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CONVENTION ON THE CONSERVATION OF EUROPEAN WILDLIFE  
AND NATURAL HABITATS

**Standing Committee**

36<sup>th</sup> meeting  
Strasbourg, 15-18 November 2016

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**RECOMMENDATION**  
**ON THE CONTROL OF THE AMERICAN MINK**  
**(*NEOVISON VISON*) IN EUROPE**

*Document*  
*prepared by*  
*the Directorate of Democratic Governance*



Convention on the Conservation  
of European Wildlife and Natural Habitats

Standing Committee

**Recommendation No. 189 (2016) of the Standing Committee, adopted on 18 November 2016, on the control of the American mink (*Neovison vison*) in Europe**

The Standing Committee to the Convention on the Conservation of European Wildlife and Natural Habitats, acting under Article 14 of the convention,

Recalling that under Article 11, paragraph 2.b of the Convention, each Contracting Party undertakes to strictly control the introduction of non-native species;

Recalling Recommendation No. 31 (1991) of the Standing Committee on the protection of the European mink (*Mustela lutreola*);

Recalling Recommendation No. 99 (2003) of the Standing Committee on the European Strategy on Invasive Alien Species (IAS);

Aware that the spread of feral populations of American mink is a serious threat to the survival of the European mink (*Mustela lutreola*), a species with critically endangered (CR) status in the IUCN Red List of Threatened Species and listed in Appendix II of Bern Convention;

Worried by the impact on other protected biodiversity (birds, small mammals, amphibians, reptiles) of the predation by American mink;

Aware that mink farms, if not properly managed, and criminal release of animals from mink farms are the main course of release of American mink in nature;

Noting that introduction of American mink in islands with high densities of breeding populations of birds has resulted in severe predation, particularly of marine birds,

Recommends that Contracting Parties and invites Observer States to:

*Feral population:*

1. Carry out national campaigns aimed to eradicate, where feasible, reduce or contain American mink populations in the wild;
2. Draft national action plans for control or eradication, with special focus on eradication of American mink in small islands important for nesting birds, range of endangered or endemic species negatively affected by American mink (as the Pyrenean desman *Galemys pyrenaicus*) or in the European mink home range;

*Pets:*

3. Discourage the use of American minks as pets and consider the prohibition of its sale in pet trade;

*Farms:*

*[N.B The following recommendations do not apply to those Contracting Parties and Observers with legislation prohibiting or requiring the phasing out of American mink farming]:*

- 4.. Require mink farms to establish effective measures to prevent escapes of the animals, establish an early alert system for escapes and an efficient recapture system (contingency plans) and implement a system to inspect existing mink farms to verify that they have efficient systems to avoid accidental escape of animals
5. Avoid the establishment of new mink farms in areas with the occurrence of European mink as well as in countries where feral population of American mink are not yet established;
6. Request environmental impact assessment for new mink farms in cases where they can possibly have a significant negative impact on protected species listed in Appendix II of Bern Convention, Natura 2000 sites, Emerald network sites or other international protected areas;
7. Recommend that permits for new mink farms be approved by authorities responsible for conservation issues;
8. Establish and communicate clear national guidelines to avoid escapes from mink farms and ensure that new mink farms comply with those guidelines;
10. Require that mink farms keep and transmit to the authorities records of animals escaped;
11. In cases where the above measures are not successful and escapes from mink farms persist, consider additional measures;

*All captive American mink*

12. Prohibit the deliberate release of American mink in nature.

*Awareness*

13. Promote public awareness on threats posed by deliberately released individuals of American mink.