

Listening (Script)

Task 1.

You will hear a lecture about the reintroduction of animals into the wild in countries where they are no longer naturally found. Answer six questions.

Good morning everybody. Today we're going to continue our series on ecology and the environment by talking about an idea that's made its way to the front pages of the newspapers recently. It's rewilding! Now, I know the idea has been around for quite a while now, but here in the UK, it has been mainly concerned with the reintroduction of trees that were native to these islands. As far as animals are concerned, there has been more talk than action. Though some animals, like <u>beavers, wild boar, elk</u> and moose, have been reintroduced in controlled conditions. But we'll come back to those later.	Q 1
The idea going around now is the reintroduction of animals that could be a danger to domestic animals, pet dogs and cats, as well as farmers' livestock and so on, and possibly even people. And wolves are at the top of this list, though some want to add bears and lynx to it. This would be mainly in the Scottish Highlands, where there is the space and environment for it. Wolves have been successfully reintroduced into the wild in the USA. The red wolf to the southeastern states and the grey wolf into Yellowstone Park. Now there has been quite a lot of successful rewilding in continental Europe. Eurasian beavers are now found in 25 countries. European bison have reappeared across Eastern Europe, including a substantial reintroduction in Romania, while wolves have spread across much of Europe, including Germany, France, and one was even found in the Netherlands. Now, I should point out that these wolves haven't been reintroduced into these countries. They have returned naturally, wandering westwards from Poland and further east, and have even established populations in France, Sweden and Norway. In fact, there are few countries in continental Europe that don't have a wolf population. <u>Austria</u>, Belgium, <u>the Netherlands</u> and <u>Luxembourg</u>, though it may be only a matter of time before they do. Indeed, Austria is already preparing a wolf management plan in anticipation of wolves moving across the border from Slovakia, Italy or Switzerland.	Q 2
A wolf management plan is going to be one of the first things to consider when discussing the reintroduction of wolves into the Scottish Highlands. Some suggest creating huge wildlife parks like Yellowstone in America or Kruger in South Africa, which will boost the tourist economy as well as protecting the animals. <u>Others don't like the idea of fencing off large areas of land, partly because it will interfere with walkers' rights of way and turn the area into what is just an enormous zoo.</u> They'd prefer that the animals should just be electronically tagged so that we can keep track of their movements. That would happen anyway, park or no park, as wolves tend to wander, as we can see from their spread across Europe.	Q 3

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Another problem is the reaction of farmers to the reintroduction of wolves. Wolves are a threat to their cattle and sheep, and most countries with wolf populations deal with this by paying compensation to farmers for livestock killed by wolves. <u>Now this may mean that the authorities will have to pay out more in the Scottish Highlands than they do in Europe, because there most flock graze on pasture</u>, attended by shepherds, whereas in the Highlands they practice free range sheep grazing, making them more vulnerable to attack. But three points need to be made here. First, Scottish farming is heavily subsidised. Second, subsidies no longer depend on what farmers produce. Previously, farmers received an amount for each cow or sheep they had. Now each farm gets what is called a single farm payment, regardless of whether they farm livestock or crops, so they don't stand to lose as much as European farmers. The third point is people's emotional reaction, which is often an overreaction, but which those who support reintroducing wolves shouldn't underestimate. For example, in Slovakia, over a period of three years, wolves were responsible for killing less than 1% of sheep per year. <u>Yet the media often makes a big thing of such incidents, to scare the public and use them as evidence that the wolf population is out of control, calling for stronger measures</u>. What then are the benefits of reintroducing wolves, of rewilding in general? Wolves will reduce the deer population, which will help economically as it will save money on culling female deer. <u>Ecologically, reducing deer numbers will allow greater regeneration of trees</u>, which now suffer from overgrazing by deer. A reduction in the number of deer may also reduce the incidence of Lyme disease, which is carried by deer ticks. Grouse moors may also benefit, as wolves have been shown to reduce the number of foxes and other small predators. Then there's tourism. Many people already visit the highlands and it's believed numbers will increase with the opportunity to see such predators in the wild. I should point out that there are very few records of humans being attacked by healthy wolves, so people's fears might need to be addressed. But is it any different from people getting close to a pride of lions in a game park? Well, there is a lot more to say on this subject, so we'll come back to it next time.	Q 4 Q 5 Q 6
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You will hear a lecture about the reintroduction of animals into the wild in countries where they are no longer naturally found. The recording will be played twice, do questions one to six.