Local villagers' perceptions of wolves in Jiuzhaigou County, western China

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While there have been increasing numbers of reports of human-wolf conflict in China during recent years, little is known about the nature of this conflict. In this study, we used questionnaires and semi-structured interviews to investigate local villagers' perceptions of wolves in Jiuzhaigou County, western China. We sampled nine villages with more frequent reports of wolf depredation to the local government, but included three villages near alpine pastures in which reports of depredation were less frequent. We sampled 100 residents, a subset of the local population who were more likely to have had experience with wolves. During the preceding three years, most families of the respondents grazed livestock on alpine pastures, and most of them reported that their livestock suffered from depredation by wolves. The mean value of the reported annual livestock loss rates was considerably higher in villages that reported depredation more frequently than in those with less frequent reports of depredation. Most respondents in the more frequently depredated villages perceived increase in wolf populations, whereas many in the less frequently depredated villages perceived decrease in wolf populations in their areas. People's attitudes towards wolves did not differ significantly between these two village categories. The majority of the respondents were negative in their attitude to wolves, despite a prevalent Tibetan culture that favors the protection of wildlife. People's negative attitude was directly related to the number of livestock owned by their family. Those with a larger number of livestock were more likely to have a negative attitude towards wolves. Factors such as village category, ethnicity, age and education level did not influence people's attitudes to wolves. We suggest that improved guarding of livestock and provision of monetary support on human resources and infrastructure may mitigate human-wolf conflicts in this region.

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14 Introduction

15 Conflicts between wolves and humans are common worldwide, because of human fear of wolves and

16 in particular, financial loss due specifically to injury to and loss of livestock that wolves cause (Mech

17 & Boitani 2003; Treves & Karanth 2003; Bisi et al. 2007). As wolf populations expand or humans

18 encroach on their habitats, economic losses to wolves increase and conflicts have become increasingly

19 likely, presenting unique challenges for the conservation and management of wolves (Mech & Boitani

20 2003; Naughton-Treves, Grossberg & Treves 2003; Bisi et al. 2007; Lescureux & Linnell 2013).

21   To conserve wolves, many researchers have conducted studies aimed at understanding the

22 conflicts. Managers need to know the perceptions and attitude of local people to wolves and their

23 conservation programs. In particular, by determining which people are more negative towards wolves,

24 managers are potentially able to find solutions to improving people's tolerance towards wolves (Treves

25 & Karanth 2003; Suryawanshi et al. 2013). It has been pointed out that people's attitude depends

26 mainly on their residence, age, gender, education and income level, and former experience with wolves

27 (for a review of 38 surveys see Williams, Ericsson & Heberlein 2002; Ericsson & Heberlein 2003;

28 Naughton-Treves, Grossberg & Treves 2003; Røskaft et al. 2007; Skogen & Thrane 2007). Yet, it is

29 hard to find a widely accepted management policy, because of regional variation and different factors

30 affecting attitudes (Bjerke, Reitan & Keller 1998; Bisi et al. 2007). Given this, one has to learn more

31 about the characteristics of human-wolf conflicts and human attitudes towards wolves, especially for

32 regions where conflicts have been reported frequently but available knowledge is very scarce.

33   China has a large wolf population which is mainly distributed in areas with relatively few

34 anthropogenic changes, in the Qinghai–Tibet Plateau, the Mongolia Plateau and the Northeast Plain. In

35 1998, the number of wolves in China was estimated as about 6,000 individuals (Wang 1998, Yang

36 2008). In this year, wolves were listed as a vulnerable species in the China Red List (Wang 1998), and

37 since then, all hunting has been banned for this legally protected animal. In 2003, China was estimated

38 to have a population of as many as 12,500 individuals (Mech & Boitani 2003). We are not aware of

39 any more recent estimates, although the number is likely to have increased substantially in recent years.

40 In recent years in China, there have been increasing reports of injury and loss wolves caused especially

41 to livestock, resulting in increase in human-wolf conflicts (Yang 2008; Zhang et al. 2010; CNC 2012;

42 Li et al. 2013; ScienceNet 2013). Yet, the published literature on this topic is scarce. There have not

43 been any national policies relating to wolves other than some with indirect implications such as

44 auctions of licenses for hunting wild animals (BBC News, 2006) and eco-compensation to mitigate

45 human-wildlife conflicts (Xinhuanet 2014; Yunnan.cn 2014).

46 In this study, we examined local villagers' perceptions of wolves Jiuzhaigou County, where

47 wolf depredation on livestock has been reported increasingly and the local government is considering

48 management plans for wolves. We aimed to determine wolf population trends, since there have been no

49 data available on the wolf populations in this area. Furthermore, we aimed to determine the level of

50 livestock depredation caused by wolves, and then how people's attitude toward wolves was related to

51 socioeconomic variables, specifically religious belief (e.g., Liu et al. 2011) and livestock ownership

52 (e.g., Tuğ 2005), which are poorly understood.

53

54 Methods

55 Ethics statement

56 The study conformed to the Declaration of Helsinki, and the Ethics Committee of Pingdingshan

57 University approved the research protocol (Ref: 2012003). Verbal informed consent was obtained from

58 all the subjects prior to participation.

59 Study area

60 We conducted the study in Jiuzhaigou County (N 32°53'–33°43', E 103°27'–104°26'; Fig. 1), Aba

61 Tibetan and Qiang Autonomous Prefecture of northwestern Sichuan Province, western China. The

62   county lies at the northeastern edge of Qinghai–Tibet Plateau and is famous for its Jiuzhai Valley

63   National Park and the traditional cultures of its inhabitants. The area is 5,290 km², with an elevation

64   ranging from 1,000 m to 4,500 m. The climate is subtropical to temperate monsoon with a mean annual

65   temperature of 12.7 °C. Total annual rainfall is 550 mm, with 80% of rainfall occurring between May

66   and October. The county comprises 17 townships and 120 villages, inhabited by Tibetan, Qiang, Hui,

67   Han and other ethnic groups. In 2011, the county's population was 66,246, with a minority population

68   (ethnic groups other than Han) of 25,090.

69   Jiuzhaigou County has 3,570 km² of forested lands (covering about 67% of the total area), and

70   is the second largest forest area in Sichuan Province. It is rich in alpine grasslands, especially in the

71   northern part, with an area of about 1,200 km² (Chen 2011). Livestock grazing occurs mainly in the

72   northern region. Yaks are the most common livestock species grazed, but there are a few sheep and

73   goats. Livestock are herded to alpine pastures except during extreme winter weather when they are

74   herded in the cropland around the villages or are stall-fed inside the villages. Livestock of each village

75   graze in exclusive pastures. Every several families take turns at herding the entire village's stock.

76   Commonly, a couple of people herd the livestock, with the use of one or two shepherd dogs

77   occasionally. The livestock are usually left to range freely on the daytime. At night, the herders bring

78   them back to a protective corral, which are poorly built with low walls and no roof.

79   Wolves are one of the most important animal species in the local ecosystems. Their large

80   natural prey species are ungulate animals including *Elaphodus cephalophus*, *Capreolus capreolus*,

81   *Capricornis sumatraensis*, *Naemorhedus goral*, and *Pseudois nayaur*; smaller prey include *Marmota*

82   *himalayana*, *Lepus oiostolus*, and *Ochotona thibetana* , and some Galliformes such as *Tetraogallus*

83   *tibetanus*, *Tetraophasis obscurus*, *Perdix hodgsoniae*, *Ithaginis cruentus*, *Pucrasia macrolopha*, and

84   *Chrysolophus pictus*. However, prey abundance is low (SPAFS 2004; SCUSLS 2011). In the area,

85   livestock depredation by wolves has been reported frequently in recent years, whereas there are few

86 reports on wolf attacks on humans. The local people reported that wolves usually traveled in groups,

87 and attacked livestock during both the day and night.

88 Fieldwork

89 We carried out the fieldwork in April and May 2012. Following advice from the local forestry bureau,

90 we conducted an interview survey in the northern region where many villages reported frequently

91 livestock depredation by wolves to the local government. We sampled nine villages with frequent

92 reports of depredation. For comparison, we also sampled three villages near alpine pastures in which

93 reports of depredation were less frequent (Fig. 1). The people we interviewed were those who were 16

94 years or older and who grazed their livestock, collected herbs or mushrooms, or carried out other

95 activities in forests and pastures, as they had a better knowledge of the population and activities of

96 wolves (Gros 1998). To foster a comfortable, non-intimidating information exchange process with

97 local residents, the interviews did not include any government staff, and we explained to local residents

98 that the interview was for scientific research purposes only (Kvale 1996).

99 During interviews, we used a semi-structured questionnaire to minimize the influence of the

100 questions on the response (Wengraf 2001). Interviews were performed orally with responses recorded

101 immediately post-interview into the standardized questionnaire. First, we recorded respondents'

102 personal characteristics, including ethnicity (a variable correlated with the religious belief system),

103 gender, age and education level (three levels: "illiterate", "elementary school", and "secondary and

104 above"). We did not ask their household incomes, because a pilot survey found it difficult to get the

105 true value from respondents. Second, we asked for information about livestock in the past three years,

106 including the annual number of livestock grazed by each family and the annual number of livestock

107 depredated by wolves. Third, we asked their opinions about wolf population trends in their areas over

108 the past 10 years ("increasing", "stable", and "decreasing"). Finally, we assessed their attitudes towards

109 wolves. We included three questions as proxy measures for attitude: (1) "What do you think of

110   wolves?"; (2) "What do you intend to do in response to livestock depredation by wolves?"; (3) "Do

111   you think that wolves should be protected? If a person thought wolves were bad and detrimental,

112   wanted to kill wolves who were attacking their livestock, and did not wish to protect wolves, we

113   considered that the person was negative towards wolves; if the opposite were the case, we considered

114   the person to have a positive attitude towards wolves. If a person had no strong opinion to the questions,

115   we considered the person to have a neutral attitude towards wolves. If the respondent showed a positive

116   attitude in response to some questions and a negative attitude in response to others, we defined this as a

117   mixed response.

118   Data analysis

119   We first calculated descriptive statistics of responses to analyze the basic information from the

120   interviews. We used to T-tests and Chi-squared tests of independence (fisher's exact tests were

121   employed if any expected frequency was below 1 or more than 20% of expected frequencies were less

122   than 5) to compare differences of responses between two village categories, those with more frequent

123   reports of wolf depredation and those less frequent reports of wolf depredation.

124   Then, we examined how people's attitudes towards wolves were affected by variables of

125   personal characteristics (including ethnicity, age, and education level; gender was not included in the

126   analysis because of only a few respondents were women), and by variables relating to livestock (i.e.

127   annual number of livestock grazed and annual percentage of livestock depredated by wolves). We

128   included all villages but used village category as an additional prediction factor. We excluded one

129   sample with mixed opinion about our measures and pooled positive and neutral attitudes due to the

130   small number of responses in these categories. We also excluded two samples with missing values. We

131   conducted a binary logistic regression, where a totally negative attitude was scored as 1 while a

132   positive or neutral attitude was scored as 0. In the regression, annual percentage of livestock

133   depredated was considered 0 if there was no livestock grazed (note that this applied only to the

134   regression and not to the previous descriptive statistics). Categorical variables including village

135   category, ethnicity and education level were converted into a set of dichotomous, dummy-coded

136   variables. We set "villages with more frequent reports of wolf depredation" as the reference for village

137   category, "Tibetan" as the reference for ethnicity, and "illiterate" as the reference for education level.

138   We used the Akaike information criterion corrected for small sample size (AICc) to compare

139   statistical models constituting different combinations of variables. We calculated ΔAICc, which means

140   the difference between the model with the lowest AICc and the other models in the model set. The

141   model with the lowest AICc was considered as the best model, when ΔAICc between it and the next

142   best model was larger than two (Burnham & Anderson 2002). However, if there were some models

143   whose ΔAICc was ≤ 2 (which means that these models had equivalent support to explain the data), we

144   used a normal model averaging approach over all candidate models to get parameters and error

145   estimates (Burnham & Anderson 2002; Anderson 2008). We calculated the 95% confidence interval

146   (95% CI) of parameter estimate and the odds ratio (OR) of the effects for each variable. We also

147   estimated the relative importance (w_+) of a given variable by summing the Akaike weights of all

148   models containing the variable, and compared variables by examining the ratio of w_+. Variables were

149   considered as associated statistically with the response variable, when their 95% CIs excluded the zone

150   value (Grueber et al. 2011). All analyses were performed on R 3.0.0 (R Development Core Team,

151   2013).

152

153   Results

154   In total, we interviewed 100 residents, of which 81 belonged to villages that reported wolf depredation

155   more frequently, and 19 to villages with less frequent reports of depredation. The respondents'

156   personal characteristics did not differ significantly between the two village categories (Table 1).

157 Overall, they averaged 44 years of age, with 36% illiterate, 44% with elementary education, and 20%

158 with secondary or higher education. Half of the respondents were Tibetan, and the other half were Han.

159   During the preceding three years, most families of the respondents owned livestock that they

160 grazed on alpine pastures. Most of them reported that their livestock suffered from depredation by

161 wolves (Table 2). The two village categories we defined did not differ significantly in livestock

162 ownership and livestock depredation; however, there was a considerable trend toward higher mean

163 annual livestock loss rate in villages that reported depredation more frequently compared with those

164 with less frequent reports of depredation (Table 2).

165   Most respondents in the more frequently depredated villages perceived increase in wolf

166 populations, whereas more than half of respondents in the less frequently depredated villages perceived

167 decrease in wolf populations in their areas (Table 3). With respect to people' attitudes towards wolves,

168 there was no significant difference between the two village categories (Table 3). The majority of the

169 respondents were negative in their attitude to wolves. All the people who were negative towards

170 wolves mentioned that livestock loss caused by wolves was the main reason for their attitude.

171 Therefore, they wanted to kill wolves and did not wish to protect them. Only very few (3.6%, 3/84)

172 people talked about fear of wolves, and no one mentioned an event of wolves attacking humans.

173   We constructed 64 candidate logistic regression models with six variables. As there were 13

174 models with $\Delta AICcs \leq 2$, we used a model averaging approach to calculate estimates for variables. The

175 results showed that the number of livestock owned was the most important predictor, with the other

176 four variables having lower relative importance to it (Table 4). Only the number of livestock owned

177 was statistically related to attitudes of the respondents towards wolves, as its 95% CI of the parameter

178 estimate excluded the zero value. People with larger numbers of livestock were more likely to be

179 negative towards wolves (Fig. 2). For each additional animal owned, people were, on average, 1.032

180 times more likely to have a negative attitude towards wolves. Variation of attitudes towards wolves

181   was not predicted by village category, the percentage of livestock depredated by wolves and factors

182   associated with personal characteristics (i.e. ethnicity, age, and education level).

183

184   Discussion

185   Understanding the perceptions of local people living adjacent to wildlife habitats of wildlife-human

186   interactions is important in the conservation of large carnivores, because they are apt to provide

187   reliable information about wildlife (Treves & Karanth 2003; Password & View 2005). However, it is

188   difficult for the public to estimate wolf population sizes (Bjerke, Reitan & Keller 1998). In this study,

189   we instead asked local people's opinions about wolf population trends. Similar studies have been

190   previously conducted on other large carnivores, for example the Asiatic black bear *Ursus thibetanus*

191   (Liu et al. 2011).

192   Most of the people we interviewed reported an increase in wolf populations in their areas in the

193   preceding 10 years. The increase in abundance may reflect effective protection and population recovery

194   of the wolf in the wild since the prohibition of guns in 1996. This may have resulted in the increased

195   livestock depredation and human-wolf conflicts as reported. Increase in human-wolf conflict may also

196   be a result of human encroachment on wolves' natural habitats (Naughton-Treves, Grossberg & Treves

197   2003) and ongoing degradation or loss of habitat (Yang 2008). In this case, wolves may more

198   frequently encounter and prey on livestock as their natural prey populations have declined.

199   Nevertheless, more than half of respondents in the less frequently depredated villages perceived

200   decrease in wolf abundance in their areas. Insights that we have gained in these villages indicate that

201   some people prisoned or killed illegally wolves in their areas. It should be noted that livestock losses

202   were self-reported in the interviews, and the reported magnitude of losses may differ from reality. It

203   was hard to verify the magnitude of these reported losses in the present study, and thus we suggest that

204   additional research is needed on this topic.

205   As reported by some previous studies in other regions (e.g., Ericsson & Heberlein 2003;

206   Naughton-Treves, Grossberg & Treves 2003; Tuğ 2005; Røskaft et al. 2007), the local population had

207   a negative attitude to wolves. Attitudes toward wolves are strongly driven by physical and behavioral

208   characteristics of wolves as well as by some cultural and historical associations such as human fear of

209   wolves (Kleiven, Bjerke & Kaltenborn 2004; Bisi et al. 2007; Suryawanshi et al. 2013). In our study,

210   the local people's explanation for negative attitude was livestock loss due to wolves, while very few

211   indicated fear of wolves. Despite widespread fear of wolves, attitudes may differ between areas and

212   groups as a result of different awareness of the biological characteristics of wolves, including

213   avoidance of humans (Bisi et al. 2007; Yang 2008).

214   However, our finding, that variation of attitudes was not explained by personal characteristics,

215   is inconsistent with previous studies in which people's attitudes towards wolves differed significantly

216   according to their age, education level and income (e.g., Ericsson & Heberlein 2003; Naughton-Treves,

217   Grossberg & Treves 2003; Tuğ 2005; Røskaft et al. 2007). We found that Tibetan people were as

218   negative as Han people, and this was not expected, as Tibetan groups, being Buddhist, find it easier to

219   accept the protection of wildlife than Han people who have no dominant religion (Eckel 1998). A

220   similar result was also reported by Liu et al. (2011) in the study on human-bear conflicts of western

221   Sichuan. It is possible that increase in conflicts between wolves and the local villagers at our study area

222   might have resulted in negative public opinion. We suspect, though, that Tibetan people would be less

223   likely to attack wolves in response to livestock loss or to engage in poaching, because of their belief

224   that killing wildlife could negatively affect their resurrection in the afterlife (Eckel 1998; Liu et al.

225   2011).

226   Little research has examined the potential links between attitude and variables concerning

227   livestock. This study revealed that people with relatively large numbers of livestock were more likely

228   to have a negative attitude towards wolves than those with smaller numbers of livestock. To our

229   knowledge, there is no previous literature that has reported this phenomenon. In addition, we did not

230   find that people who had lost a larger percentage of their livestock to wolf depredation showed a more

231   negative attitude to wolves, as concluded by some previous studies concerning the wolf conflicts

232   (Williams, Ericsson & Heberlein 2002; Ericsson & Heberlein 2003; Naughton-Treves, Grossberg &

233   Treves 2003; Tuğ 2005). We acknowledge that assigning zero predation to informants who had no

234   livestock would artificially reduce the predation intensity, thus may have affected the relationship

235   between livestock losses and attitude toward wolves. Unfortunately, because of small samples, we

236   cannot further test the effect of percent loss using only those informants who had livestock.

237   As an explanation, we suggest that the current finding might be associated with the fact that the

238   local people were impoverished and had seldom been compensated for their losses, while livestock

239   mortality by wolves was a relatively common occurrence. It is expected that people who grazed a

240   larger number of livestock and whose main source of income was from livestock, would be negative

241   towards anything that may cause loss of their livestock and threaten their income. Even if wolves had

242   not killed their livestock in the past, they would still have a negative attitude to wolves as they felt that

243   no one could guarantee the safety of their livestock in the future. In contrast, people with a smaller

244   number of livestock would expected to be neutral or positive in their attitude to wolves, as usually they

245   were able to make much money from other sources and the economic benefits from livestock

246   accounted only for a small part of their incomes.

247

248   Management implications

249   To mitigate future human-wolf conflicts, we must reduce livestock losses of local people who

250   suffer from wolf depredation. In our study site and related areas, a large livestock group is herded

251   commonly by a couple of people. Younger people are not willing to take up this lifestyle. Furthermore,

252   existing corrals are poorly built. Ineffective guarding of livestock might have facilitated depredation by

253   wolves (Jackson 2000; Treves & Karanth 2003; Li et al. 2013). Therefore, we suggest that the best

254   approach at present should be to improve guarding of livestock in the context of local cultures and

255   conditions, for example, increasing the number of herders, developing expertise in herding, and

256   building wolf-proof corrals using local materials (see Namgail, Fox & Bhatnagar 2007).

257   Eco-compensation in mitigating human-wildlife conflicts has been increasingly emphasized by

258   the government in recent several years (Xinhuanet 2014; Yunnan.cn 2014). Public education on wolf

259   conservation has been conducted in our study area, but there have been no any provision of monetary

260   compensation for herders who lost livestock to wolves. The local forestry department mentioned many

261   obstacles, such as the difficulty of verifying the magnitude of livestock losses reported by the local

262   villagers. As an alternative approach, we could invest these monies in human resources and

263   infrastructure, such as training herders and improving corrals. This will distribute the benefit equitably

264   (Namgail, Fox & Bhatnagar 2007). Furthermore, initiation of a livestock insurance program guided by

265   the government, a measure that has proved effective in the India's Trans-Himalayan region (Mishra et

266   al. 2003), is encouraged for a long-term management.

267   There are other alternatives such as relocation or limited removal of problem wolves (e.g.,

268   Mech & Boitani 2003; Treves & Karanth 2003; Bradley et al. 2005), and change of local livelihood

269   (e.g., Jackson 2000; Conforti & de Azevedo 2003; Li et al. 2013). The local government is considering

270   employing armed police to kill problem wolves. Although a reported increase in the wolf populations

271   and in livestock depredation by wolves in our study area, causal relationships between them are not

272   clear. In addition, there is no scientific information on wolf population sizes. Therefore, this measure

273   will require further data on wolf population sizes and their relations with livestock depredation. The

274   local government is also assisting herders to attempt to increase incomes from alternative sources, for

275   example eco-tourism and the cultivation of economically important alpine plants, aiming to reduce

276   their dependency on livestock. Two of the 12 villages we interviewed seemed to have been moving

277   toward a more positive attitude toward wolves. However, it should be noted that local people might

278   resist directions from authorities. Shift to other areas may also have different environmental impacts.

279   The forms of income generation should be implemented and sustained selectively through existing

280   institutions (Jackson 2000).

281

282   Conclusions

283   To conclude, this study investigated local villagers' perceptions of wolves in Jiuzhaigou County,

284   western China. Most people, especially in villages with more frequent reports of wolf depredation to

285   the local government, reported an increase of wolf population and thus increased livestock losses to

286   wolves. People were generally negative towards wolves, despite a prevalent Tibetan culture that favors

287   the protection of wildlife. These with a larger number of livestock were more likely to have a negative

288   attitude towards wolves. In term of conservation management, we suggest that improved guarding of

289   livestock and provision of monetary support on human resources and infrastructure may mitigate

290   human-wolf conflicts in this region. Our study provides insights into management of human-wolf

291   conflicts in western China.

292

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302

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Comparison of respondents' personal characteristics between villages with more frequent reports of wolf depredation and those with less frequent reports of wolf depredation

Village category	Mean age (range)	Proportion of ethnic groups		Proportion of education levels		
		Tibetan	Han	Illiterate	Elementary school	Secondary and above
Villages with more frequent reports of depredation (n = 9 villages, and 81 respondents)	44 (16-81)	49.4% (40/81)	50.6% (41/81)	34.6% (28/81)	45.7% (37/81)	19.8% (16/81)
Villages with less frequent reports of depredation (n = 3 villages, and 19 respondents)	46 (23-77)	52.6% (10/19)	47.4% (9/19)	42.1% (8/19)	36.8% (7/19)	21.1% (4/19)
Statistical tests	t = -0.536, df = 98, P = 0.593	$\chi^2 = 0.065$, df = 1, P = 0.799		$\chi^2 = 0.529$, df = 2, P = 0.767		

Comparison of estimates of livestock ownership and livestock depredation between villages with more frequent reports of wolf depredation and those with less frequent reports of wolf depredation

Village category	Percentage of families with livestock grazed	Average annual number of livestock owned per family (range)	Percentage of families with livestock depredated by wolves	The reported annual livestock loss rate to wolves (range)
Villages with more frequent reports of depredation (n = 9 villages, and 81 respondents[a])	86.3% (69/80)	41 (4-200)	82.6% (57/68)	21.7% (0-70%)
Villages with less frequent reports of depredation (n = 3 villages, and 19 respondents)	73.6% (14/19)	53 (3-200)	64.3% (9/14)	11.7% (0-30%)
Statistical tests	Fisher's exact test P = 0.184	t = -0.981, df = 81, P = 0.330	Fisher's exact test P = 0.134	t = 1.180, df = 80, P = 0.074

2 [a] no data values were recorded for livestock ownership and livestock depredation in one sample, and there is one missing value for livestock

3 depredation in another sample.

Comparison of respondents' opinions about wolf population trends and attitudes towards wolves between villages with more frequent reports of wolf depredation and those with less frequent reports of wolf depredation

Village category	Proportion of opinions about wolf population trends			Proportion of attitudes towards wolves			
	Increasing	Decreasing	Stable	Negative	Positive	Neural	Mixed
Villages with more frequent reports of depredation (n = 9 villages, and 81 respondents)	79.0% (64/81)	16.0 % (13/81)	4.9% (4/81)	86.4% (70/81)	7.4% (6/81)	4.9% (4/81)	1.2% (1/81)
Villages with less frequent reports of depredation (n = 3 villages, and 19 respondents)	47.4% (9/19)	52.6% (10/19)	0 (0/19)	73.7% (14/19)	26.3% (5/19)	0 (0/19)	0 (0/19)
Statistical tests	Fisher's exact test P = 0.005			Fisher's exact test P = 0.116			

Model-averaged coefficients and relative importance calculated for variables explaining variation in attitude of respondents towards wolves

Variable	Estimate	SE	Lower 95% CI	Higher 95% CI	OR	z value	wi+
Intercept	0.175	1.115	-2.010	2.360	1.191	0.156	
ANL	0.032	0.016	0.001	0.062	1.032	2.018	0.93
Ethnicity_Han[a]	1.082	0.747	-0.382	2.546	2.951	1.432	0.53
Village category_less frequent reports of wolf depredation[b]	-0.945	0.687	-2.293	0.402	0.389	1.358	0.46
APL	2.144	1.806	-1.395	5.683	8.534	1.173	0.44
Age	0.025	0.024	-0.022	0.072	1.025	1.038	0.38
Education level_secondary and above[c]	0.370	0.870	-1.335	2.075	1.447	0.42	0.32
Education level_elementary school	0.599	0.674	-0.721	1.920	1.821	0.878	-

2 [a] "Tibetan" was the reference category

3 [b] "Villages with more frequent reports of wolf depredation" was the reference category

4 [c] "Illiterate" was the reference category

5 Abbreviations: ANL, annual number of livestock the respondent's family grazed; APL, annual percentage of livestock depredated by wolves.

1

Map showing the study area, Jiuzhaigou County, Sichuan Province, western China, as well as locations of villages investigated in the study

The dark circles represent villages with more frequent reports of wolf depredation, and the dark squares villages with less frequent reports of wolf depredation

103°30'0"E   104°0'0"E

• Yuwa
• Batun   ▲Yuwa   • Dashe
▲DaLu   • Shimen
   • Donggou   • Bili
33°30'0"N   ▲Heihe   33°30'0"N
• Dongbei   • Daye
   ▲Lingjiang
   • Qianghuo
   ▲Baihe
■Yatun   ■Taiping
▲Zhangzha
■Zhongcha

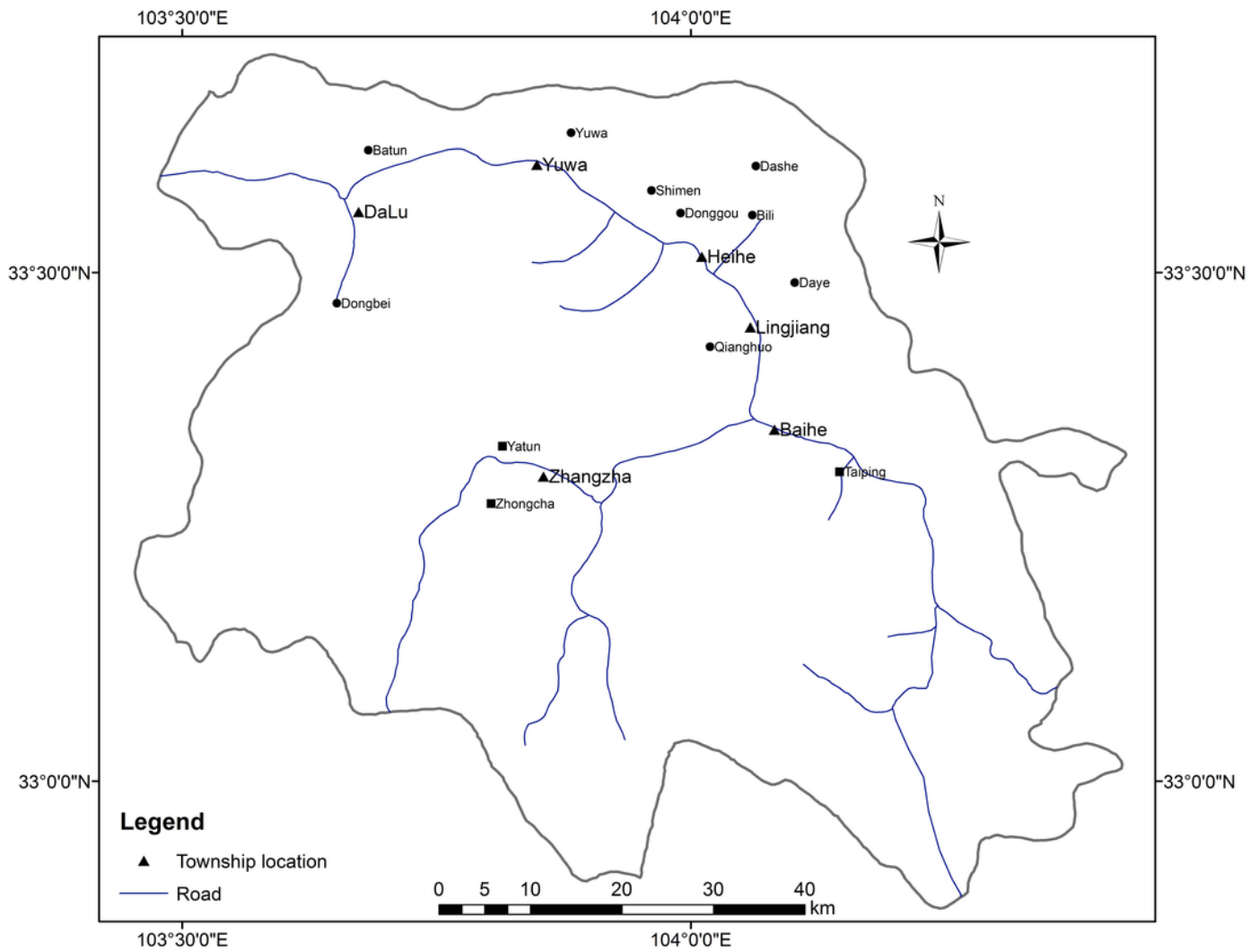
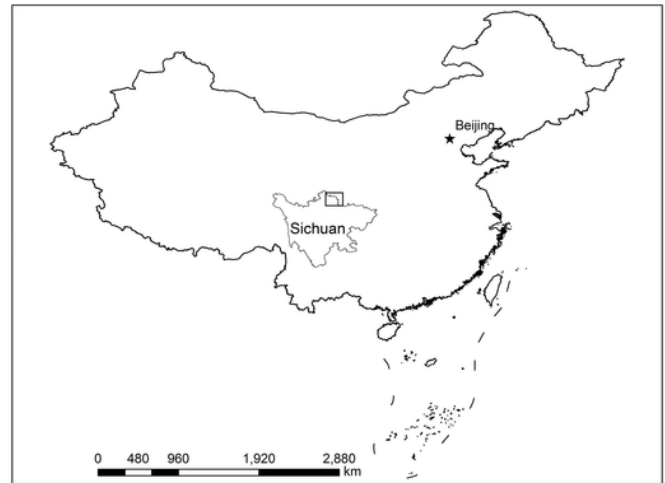
N

33°0'0"N   33°0'0"N

Legend

▲ Township location

— Road

0   5   10   20   30   40
km

103°30'0"E   104°0'0"E

Mean annual number of livestock ± 1 SE grazed by families of respondents who had different attitudes towards wolves