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CONVENTION RELATIVE A LA CONSERVATION DE LA VIE SAUVAGE
ET DU MILIEU NATUREL DE L'EUROPE

Comité permanent

35e réunion
Strasbourg, 1-4 décembre 2015

**Atelier sur « Les ongulés à l'état sauvage et leur
impact sur la biodiversité des îles de Méditerranée et
de Macaronésie »**

La Gomera, Iles Canaries (Espagne)
23-24 mars 2015

- RAPPORT DE REUNION -

*Note du Secrétariat
préparée par
la Direction de la Gouvernance démocratique*

L'atelier sur « Les ongulés à l'état sauvage et leur impact sur la biodiversité des îles de Méditerranée et de Macaronésie » s'est tenu à La Gomera (Iles Canaries, Espagne) les 23 et 24 mars 2015.

Le Comité permanent est invité :

1. à remercier les autorités canariennes de conservation de la nature pour leur chaleureux accueil et l'excellente préparation de la réunion ;
2. à prendre note du rapport de la réunion et à examiner et, le cas échéant, adopter le projet de recommandation joint en annexe 4 du rapport.

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1. OUVERTURE OFFICIELLE

La réunion est ouverte par Mme Ventura del Carmen, ministre insulaire de l'Environnement et (par vidéoconférence) par Mme Gusimara Medina, vice-ministre régionale de l'Environnement, qui souhaitent la bienvenue aux participants et font part du soutien de leurs gouvernements dans la lutte contre les espèces exotiques envahissantes. Elles sont toutes deux impatientes de lire les conclusions de l'atelier afin de pouvoir les appliquer dans les lieux concernés.

Le secrétariat du Conseil de l'Europe, représenté par M. Eladio Fernández-Galiano, remercie les autorités canariennes de conservation de la nature pour leur chaleureux accueil et l'excellente préparation de la réunion. Il explique que cet atelier technique s'inscrit dans le cadre de l'implication à long terme de la Convention de Berne dans la lutte contre les espèces exotiques envahissantes, une mission guidée par le Groupe d'experts sur les Espèces exotiques envahissantes (EEE) créé en 1993 et l'adoption en 2003, par le Comité permanent de la Convention, de la Stratégie européenne sur les EEE.

Le programme de l'atelier et la liste des participants figurent respectivement à l'annexe 1 et à l'annexe 2 du présent rapport.

2. COMMUNICATIONS

Les communications suivantes sont présentées, suivies par une séance de questions et des discussions techniques (les résumés des interventions figurent à l'annexe 3 du présent rapport) :

- Charte de la sauvegarde et de l'utilisation durable de la diversité biologique des îles d'Europe ;
- Ongulés à l'état sauvage dans les îles de Méditerranée et de Macaronésie [document T-PVS/Inf (2015) 2] ;
- Chèvres sauvages dans le réseau Natura 2000 aux îles Canaries ;
- Impact des herbivores sauvages introduits sur la flore indigène à La Gomera (îles Canaries). Etat d'avancement des programmes de contrôle ;
- Impact sur la biodiversité des chèvres sauvages et autres mammifères introduits dans les îles adriatiques de Croatie ;
- Population de chèvres sauvages dans la réserve naturelle de Montecristo (Italie) : conservation et contrôle ;
- Invasion biologique sur les petites îles méditerranéennes, le cas des mammifères et des ongulés, un exemple de contribution à l'échelle régionale ;
- Durabilité de l'éradication des mammifères exotiques aux Açores ;
- Stratégie relative aux espèces exotiques envahissantes dans les îles Canaries.

3. PROPOSITIONS AU COMITE PERMANENT DE LA CONVENTION DE BERNE

Le Groupe met en avant l'importance de traiter des conséquences graves que peuvent avoir les ongulés à l'état sauvage sur les écosystèmes insulaires fragiles. Il suggère au Comité permanent de la Convention et à son Groupe d'experts sur les EEE de poursuivre leurs travaux sur ce thème et soumet au Comité permanent, pour adoption éventuelle, le projet de recommandation figurant à l'annexe 4 du présent rapport.

Annexe 1

COUNCIL OF EUROPE



CONSEIL DE L'EUROPE

PROGRAMME**Ouverture de l'atelier**

- Ouverture officielle de l'atelier par les autorités régionales de conservation de la nature (Mme Ventura del Carmen, ministre insulaire de l'Environnement) et le Conseil de l'Europe (Mr Eladio Fernández-Galiano, Chef du service des initiatives démocratiques)
- Présentation de la « *Charte de la sauvegarde et de l'utilisation durable de la diversité biologique des îles d'Europe* »
par M. Eladio Fernández-Galiano (Conseil de l'Europe)
- Présentation du rapport « Ongulés à l'état sauvage dans les îles de Méditerranée et de Macaronésie »
par M. Joan Mayol (expert du CdE, gouvernement régional des îles Baléares)

Session 1 : Expériences de diverses régions

- Les chèvres sauvages dans le réseau Natura 2000 aux îles Canaries
par M. Juan Carlos Rando (professionnel freelance)
- Impact des herbivores sauvages introduits sur la flore indigène à La Gomera (îles Canaries). Etat d'avancement des programmes de contrôle
par M. Ángel Fernández-López (directeur du Parc national de Garajonay)
- Impact sur la biodiversité des chèvres sauvages et autres mammifères introduits dans les îles adriatiques de Croatie
par M. Goran Sušić (Académie croate des sciences et des arts)
- Population de chèvres sauvages dans la réserve naturelle de Montecristo (Italie) : conservation et contrôle
par M. Stefano Vagniluca (Parc national de Montecristo)

Session 2 : Expériences de diverses régions

- Invasion biologique des petites îles méditerranéennes, le cas des mammifères et des ongulés, un exemple de contribution à l'échelle régionale
par M. Mathieu Thévenet (Conservatoire du littoral, France)
- Durabilité de l'éradication des mammifères exotiques aux Açores
par Mme Sandra Hervias (SPEA, Madère)

- Stratégie relative aux espèces exotiques envahissantes dans les îles Canaries
par M. Juan Luis Rodríguez Luengo, (gouvernement régional des îles Canaries)

Session 3 : Priorités en matière de conservation

- Quelle est la voie à suivre ? Que proposer au Comité permanent de la Convention de Berne ?
Conclusions – fin de la réunion

Annexe 2**LISTE DES PARTICIPANTS**

Annex 2**LIST OF PARTICIPANTS**

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Annexe 3**SUMMARIES OF CONTRIBUTIONS****3.1 CHARTER ON CONSERVATION AND SUSTAINABLE USE OF BIOLOGICAL DIVERSITY IN EUROPEAN ISLANDS**

by Mr Eladio Fernández-Galiano, Council of Europe

In 2011 the Standing Committee to the Bern Convention adopted its recommendation No. 153 (2011) on the Charter on the Conservation and Sustainable Use of Biological Diversity on European Islands. The Charter had been prepared by a consultant and a working group. The Charter tried to implement in the territory of the Convention a Programme of Work on Island Biodiversity adopted by the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) in 2006.

The Charter had the following objectives: (i) improve Network conservation work on European islands; (ii) contribute positively to the island programme of work of the Convention on Biological Diversity by bringing the views, expertise and problems of European islands; (iii) assist Bern Convention governments on specific conservation issues of European islands; (iv) propose common guidelines and tools that may be used to improve conservation of European islands; (v) analyse threats to biodiversity that may present greater challenges on islands than on the continent; (vi) foster national conservation work on islands;

Whilst the principles and recommendations captured in the Charter could apply to most, if not all, islands worldwide, the Charter focused specifically on the marine islands of the European and Mediterranean states which are parties to the Bern Convention. The Charter applies to all forms of biological diversity in the terrestrial, marine, coastal and freshwater realms, unless specified.

The Charter was complemented by a separate plan of action detailing the corresponding recommendations and implementation means and measures.

The Standing Committee asked Contracting Parties to take note of the Charter on the Conservation and Sustainable Use of Biological Diversity on European Islands as a source of inspiration for their policies and practice, to promote its use also with sub-national and regional authorities and to devote special attention to island biological diversity in the implementation of their international obligations and also in the achievements of the 2020 targets adopted in the framework of the Convention of Biological Diversity;

The 13 points of the Charter are the following:

1. The biological diversity of European islands is an important part of Europe's natural heritage and warrants protection for both its intrinsic value and because the services it provides are a fundamental pillar of local socio-economic development
2. Renewed targeted efforts are needed to conserve and manage sustainably both species and natural habitats on European islands, especially those with the greatest and most threatened endemic biodiversity, but also noting the significant conservation potential of small uninhabited islands
3. The conversion, modification and disturbance of natural habitats continues to be a significant threat to biodiversity on many European islands, wherefore spatial planning should give biodiversity full consideration
4. Invasive alien species represent one of the leading threats to island biodiversity; invasive species must be prevented from arriving on islands, detected, eradicated or controlled and measures be put in place to identify and manage pathways to prevent their introduction and establishment, particularly in priority sites and to safeguard highly threatened species
5. Water resources on European islands should be managed so that negative impacts on freshwater biodiversity are minimised, especially in light of the growing impacts of climate change
6. The direct and indirect impacts of climate change on the especially vulnerable biodiversity and living natural resources on European islands require concerted preventive action, including measures enhancing their resilience and facilitating their adaptation.

7. On many European islands the intensification of agricultural, pastoral and silvicultural practices and the abandonment of traditional low-intensity farming may have major effects on island species and habitats.
8. Recognising that many European islands offer important opportunities for renewable energy generation, the potentially serious effects of some forms of renewable energy make it imperative that impact assessments fully consider potential effects on island biodiversity.
9. The management of waste presents a real challenge to many European islands and requires concerted action to prevent harmful long-term effects on biodiversity, ecosystems and the wider environment.
10. The situation and characteristics of islands require the development and application of specially-adapted approaches and tools for problem analyses and response measures.
11. The knowledge and sharing of scientific data on the biodiversity and living natural resources of European islands, including on the threats they face and their conservation status, remain limited, and renewed efforts should be made to fill the priority gaps.
12. Biodiversity conservation and natural resource management on European islands require adequate financial means and institutional capacities, recognising that by affording greater means to islands, more may be achieved for biodiversity than by analogous investments in continental settings in Europe.
13. To achieve the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity on European islands it is fundamental to enhance local awareness and ownership.

3.2 FERAL UNGULATES IN THE MEDITERRANEAN AND MACARONESIAN ISLANDS

by Mr Joan Mayol Serra

See document T-PVS/Inf (2015) 2

English :

<https://wcd.coe.int/ViewDoc.jsp?id=2311433&Site=&BackColorInternet=B9BDEE&BackColorIntranet=FFCD4F&BackColorLogged=FFC679>

French:

<https://wcd.coe.int/ViewDoc.jsp?id=2311421&Site=&BackColorInternet=B9BDEE&BackColorIntranet=FFCD4F&BackColorLogged=FFC679>

3.3 FERAL GOATS IN THE NATURA 2000 NETWORK IN THE CANARY ISLANDS

by Mr Juan Carlos Rando

The Canary Islands are a volcanic archipelago without native herbivores mammals. The endemic plants evolved in absence of ruminants, so lack defences against these alien mammals. The goats, sheep, pigs, dogs and mice were introduced into the islands by the aboriginal peoples around two millennia ago. From then -and until now- the goats remained as an important resource in the economy of all the islands. The number of goats in the Canary Islands is high, in 2008 there were 368.000 farm goats in the archipelago, 125.000 only in Fuerteventura (More than 75 goats/Km² in this island).

The goats are exploited mainly by two systems: intensive livestock (housed in enclosures) and semi-extensive livestock (goats spend a part of their time housed in enclosures for be milked and another part of the time free in the wild). In addition, on Fuerteventura an important number of goats live in the wild without any control ("*cabras de costa*"). One or two times by year are captured and marked by goatherds. Some of them are sacrificed for meat while the others are released again. This kind of exploitation (extensive) is an important popular tradition on the island.

Currently, the feral goats (without owners and without any exploitation) are present in all of the seven main islands. The strongest impacts on Natura 2000 network are those produced by extensive and feral goats (goats without any control). The negative effect of feral goat on native species of flora and fauna has been mentioned in 80 spaces of Natura 2000 in the Canary Islands (Lanzarote 8, Fuerteventura 10, Gran Canaria 16, Tenerife 16, La Gomera 15, La Palma 10 and El Hierro 5).

The ruminants are one of the biggest threats for 92 species of endangered native plants. 97% on these plants (89 species) are endemic of the archipelago, 82% (76 species) are endemic of only one island, and 22% (20 species) survive only with one population. In addition, the goats have been mentioned as a threat for 3 species of giant lizards, 1 grasshopper and 8 land snails endemic of the archipelago and 4 species of birds in zones of special conservation in the archipelago.

Some recommendations for management are: (i) to maintain the semi-extensive livestock outside of areas where there are critically endangered species sensitive to grazing; taking into account that a part of the semi-wild goats of Fuerteventura (those from the west of the island) show morphological and genetic differences from other breeds of Canary Islands, (ii) it is necessary to isolate areas, of low conservation interest, with fences or other devices to conserve this breed, out of these areas, the semi-wild goats must be eradicated; (iii) install fences to protect the last populations of critically endangered species from feral goats; (iv) capture feral goats, in collaboration with local farmers ("*apañadas*"), to remove these animals from Natura 2000; (v) shots, periodically to keep the wild populations of goat in low numbers. All these actions need a careful planning and management for animal welfare issues to get a strong community support and avoid social opposition (mainly from groups of defence and liberation of animals).

3.4 IMPACT OF INTRODUCED FERAL HERBIVORES ON THE NATIVE FLORA IN LA GOMERA (CANARY ISLANDS). PROGRESS OF CONTROL PROGRAMMES

by Mr Angel B. Fernández, Director Conservador P. N. Garajonay

La Gomera Island, one of the smallest islands of the Canaries, suffers a silent but very important impact in its native flora and vegetation by the effects of feral ungulates, mainly goats and sheep.

The island maintain an impressive variety of native habitats and endemic species of flora, such as sub-desertic euphorbia scrublands in the lower vegetation belt, extensive juniper (*juniperus turbinata*) and palm groves (*Phoenix canariensis*) in the medium belt and superb laurisilva forests (cloud evergreen forests) in the summits. The whole island is a Biosphere Reserve with more than 50% of the territory included in a protected area and with a significant part of the laurel forests protected by Garajonay National Park, a World Heritage Site by UNESCO.

In addition of this, La Gomera is the first Important Area for Conservation of Endangered Species of Flora in Spain, being the main threat factor the impact of feral ungulates. In the last 20 years the feral ungulates have increased almost out of control in many areas of the island except in the National Park, where a control program has been implemented by means of professional shooters. In spite of this, the problem continues in some of its peripheral areas because of the continuous arrival of new animals from outside, since in the rest of the island none control activities have been implemented until recently. Finally, in the last 2 years, the local government has initiated a control program in some of the protected areas, also by means of professional shooters. These control activities found some difficulties due to the hard critics of the opposition political parties as well as some groups of local hunters.

Although this impact is evident and many areas and populations of endangered species of flora have suffered a clear regression, some monitoring and research has being implemented in the National Park, concluding that an important part of the native flora has a very limited capacity to tolerate the impact of herbivores, that a side effect of the herbivores is that facilitate the expansion of invasive alien species and that the controls clearly contribute to the regeneration of native flora and vegetation.

In conclusion, a key management decision for the future conservation of native flora and vegetation in La Gomera Island is the strengthening and implementation of a permanent control program of feral ungulates for the whole island, prioritizing their elimination in the protected areas network. These measures should be supported and complemented with communication activities, directed to local population in order to create an understanding of the problem, and effective control on registration, identification and health control of livestock and ranch operations to avoid irregular or illegal herding, that is the main source and origin of the problems created by feral ungulates.

3.5 IMPACTS ON BIODIVERSITY BY FERAL GOATS AND OTHER INTRODUCED MAMMALS ON ADRIATIC ISLANDS OF CROATIA

by Mr Goran Sušić

There are several ungulates between game species, introduced to Adriatic islands in Croatia. Hunters introduced Fallow deer, spotted (Axis) deer, wild-boar, mouflon, roe deer, white-tailed deer and Barbary sheep to not less than 25 Adriatic islands (all of them inside NATURA 2000 Network, and several are inside 2 Nature and 3 National parks). Programs of eradication are intentionally not implemented by hunting associations, supported by politicians, despite the order by the Minister. Ungulate species and Wild-boars have huge negative impacts on the biodiversity and present a serious problem, but any scientific research about the level of their influence was never made.

The presence of such species is the main reason for the use of poison in nature on the islands, against predators (wild boar) and only poisoned victims are griffon vultures and golden eagles. Examples include the wild boar - whose populations in the islands in Kvarner Archipelago are out of control, thus inflicting losses to the economy and changing the natural island ecosystems. The most recent introduced ungulate species Barbary sheep - introduced to Hvar and Tijat, and possible some more islands as well as on mountains along the coast.

The number of feral goat on the island of Mljet (National Park) and Dugi otok (Telaščica Nature park) has increased exponentially and could led to an extinction crisis of the islands' rare plant species as well as dissemination of invasive plants like one of the most dangerous invasive plant species silver – leaved nightshade (*Solanum elaeagnifolium*). This plant was found on the island of Plavnik where Fallow deer and feral goat were introduced by hunters.

3.6 FERAL GOAT POPULATION IN MONTECRISTO NATURAL RESERVE (ITALY): CONSERVATION AND CONTROL

By Mr. Stefano Vagniluca, Ms. Nicola Baccetti, Ms. Francesca Giannini, Ms. Camilla Gotti and Ms. Elisabetta Raganella

Montecristo is a rocky, almost desert island in the Northern Tyrrhenian. A Natural Reserve since 1971, it is included in the Natura 2000 network and is a part of the Tuscan Archipelago National Park. It has been awarded with the European Diploma for Protected Areas in 1988.

The island is quite a unique case of relatively large Mediterranean Island very far from the mainland, without significant human settlements, with severe public access restrictions and totally devoted to nature conservation since more than 40 years.

The goats that still live in the island of Montecristo (*Capra hircus Linnaeus 1758*, sensu Giusti 2005) form the only population that is living in a wild state in Italy since ancient times.

They were certainly introduced, although it is difficult to be sure of when it happened.

They are quite similar to the wild goat of Turkey and the Middle East (*Capra aegagrus* Erxleben, 1777), which suggests that their presence on the island dates back to the earliest times of the domestication process, when the animal were quite similar to their wild progenitors. This period coincides with the introduction of the goats on Mediterranean islands, around the end of the 9th millennium B.C.

However also a number of subsequent, probably small scale introductions of domestic goats during the ages are known.

A systematic annual survey of Montecristo goat population was set up only since 2003. Before we have a single datum collected in 1992, with the direct counts that showed an estimated amount of 770, it was assumed that the population was too large, comparing to the carrying capacity of the Island. In the 1992 – 1997 period some 500 individuals were culled by shooting.

The observed following decreasing of size suggested that the population is not as reproductive as it was supposed to be, and that a different kind of approach was needed, to preserve the goat from extinction.

In 2010 the LIFE Project “Montecristo 2010” was started. The main target alien species to eradicate were black rat and the tree of heaven. Some important interventions were implemented to preserve the goat population from risk of severe damage during the black rat eradication.

As the black rat eradication was performed by spreading baits containing rodenticide with a helicopter carried tool, even the goats could eat a certain amounts of baits, and so they ran the concrete risk of poisoning.

A large group of 42 goats were transferred in a previously built 25 hectares enclosure, to have a sufficient number of founders in case the population should suffer, unexpectedly, serious consequences from the rat eradication.

Before releasing, several months later, the goats have been marked with ear tag, and 13 of them were also equipped with VHF/GPS radio collars that recorded their position every 5 hours. Additionally 5 individuals (2 males and 3 females) were transferred to the Bioparco Zoo in Rome for *ex situ* conservation, and for divulging the project to a larger audience.

Monitoring of goat populations was implemented and the results showed a significant decrease of the population size after the bait distribution, but a following increase had been recorded in 2014.

The on-going Life Project RESTO CON LIFE started in 2014 and has the main objective of island naturalization. It includes concrete actions for goat population management as it is considered an important entity to preserve, but also a threat for species and habitat.

The foreseen actions are:

1. Drawing up a management plan for Montecristo goats
2. Exclusion fencing
3. Carrying out *ex situ* conservation of the specie

A balance between goat preservation and the maintenance of a favourable conservation status for Montecristo habitats needs to be achieved. This will neither be easy nor cheap.

3.7 BIOLOGICAL INVASION ON MEDITERRANEAN SMALL ISLANDS, THE CASE OF MAMMAL AND UNGULATES, AN EXAMPLE OF CONTRIBUTION AT REGIONAL SCALE;

By Mr Mathieu THEVENET and Mr Fabrice BERNARD

PIM Initiative, an example of network strategy on invasive species at Mediterranean scale

The International department of the French Coastal Agency 'Conservatoire du littoral' has been working for 10 years on insular territories through the Mediterranean Small Island Initiative. Aimed at improving the management of these natural sites of less than 1000 Ha, this organization is working in the first place on the field involving at the same time national institutions, universities and associations of Mediterranean countries.

Invasive species being one of the most important challenges on islands conservation, PIM Initiative, in its active networking, is carrying out diagnostic studies, support on eradication campaigns on territories such as

- the black rat eradication of Zembretta in 2009, which has resulted in a drastic increase of Yelkouan Shearwater breeding population on this islet[1]
- The participation at black rat eradication of Bagaud Islet in support of the National Park of Port-Cros in France
- Diagnostics on Invasive mammals study on Zembra, Kuriat and Galite archipelago, Tunisia. Habibas archipelago, Algeria; Sazani Islands, Albania; Essaouira, Morocco; Rouveau island and Presqu'île de Giens islets, France; Comino, Malta, Islet of Kerkennah.
- *Carpobrotus* eradication on Rouveau Islands

All these experiences need to be shared to allow the implementing of similar actions by other manager of the Mediterranean. Therefore the PIM Initiative is coordinating a trainee program to permit transfer of experience, in every campaign cited. The scientific Committee of PIM Initiative grouping together experts from all Mediterranean countries permit to identify target site where such activities need to be implemented and the correct methodology to follow.

Based on this model of action, it should be interesting to spread this way of proceeding to also tackle the Ungulate issues on small Islands: build up an efficient working group, identify the target sites, find funds providers, and quickly start to carry out pilot actions on the field involving other islands manager of the 3 typology of actors outlined above, in order to permit horizontal experience transfer to other Mediterranean and Macaronesian sites.

Different ways of providing such a regional networking support are possible: a new dedicated network about ungulate, a new Macaronesian network about small islands or an increased in thematic and geography of the Mediterranean network of small island? All the figures have to be evaluated...

3.8 VIABILITY OF ERADICATION OF ALIEN MAMMALS IN AZORES

By Ms. Sandra Hervías

Nowadays, most islands are invaded by more than one alien mammal species. The eradication is often the preferred strategy for the removal of exotic species on islands, but before attempting eradication, knowledge of the influence of each alien mammal and their trophic interactions on prey population is required. Moreover, when those islands are inhabited by humans and domestic animals there are challenges associated with eradication campaigns and hence, detailed analyses of the social, cultural, and economic costs and benefits of eradication are required to increase the probability of local communities supporting the eradication campaign.

Corvo Island (the Azores, North Atlantic Ocean) has an extraordinary list of seabird species, some of them categorized as vulnerable by the IUCN. Seabird populations have declined dramatically due mainly to the reduction of habitat and predation by cats and rodents. Moreover, there is evidence that introduced goats and sheep feed on indigenous plant species, which today represent the larger unique patches of natural vegetation, and the soil erosion reduces the habitat where burrow-nesting seabirds build their nests.

In order to preserve seabird populations in the island of Corvo we aimed two objectives: (1) to investigate the feasibility of performing an eradication of the alien mammal species, and (2) to know the trophic interaction between rodents and cats to find out whether the eradication of only one species would benefit seabird breeding success.

According to the small size of Corvo Island (17km²) and the densities of alien mammal species, their eradication is likely to be technically feasible. However, because there are socio-political factors impeding the success of eradication, some actions are needed to overcome risks to attempt mammal eradication on Corvo. Seabird species have one of the lowest breeding success on Corvo among all available studies on these species, therefore it is recommended to take action to avoid a drastic reduction of seabird breeding populations in the near future. The removal of only the main predator of seabirds (cats) couldn't benefit seabird breeding success, because the potential expansion of rodents may lead to a negative cascading effect on seabirds.

An iterative approach conducting eradication campaigns on inhabited islands and involving local communities, that starts with small islands and communities and builds on those experiences before planning eradications on larger islands with larger communities, may be the most efficient way to build global expertise in mammal eradications on inhabited islands.

3.9 STRATEGY FOR INVASIVE ALIEN SPECIES IN THE CANARY ISLANDS.

By Mr. Juan Luis Rodríguez Luengo

According to the List of Wild Species of the Canary Islands 2009, the islands are host to 14,254 species of land animals, plants and fungi. Of these, 3,857 (27%) are endemic to the Canaries. From the conservation point of view, 380 are included in the Canary Islands Catalogue of Protected Species or in the List of Wild Species under Special Protection.

Feral goats and sheep, along with wild mouflon, Barbary sheep (aoudad) and rabbits are among the major threats to certain habitats and numerous species of endangered animals and plants.

According to the official statistics of the Canary Islands Government, 416,764 goats and sheep appear in the 2012 census of livestock facilities widely distributed throughout the archipelago, except for national parks, natural parks and reserves. While the number of feral goats and sheep on each island is unknown, in recent years the scientific community has been warning us about their impact on endangered habitats and species of flora and fauna.

According to the Royal Decree 630/2013, August 2nd, regulating the Spanish Catalogue of Invasive Alien Species, feral goats and sheep are considered "invasive alien species". This means that the competent authorities should adopt measures for the management, monitoring and possible eradication of these species.

According to the Decree 42/2003, 6th July, regulating hunting in the Canary Islands, goats and sheep cannot be considered as hunting species, but licensed hunters may participate in control operations promoted by the competent authorities.

Other legal instruments available to control livestock farming are the regulations on animal health and welfare, each island's territorial plans that regulate livestock, and legal instruments for the management of protected natural areas.

As a result of the studies commissioned by the Department of the Environment of the Canary Islands Government during 2014, we learned that:

- In at least 80 of the 196 areas included in the Canaries Natura 2000 network, introduced ungulates adversely affect animal and plant species: in 8 on Lanzarote, Fuerteventura 10, Gran Canaria 16, Tenerife 16, La Gomera 15, La Palma 10 and El Hierro 5.
- There are 92 species of vascular plants with serious conservation problems for which these ungulates are one of their main threats.
- Goats adversely affect 16 animal species: 4 birds, 3 giant lizards, one grasshopper and 8 snails, in 18 areas included in the Natura 2000 network within the Canaries.

To address this situation, some of the island councils ("cabildos") have taken steps to control or eradicate these species, sometimes with funding from the LIFE financial instrument of the European Union. However a coordinated response is required by the different authorities involved (local, insular and regional), to prevent feralization and control or eradicate established populations.

What actions should we carry out in the future?

1. Control or eradication of feral ungulates. Priority: areas with threatened species.
2. Promote the herding plans for each island.
3. Establish clear guidelines on goat and sheep herding in protected areas and include them progressively in the 'master' plans.
4. Strict application of the legislation on registration and identification of animals.
5. Improve inter-administrative coordination.

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Annexe 4



Convention relative à la conservation de la vie sauvage et du milieu naturel de l'Europe

Projet de Recommandation n° ... (2015) du Comité directeur, adopté le 4 décembre 2015, sur le contrôle des ongulés à l'état sauvage dans les îles de Méditerranée et de Macaronésie

Le Comité permanent de la Convention relative à la conservation de la vie sauvage et du milieu naturel de l'Europe, agissant en vertu de l'article 14 de la Convention ;

Eu égard à l'objet de la Convention qui est d'assurer la conservation de la flore et de la faune sauvages et de leurs habitats naturels, en accordant une attention particulière aux espèces menacées d'extinction et vulnérables, y compris aux espèces migratrices menacées d'extinction et vulnérables ;

Rappelant qu'au titre de l'article 11, paragraphe 2.b de la Convention, toute Partie contractante s'engage à contrôler strictement l'introduction des espèces non indigènes ;

Rappelant sa Recommandation n° 99 (2003) sur la Stratégie européenne relative aux espèces exotiques envahissantes ;

Rappelant sa Recommandation n° 128 (2007) sur la Charte européenne relative à la chasse et la biodiversité ;

Rappelant la Décision VI/23 de la 6^e Conférence des Parties à la Convention sur la diversité biologique concernant les espèces exotiques qui menacent les écosystèmes, l'habitat ou les espèces, ainsi que les définitions employées dans ce texte ;

Rappelant que la 10^e réunion de la Conférence des Parties à la Convention sur la diversité biologique a adopté le Plan stratégique 2011-2020 pour la diversité biologique et ses 20 grands objectifs d'Aichi pour 2020, et en particulier l'objectif 9 consacré aux espèces exotiques envahissantes (EEE) : « D'ici à 2020, les espèces exotiques envahissantes et les voies d'introduction sont identifiées et classées en ordre de priorité, les espèces prioritaires sont contrôlées ou éradiquées et des mesures sont en place pour gérer les voies de pénétration, afin d'empêcher l'introduction et l'établissement de ces espèces » ;

Ayant à l'esprit la Stratégie biodiversité de l'UE à l'horizon 2020, adoptée en juin 2011 par le Conseil de l'Union européenne, et notamment son Objectif 5 qui invite les Etats membres à lutter contre les EEE afin que d'ici à 2020, les espèces allogènes envahissantes et leurs voies d'accès soient répertoriées et traitées en priorité, les principales espèces soient endiguées ou éradiquées et les voies d'accès soient contrôlées pour éviter l'introduction et l'installation de nouvelles espèces ;

Rappelant sa Recommandation n° 91 (2002) sur les espèces exotiques envahissantes qui menacent la diversité biologique dans les îles et dans les écosystèmes isolés sur les plans géographique et de l'évolution ;

Rappelant sa Recommandation n° 153 (2011) sur la charte de la sauvegarde et de l'utilisation durable de la diversité biologique des îles d'Europe ;

Saluant le Règlement (UE) n° 1143/2014 sur les espèces exotiques envahissantes et espérant sa mise en œuvre pleine et entière par les Etats membres ;

Notant que les ongulés à l'état sauvage peuvent avoir des effets négatifs très graves sur la biodiversité riche des îles de Méditerranée et de Macaronésie;

Conscient du fait que les îles de Méditerranée et de Macaronésie comptent un taux très élevé d'espèces endémiques protégées au titre des Annexes I et II de la Convention ;

Se référant au rapport intitulé « Ongulés à l'état sauvage dans les îles de Méditerranée et de Macaronésie » de M. Joan Mayol [document T-PVS/Inf (2015) 2] ;

Utilisant le terme « ongulés à l'état sauvage » pour des ongulés non indigènes qui vivent à l'état sauvage ayant échappé à la captivité ou ayant été introduits intentionnellement ;

Recommande aux Parties contractantes concernées :

1. de clarifier, si nécessaire, le statut juridique des ongulés à l'état sauvage, qu'ils soient issus d'une introduction ancienne dans les îles ou de leur abandon récent par les éleveurs ou encore d'une fuite accidentelle ;
2. de considérer, en règle générale, les ongulés à l'état sauvage comme des espèces exotiques envahissantes susceptibles de nuire à la biodiversité indigène des îles ;
3. s'agissant des introductions anciennes qui peuvent présenter un intérêt historique ou pour la conservation, de gérer ces populations d'ongulés non indigènes de manière à réduire autant que possible leur impact sur la biodiversité indigène, en évitant le cas échéant de leur conférer un statut de conservation en tant qu'espèces protégées ;
4. de revenir, dans la mesure du possible, sur l'introduction récente d'ongulés sauvages ou devenus sauvages dans les îles de Méditerranée et de Macaronésie, en particulier dans celles où ils ont des conséquences très graves sur la biodiversité indigène ;
5. d'encourager dans les îles de Méditerranée et de Macaronésie une application plus stricte de la législation relative à l'enregistrement, l'identification et le contrôle sanitaire des ongulés, de manière à prévenir tout élevage irrégulier ou illégal dans les zones naturelles ;
6. d'éviter les subventions et incitations pour les troupeaux vivant en liberté dans les îles de Méditerranée et de Macaronésie susceptibles d'engendrer une hausse substantielle du nombre d'ongulés à l'état sauvage ;
7. dans le cadre du contrôle des ongulés à l'état sauvage dans les îles de Méditerranée et de Macaronésie, de favoriser leur élimination dans les petites îles inhabitées, les aires protégées et leurs zones tampon ;
8. d'inclure, le cas échéant, un contrôle des ongulés à l'état sauvage dans les îles de Méditerranée et de Macaronésie, dans les plans de gestion des sites des réseaux Natura 2000 et Emeraude ; dès lors que le contrôle ou l'éradication des ongulés à l'état sauvage n'est pas réalisable, d'envisager l'installation de clôtures en tant que moyen de protéger la biodiversité indigène contre les effets négatifs de ces animaux ;
9. de consulter les chasseurs et la communauté des éleveurs dans le cadre de la préparation des plans de contrôle ou d'éradication des ongulés à l'état sauvage des îles de Méditerranée et de Macaronésie de manière à bénéficier autant que possible d'un soutien et d'un consensus autour des mesures de coopération à mettre en œuvre ;
10. d'encourager, lors de l'éradication ou du contrôle des ongulés à l'état sauvage, la participation de professionnels avec l'aide de chasseurs volontaires, afin d'éviter que les chasseurs soient les seuls acteurs des contrôles, beaucoup d'expériences passées ayant montré qu'ils pouvaient être tentés de faire en sorte que les opérations de contrôle s'étendent sur plusieurs années ou prennent un caractère permanent ;
11. de recueillir les informations appropriées sur les ongulés à l'état sauvage dans les îles de Méditerranée et de Macaronésie, en particulier dans les petites îles inhabitées, les aires protégées ou ayant été utilisées à des fins d'introductions anciennes ;

12. d'encourager les travaux de recherche sur les effets des ongulés à l'état sauvage sur les espèces indigènes ainsi que sur l'interaction de différentes espèces exotiques envahissantes sur les espèces indigènes, sachant que l'élimination d'une seule espèce exotique peut avoir des répercussions sur les populations d'autres espèces exotiques ;
13. de promouvoir la sensibilisation des communautés locales aux effets négatifs des ongulés à l'état sauvage sur la biodiversité, les paysages et l'économie, en associant autant que possible différents acteurs de manière à obtenir le soutien des habitants pour l'élimination des animaux ;
14. de faciliter la participation active des îles de Méditerranée et de Macaronésie au sein d'un réseau international efficace de gestionnaires des îles, afin i) de partager les enseignements tirés des initiatives antérieures et ii) de bénéficier d'un accès à un ensemble de normes, lignes directrices et recommandations reconnues au plan international, consacrées à la gestion des ressources naturelles et plus spécifiquement à la gestion des ongulés à l'état sauvage. En fonction de son évolution et de sa mise en œuvre futures, de promouvoir la participation à l'initiative PIM et notamment à son label « Petites îles durables » et au réseau connexe.

Recommande par ailleurs aux autorités espagnoles compétentes :

de poursuivre et d'intensifier l'élimination des ongulés à l'état sauvage dans toute l'île de La Gomera, en particulier dans le Parc national de Garajonay, sa zone tampon et les autres aires protégées de l'île, en veillant à assurer la coordination entre les différentes administrations impliquées (services en charge de l'agriculture, de l'environnement, du parc national et autorités régionales, insulaires et locales) et à mettre en place une stratégie commune, permettant, espérons-le, l'éradication définitive des ongulés à l'état sauvage et de l'élevage illégal dans l'ensemble de l'île.