

10. MOST IMPORTANT PROBLEMS

To summarise this report, we would like to highlight a few points which we consider to be important:

1. Threatened autochthonous populations:

- Pyrenean Mountains (France): The population is close to extinction. Every effort should be done to save this last existing autochthonous population of Lynx lynx in western Europe.

- Macedonia-Kosovo-Montenegro (Yugoslavia): A rather small, and therefore potentially endangered population that is said to have been stable in recent years. As there are no data available from Albania and the abundance probably is overestimated in Yugoslavia, this population should at least be closely monitored.

- Turkey: All small populations in Turkey - perhaps with the exception of the one connected to the Caucasus Mountains - are isolated and threatened. The problem is the lack of data. Turkey has several endangered cat species (e.g. Panthera pardus), and it is urgent to establish a conservation and education programme not only for the lynx.

2. Re-introduction: In every country with re-introduced lynx (Yugoslavia, Switzerland, France, Austria and Czechoslovakia), monitoring of the population should continue. Re-introduction is a long term project. Often, severe questions and problems occur only many years after the releases (impact on ungulate populations, damage to livestock) or even later (inbreeding effects). Better coordination and cooperation is needed between private organisations (which are often the initiators of a re-introduction) and official institutions, as well as between countries. Further releases should be carried out to create one large connected population in the Alps.

3. Damage to livestock: A good recognition and compensation system should be established. Cooperation between countries could support this task. We should know more about the mechanism of damage. Why do lynx cause no damage in eastern countries, but kill sheep when they are re-introduced in Switzerland, Austria or France? Are there differences in lynx behaviour or in sheep husbandry?

4. Research and management: Many problems in conservation and management are difficult to answer because we do not have enough basic knowledge. We should develop census methods for large predators, and work on the population dynamics of the lynx and on its relationship to the prey species.

5. Information exchange: Many practical experiences have been made in conservation, management and re-introduction of the lynx in Europe. Only a little of this helpful information has ever been published in scientific works. We should expand information exchange and cooperation between local experts and authorities of all European countries. This would make all our work more effective. We hope that this report will be a step in this direction.