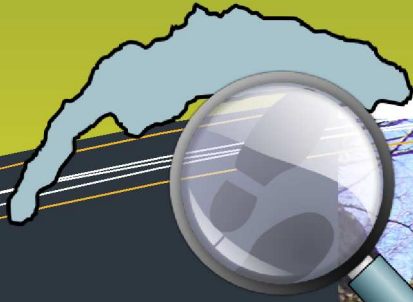
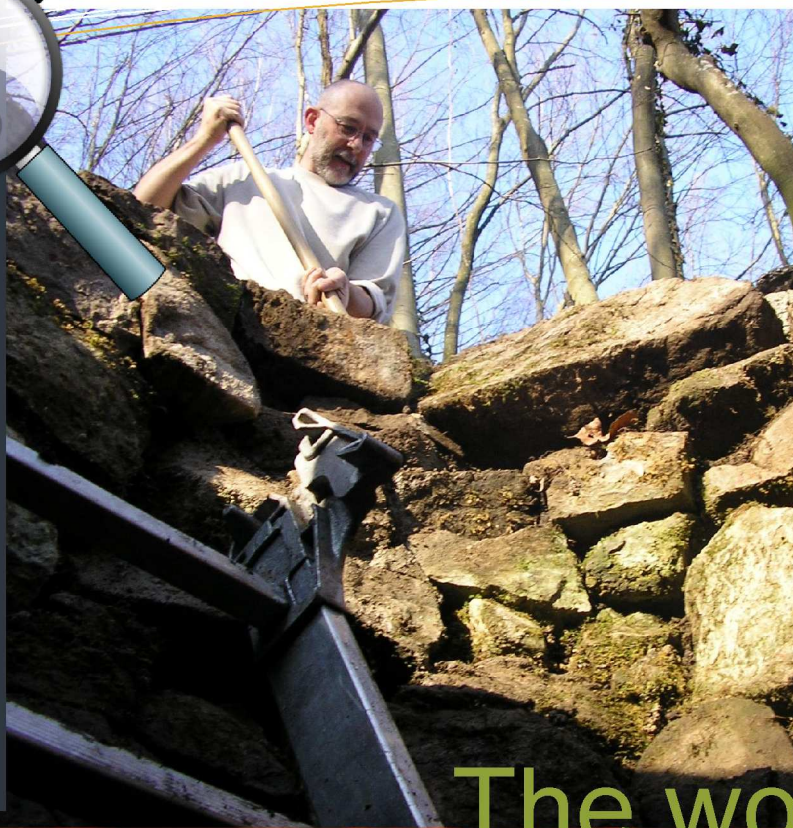


Do you know ?



Number

03



The wolf trap

This structure has been identified as a wolf trap, and worked on the principle of a chase and trap; a hole covered by a carpet of branches which collapses under the weight of the animal, attracted by food.

The dimensions found were a maximum diameter of 1.60m and a depth of 1.80m.

The date of construction of this trap is difficult to define with certainty, but must be before the 19th century. In fact, after this date, men used poison such as strychnine and hunted with a rifle, which gave the best results – so good in fact that the wolf disappeared from Switzerland in 1872 and in France from 1937.

The bear traps of the Chablais

Similar ditches were found over the whole of Europe. Similar traps especially destined for bears are known in the Chablais at Locum (Meillerie) and Bret (St Gingolph) and elsewhere in Haute Savoie (Doussart, Faverges).

The latter had a pyramidal or conical form with a minimum depth of 3.5m designed to prevent animals which at times could walk on two legs and climb easily, to get back out.





The trap is dug into the soil and is constructed in stone as a sort of well, vaguely cylindrical, and the floor is covered in a lime render.

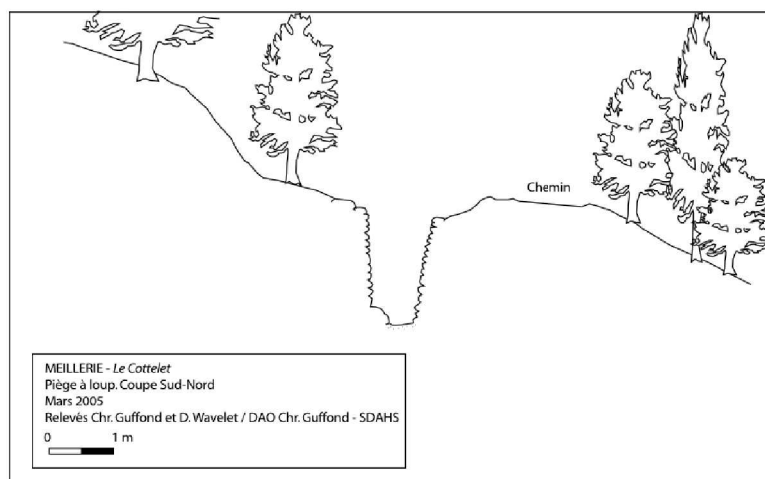
The wolf – the reality...

The wolf is considered traditionally as a harmful, ferocious animal and in the middle ages, many ravages were attributed to it. Capture of wolves, especially the pregnant females, were guaranteed an excellent recompense by virtue of royal or imperial edicts to the republican laws.

In the guide of Louis Liger edited in 1790 entitled "The New Rustic House" can be found the technique to be used to construct a wolf trap: "One catches a wolf in a hole, the opening of which is 9 – 10 feet square and of the same depth. It is preferable that it should be larger at the bottom, on all sides, than at the top, so that the wolf cannot jump or climb to escape.

... And the general imagination

Documents in the archives abound with descriptions of attacks on herds and indeed on humans which are attributed to wolves. The institutions up to the 19th century were worried about the loss of children, from time to time, and this savage beast was blamed, but it is very likely that in the great majority of cases when authenticity could be proved, that the wolf could not have been the guilty animal.



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