

To whom it may concern.

This letter certifies that between May and August 2016 Karola Anna Barta worked as a research assistant on the interdisciplinary study 'Coexisting with large carnivores: understanding how perceptions of risk pertain to rewilding in Europe'.

This study seeks to better understand the drivers of public tolerance (or intolerance) towards large mammalian carnivores. Historically human responses to the perceived risks posed by large carnivores have resulted in regional eradications such as the historic elimination of brown bear (*Ursus arctos*), grey wolf (*Canis lupus*) and Eurasian lynx (*Lynx lynx*) from large areas of Europe. However during the second half of the 20th century these three species have re-colonised some areas of Europe from which they were removed. The ecological roles played by top carnivores puts the continuation of these natural and assisted range expansions at the heart of many initiatives aiming to "rewild" Europe. However limited information is available regarding the suitability of the anthropogenic environment for these returning species.

With a view to developing a broad understanding of the public's current interactions with, and perceptions of, the three study species Karola was employed to carry out data collection across three study areas in Transylvania. The data collection process involved conducting multiple hour-long face-to-face interviews per day. Karola was also responsible for data entry and database management during her time with the project. At times this work required Karola and the other research assistants to live and work in remote environments. At all times they were required to work in a self-directed manor. Collectively Karola and the team of research assistants successfully managed to acquire a data set of exceptional size and breadth that will be the foundation of at least 1 PhD thesis and 4 scientific publications.

I was continuously impressed by Karola's capacity to engage with both the household interviews and dataset management over an extended time period. Maintaining a focus on research objectives and identifying and accurately recording promising responses and following these up after weeks of engaging with the same questions is, as I know from personal experience, extremely challenging. I was also impressed with Karola's capacity to use her understanding of the study and the methodologies it was utilising to solve emerging challenges whilst out in the field. The capacity of Karola to work with the rest of the research team to overcome logistical and situational challenges was deeply impressive from day 1 of the study through to its conclusion.

Should you have further questions regarding the study or Karolas involvement in the data collection and processing then I would be happy to answer these for you.

Yours Sincerely



Peter Damerell
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