

# Are wolf's hybrids danger for feral wolf's population in Czech republic?

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**Paper described difficulties and problems arising by attempts to get wolf's hybrids of F1 generation in captivity. We base on findings from experimental crossbreeding carried out in Czech Republic during last fifty. There are ethological barriers associated with the interspecific crossing dogs and wolves that to get progeny is very troublesome. On the basis these findings and our experiments we can exclude an accidental origin of wolf's hybrids**

The all canine (*Canis lupus*, *Canis familiaris*, *Canis aureus*, *Canis adustus*, *Canis mesomelas*, *Canis latrans*, *Canis rufus*, *Canis simensis* and also *Canis dingo* – as far as we rate it as separate species) have the same number of chromosomes, 78. They are phylogenetically very close related and an interspecific crossing is possible, so much a biological textbook. What about practice?

Let as introduce our experience with dog and wolf's crossbreds. Authors kept and bred wolves and their F1 hybrids, as some of the few in Czech Republic. There is no literature about wolf's hybrids in Czech Republic practically. The first reliable documentation about crossing dogs and wolves is from fifties to eighties years of last century. Biometrical data and photo documentation from experimental crossbreeding of Border guard exists in military archives. The aim of crossing was to verify a possibility of crossing between different species and observe endogenous activity of dogs, wolves and their hybrids. The hybrids were regularly measured and weighed and their traits of character were observed. The project of experimental crossbreeding was lead by Col. Ing. Karel Hartl.

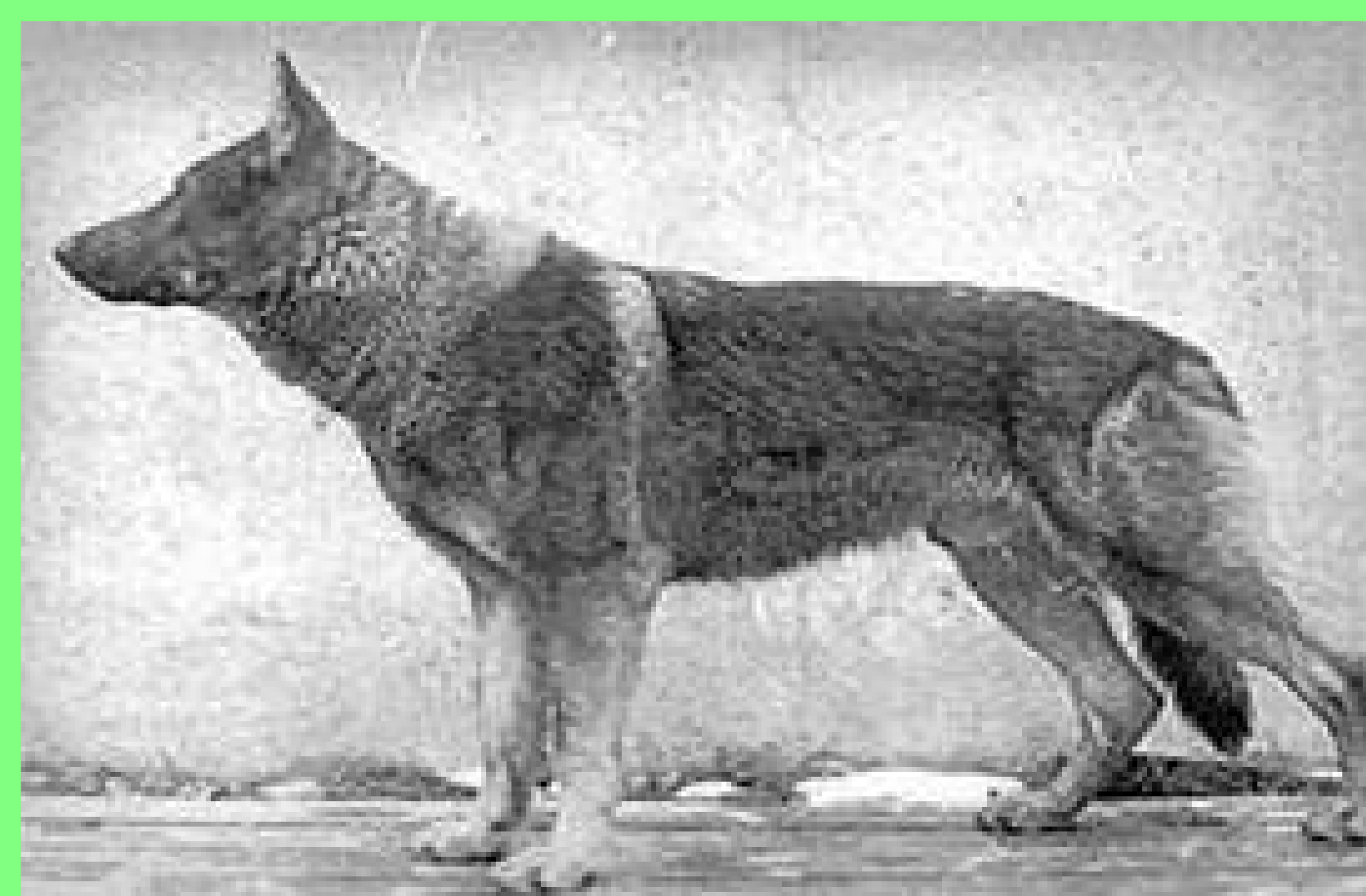
Four Eurasian wolves (*Canis lupus lupus*) entered subsequently experimental crossing: two he-wolves Argo and Ťarik and two she-wolves Brita and Lejdy. They were mated with German Shepherds at the kennels of the Border Guard. This experiment started in the year 1955 but the first hybrids were born by she-wolf Brita at the kennels in Lib'ejovice after three years, in 1958. She-wolf Brita refused mating, in spite of that only experiences stud dogs, firm in character, were chosen. Despite of the stallion dogs were sturdy and responded to she-wolf also in size, she fought them back and injured them. Mating was achieved by chance. An aggressive and dominant, very unmanageable, perilous stud dog was at the kennels in time of she-wolf's rut. He attacked his dog handler and had to be therefore destroyed. Ing. Hartl had a tray to put him in the Brita's pen. The dog jumped on the she-wolf, grabbed her neck and she was suddenly willing to mate. The first hybrids of the above mentioned she-wolf and the German Shepherd Czar z Březovho hje were born on May 26, 1958.



Picture 1 : First mating in Czechoslovakia, 1958

The mating and breeding of dog and wolf's hybrids is not ease even by a long-term effort of experts. Successful mating and breeding of bitch and he-wolf succeeded in the kennels of the Police in Bychory (1968) and in the kennels near Malacky, which belonged to Bratislava section of the Border Guard (1974). In both cases the animal have been acquainted for a long time.

Since the experimental crossing at the kennels of the Border Guard was stopped similar crossbreeding was realized by Stanislav MarŤlek from Vodnany. In 1983 his she-wolf Lejdy gave birth to puppies. Their father was G. Sh. Bojar von Schotterhof. Bojar von Schotterhof was very good trained, all-purposed dog also entered as a seeing eye dog. The she-wolf Lejdy was placid, very good adapted to humans, not wild. She managed to travel with Mr. MarŤlek by train. Stanislav MarŤlek worked at the kennels in Lib'ejovice, where Bojar von Schotterhof was kept. Kazan z Pohranini stre (F 1), born from this mating, was huge dark crossbred, similar to German Shepherds. He put service exams ZM and ZVV1, was very good at following trails, surprisingly he managed also an obedience and a defense. He was used directly in breeding "Czechoslovak Wolfdog (sV)". Kazan proved that some F1 hybrids are able to be trained, but they are exception. All his sibs had wolf's phenotype; they were shy and wild, unsuitable for training (Mr. MarŤlek verbal communication). The F1 hybrids of the litter were no uniform.



Picture 2 : Kazan - F 1 hybrid of Mr. Stanislava MarŤlka z Vodnan, born 26. 4. 1983



Picture 3 : Vater of Kazan, German Shepherd Bojar von Schotterhof, born 13. 3. 1975

After 20 year breeders FrantiŤek Hrach a Nad'a Ťebkov were successful in crossing dog and wolf. FrantiŤek Hrach owns she-wolf Lupina (*Canis lupus occidentalis*), born in 1993 in Zoo Brno. At the time of mating she-wolf Lupina was already 8 years old. By this time she has lived in her wood yard (size 30 x 30m), near town Pisek together with German shepherd Armin. He was five year old, in principle he was brought by she-wolf. They have never mate. Similarly they have never mate on the collective walks, when she-wolf was on a long dog-lead and the dog tried to mate. She refused his attempt with power and she wounded him many times. Once when the dog and she-wolf walked with Nad'a Ťebkov the mating was realized. The dog had to overcome higher size of she-wolf (10cm), her twisting and snatching of teeth. During this rut they mated three times, every time on the walk, when the she-wolf were on a long dog-lead (14. 3. 2002 17 – 18 h , 15. 3. 20 h, 17. 3. 17 h).



Picture 4 : Mating of she-wolf Lupina (*Canis lupus occidentalis*) and he-dog German Shepherd Armin

The three puppies, two bitches and he-dog, were born on May 14, 2002. He-dog stayed by she-wolf Lupina. Mr. Jind'ich Jedli ka took the she-wolf Eva (light hair). She-wolf Audrey (dark hair) was taken by Ms. Nad'a Ťebkov. They were taken out from wolf-earth at the age of 18th days. How the F1 hybrids appear we can see on the following photos. Uniformity of F1 generation is not valid. The all sibs were different in the color and in the character. Also any heterotic effects didn't approve. They size was medium between dog and wolf.



Picture 5 : Puppies wolf-dog hybrids F1 generation, five days old

She-crossbreds first rutted at the age of 18 month. They rut regularly one time a year on autumn, during whole November. This time is different in comparison with time of wolf's rut. A she-wolf keeps together with she-crossbreds rut during the all February to start of March. We can assume that the time of rut is conditioned genetically because the conditions of keeping of both she-wolves are the same.



Picture 6 : Fence enviroment where the Hrach's puppies were born, 2002