies. As a result, we now have professionals pleading with colleagues and organizations to recognize the ecological role of predators in wildlife communities, and to develop solutions that will address human-predator conflicts and will maintain or even re-establish viable populations of carnivores. To accomplish this, wildlife biologists and managers will have to rely on scientific evidence to differentiate facts from prejudice and anecdotes. They will have to develop management programs that truly address the root of the problem instead of implementing conservation measures aimed at protecting the interests of specific groups or individuals. In a nutshell, wildlife biologists and managers will have to base their decisions on scientific method and critical thinking, sound approaches based on extensive field experience, and professionalism.

The conservation and management of terrestrial predators is highly controversial and inevitably political with major socio-economic consequences. This CWBM issue could not

review the many aspects of predator conservation and management. I therefore selected a series of papers related to the assessment of predator-human conflicts and the development of alternative approaches to resolve conflicts and further the conservation of predators. Ultimately, this CWBM issue aims to motivate wildlife biologists and professionals to challenge what has been done until now, and to develop inventive and ethical solutions to ensure the conservation of predators.