

Population level management and conservation of brown bears in northern Dinaric Mountains and the Alps

LIFE DINALP BEAR

Rok Černe¹, Miha Marenče¹, Marko Jonozovič¹, Tomaž Berce¹, dr. Tomaž Skrbinšek²

1. Slovenia Forest Service, Večna pot 2, 1000 Ljubljana, Slovenia

2. University of Ljubljana, Biotechnical Faculty, Department of Biology, Večna pot 111, 1000 Ljubljana, Slovenia

BACKGROUND

In politically fragmented landscape of Europe, one of the most important goals in conservation and management of brown bears is transboundary, population level coordination. Unfortunately, this goal is often very difficult to achieve. We are trying to overcome this obstacle in Croatia, Slovenia, Austria and Italy through a large Life+ project mainly funded by the European Commission (69%) and targeting the brown bear population in Northern Dinaric Mts. and south-eastern Alps. The project **Life DinAlp Bear** started on the 1st of July 2014 and will last until the 30th of June 2019.



POPULATION-LEVEL MONITORING, MANAGEMENT AND CONSERVATION OF BROWN BEARS IN NORTHERN DINARIC MOUNTAINS AND SOUTH-EASTERN ALPS

The goal of the project is to start a comprehensive and optimized scheme for monitoring of the Alpine - Northern Dinaric bear population that will cover its entire range within the participating countries.

The project includes:

- population-level surveillance of brown bear conservation status,
- optimization of the monitoring methods and their application,
- long-term transboundary bear monitoring and first baseline data at large-scale,
- development of transboundary population-level monitoring geo-database,
- first transboundary management of a large carnivore in Europe,
- transboundary network of professionals.

HUMAN-BEAR CONFLICTS AND PROMOTION OF COEXISTENCE

In a variety of actions we will explore the conflict »hot-spots« and the use of non-lethal solutions to enhance and promote co-existence.

Our main actions are:

- prevention of bear access to anthropogenic food sources in the vicinity of human settlements as the most important conflict mitigation measure,
- protection of human property using different protection techniques, which include electric fences, deterring devices and livestock guarding dogs,
- monitoring and research of supplemental feeding of bears with carrion in terms of conflict mitigation,
- promotion of bear as an eco-touristic attraction.



Figure 2: Sheep flock protected by an electric fence and by a livestock guarding dog (Photo: Miha Marenče).

PROMOTION OF NATURAL EXPANSION OF BROWN BEAR FROM DINARIC MOUNTAINS INTO THE ALPS

With a multidisciplinary approach we will explore the social and physical barriers to expansion of brown bears into the Alps.

Our approach includes:

- implementation of technical solutions for reduction of bear traffic mortality as dynamic signage, acoustic deterrents and electrification of fences along problematic sections of highways,
- providing solutions to slow down habitat fragmentation,
- regular communication with media,
- dissemination of the human-bear coexistence on national and local levels,
- emphasize the bear role in the ecosystem and in the society as natural heritage,
- targeted educational and promotional activities.



Figure 3: Brown bear running on the Croatian highway (Photo: Đuro Huber).

Leading partner:



ZAVOD za GOZDOVE SLOVENIJE
Slovenia Forest Service

Associated partners:

- Autocesta Rijeka-Zagreb d.d.
- ERICo Velenje, Ecological Research & Industrial Co-operation Ltd.
- Research Institute of Wildlife Ecology, University of Veterinary Medicine, Vienna
- Veterinarski fakultet, Sveučilište u Zagrebu
- University of Ljubljana

- Provincia Autonoma di Trento – Servizio Foreste e Fauna
- Regione del Veneto – Unità di Progetto Caccia e Pesca
- Progetto Lince Italia



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