

expenses  
were once being  
that MPs' pay did  
y cover the cost  
y job. And that  
ularly true for  
the far South  
lots of travelling  
d for a second,  
me. So while  
a to keep their  
t be designed to  
with constituents  
just returned  
o parliament, it  
e in the best long  
sts of a properly  
d and genui-  
ally independ-  
Commons.

good for MPs to  
experience out-  
ics and even, in  
to continue to  
job even while  
their constitu-  
ould be able to  
rtably on their  
e. £74,000 a year,  
hat their pay  
a to if the 10%  
mposed, is not  
at. But neither  
e given the re-  
s of the job.  
want to think  
rejecting this  
y offer.

## views

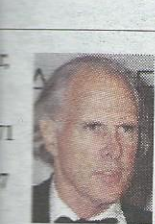
PL1 3LF

to.uk

ningnews

n was elected  
gentina.

2,000 people  
men Square,  
roops opened  
ng students.



44  
stress, 40.

ber, with robes



A wolf, assisted by ravens, devour an elk in Montana. Wolves were reintroduced to Yellowstone National Park about 20 years ago

PICTURE: KIRSTY PEAKE

# US example shows we must keep the wolf from our doors

The UK is too crowded to tolerate the introduction of a key predator, argues **Kirsty Peake**

There is a move to reintroduce wolves to Scotland because of the explosion of red deer in the Highlands.

Apparently the reintroduction would be based on how the wolves were reintroduced to Yellowstone National Park in the United States in 1995 and 1996.

This is not a workable option for the UK. Yellowstone is 2.2 million acres of wilderness in which man has played no part. All the wilderness areas of the UK are heavily managed by man.

The reintroduction has impacted the whole of the greater Yellowstone ecosystem (GYE), about 56,000 square miles. The Scottish Highlands are 10,200 sq miles.

It is more relevant to compare the impact on the GYE with the probable impact on the Highlands of Scotland. Why? Because in the GYE there are many ranchers who now have to cope with wolf packs in the area and in some instances on their land.

Wolf numbers, as with any predator species, depend heavily on the supply of prey. When the wolves were reintroduced to Yellowstone, the park was over-populated by elk and they had lost their 'knowledge' of living with

predators. In fact they were acting just the same as cattle – grazing the same area all the year round. With the arrival of the wolves they had to relearn what it was like living with a keystone predator.

Twenty years on and the elk numbers are down in the park to a sustainable number and they now live as they should, that is migrating when the time comes. Yellowstone is the most natural ecosystem in the northern hemisphere. Wolf

California and the belief is that these all started from the Yellowstone reintroduction in 1995 and 1996.

I see no reason why this would not happen in Scotland. The red deer population is very large. It is also a population that in reality has no predators except man and therefore no knowledge of how to live with a keystone predator.

Over time the red deer population would reduce and those left would be 'street

How soon before they reach centres of civilisation?

The state of Montana is one and a half times the size of the UK. It has a population of just less than one million people. The UK has a population of just over 64 million people.

Montana struggles to cope with wolves now roaming in the state, as do Idaho and Wyoming. All three states border Yellowstone National Park.

There are now hunting (shooting and trapping) seasons for wolves but wolf numbers continue to increase.

Can we really cope with these animals running wild in the UK? Much as I admire, work with and study them, over in the USA, we are just too overcrowded in this country to be able to tolerate a reintroduction here.

The main stumbling block, though, will be the European Union which encourages the reintroduction of native species. The British wolf is long gone. Its demise was around 1760.

What then are we going to reintroduce? Nothing. We would be introducing a new species to the UK, probably the European wolf.

Devon-based Kirsty Peake is a specialist advisor to the UK Wolf Conservation Trust. She spends six months each year based in Montana studying the animals' behaviour.



What do you think of the suggestion that wolves should be reintroduced?

Leave your comment at [westernmorningnews.co.uk](http://westernmorningnews.co.uk)

numbers are down as well but that is because they have spread out of the park and into the GYE and therefore into conflict with ranchers and the elk hunters.

Initially in Yellowstone it was a bonanza for the wolves. The prey was plentiful and not quick enough to avoid being killed. This resulted in the wolf numbers escalating.

This in turn resulted in the wolves moving out of Yellowstone National Park as areas for territories became scarce and the prey became more 'street wise'. Wolves are now seen as far south as

wise'. During this change over period of time, however, the wolf population would explode. Ultimately it would balance out but before that wolves would move off to form new packs and find new territories.

How easy is this going to be for them?

How soon before they arrive in agricultural land or on grouse moors?

How do we protect our dwindling populations of some ground nesting game birds?

How do we protect our livestock?