


PIROSLIFE - Consolidation of a bear population in a fragmented management territory: Central Pyrenees

LIFE13 NAT/ES/001394



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PROJECT DESCRIPTION:

BACKGROUND

By 1990 native bears in the Central Pyrenees had become extinct. A reinforcement action with specimens of the same genetic strain from Slovenia was initiated in 1996. This project was funded and promoted by France, Spain and the EU, with support from the LIFE programme. However, the concerted actions were insufficient and the bear became extinct in the whole of the Pyrenees by 2004.

Since then, many efforts have been made and the population of bears has reached about 30 specimens, almost 90% of which live totally or partially in Catalonia. They enjoy areas of high quality habitat that have been mostly included in the Natura 2000 network. However, this relative demographic success has not been accompanied by a success in the genetics of the population – more than 75% of newborns are descended from a single male.

One of the main challenges to successful restoration of the conservation status of bear populations is conflict with the local population and negative public opinion. Moreover, territorial fragmentation of the bear populations creates further conflicts depending on the territory and reduces administrative cohesion. Successful co-existence with the primary sector has yet to be achieved. Furthermore, there are serious doubts whether connectivity between areas will ever be feasible.

OBJECTIVES

The PIROSLIFE project aims to consolidate bear populations and strengthen their long-term conservation in the Pyrenees. It will develop measures to improve coordinated action between different administrative units in order to help support the co-existence of bear populations with human interests. It hopes to develop a management approach that can be an example to other territories.

The project plans to draft a 10-year Bear Action Plan (2014-2023) based on studies of the genetic and demographic structure of the bear populations. It will develop a network of bear habitat spaces with improved ecological connectivity within the Natura 2000 network. It will support this action by developing an administration network to coordinate monitoring and bear conservation across the Pyrenees.

One of the specific interventions of the project will be to introduce a male bear from a different territory and with good genetic variance into the resident population. The project will also draft a manual on how to carry out this sort of reintroduction.

Awareness-raising efforts will create a more positive attitude towards the bear, focusing on the possible eradication of risk of attack to livestock and beekeeping as well as danger to humans. It will define action rules to prevent and reduce conflict in zones of proximity to humans, including agreements with livestock owners and hunters.

Expected results:

- A 10-year bear action plan for the Pyrenees;
- A cross-border network of connected spaces for the bear within the Natura 2000 network;
- A coordinated international administration network across different political and administrative units for bear conservation in the Pyrenees;
- Consolidation or increase in the bear population in the Pyrenees;
- A genetically strengthened population;
- A manual on how to successfully reintroduce male bears to a territory;
- Agreements with livestock owners and hunters;
- Totally eliminate bear attacks on livestock and apiculture;
- Progress towards a climate of co-existence between bears and humans, including total acceptance of their presence and an appreciation of new opportunities for eco-tourism.

RESULTS

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THEMES

Species - Mammals

KEYWORDS

endangered species, animal corridor, management plan, mountainous area, conflicting use

TARGET SPECIES

Ursus arctos

NATURA 2000 SITES

SCI	ES0000022	Aigüestortes
SCI	ES5130003	Alt Pallars
SCI	ES5130004	Baish Aran
SCI	ES5130006	Estanho de Vielha

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COORDINATOR

GENERALITAT DE CATALUNYA (DEPARTAMENT D'AGRICULTURA, RAMADERIA, PESCA, ALIMENTACIÓ I MEDI NATURAL)

TYPE OF ORGANISATION

Regional authority

DESCRIPTION

The coordinating beneficiary is the Department of Agriculture, Livestock, Fisheries, Food and the Natural Environment of the Regional Government of Catalonia. Its responsibilities cover sustainable rural development, the primary sector and protection of the natural environment in Catalonia.

PARTNERS

FOP(Fundación Oso Pardo), Spain CGA(Conselh Generau d'Aran), Spain UdL(Universitat de Lleida), Spain FORCAT(Forestal Catalana, SA), Spain

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PROJECT REFERENCE

LIFE13 NAT/ES/001394

DURATION

01-JUL-2014 to 31-DEC -2018

TOTAL BUDGET

2,435,639.00 €

EU CONTRIBUTION

1,826,729.00 €

PROJECT LOCATION

Cataluña

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