

# Convention on the Conservation of European Wildlife and Natural Habitats



Standing Committee

## Recommendation No. 77 (1999) on the eradication of non-native terrestrial vertebrates

*(Adopted by the Standing Committee on 3 December 1999)*

The Standing Committee of the Convention on the Conservation of European Wildlife and Natural Habitats, in accordance with Article 14 of the Convention,

Having regard to the aim of the Convention to conserve wild fauna and its natural habitats;

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 that under Article 8.h of the Convention on Biological Diversity, each Party undertakes to prevent the introduction of, control or eradicate those alien species which threaten ecosystems, habitats or indigenous species;

Recalling that the Bonn Convention provides that, with regard to the endangered migratory species listed in its Annex 1, to the extent feasible and appropriate, the Parties must endeavour to prevent, reduce or control “*factors that are endangering or are likely to further endanger the species, including strictly controlling the introduction of, or controlling or eliminating, already introduced exotic species*”;

Recalling Article 11 of the EU Directive (79/409/EEC) on the Conservation of Wild Birds, which states that “*Member States shall see that any introduction of species of bird which do not occur naturally in the wild state in the European territory of the Member States does not prejudice the local flora and fauna*”;

Recalling that Article 22.b of the EU Directive (92/43/EEC) on the Conservation of Natural Habitats and of Wild Fauna and Flora requires the Member States to “*ensure that the deliberate introduction into the wild of any species which is not native to their territory is regulated so as not to prejudice natural habitats within their natural range or the wild native fauna and flora and, if they consider it necessary prohibit such introduction*”;

Bearing in mind Recommendation No. R 14 (1984) of the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe to Member states concerning the introduction of non-native species;

Recalling Recommendation No. 57 (adopted on 5 December 1997) of the Standing Committee, on the introduction of organisms belonging to non-native species into the environment;

Taking into account that, in Recommendation No. 57, species native to a given territory means a species that has been observed in the form of a naturally occurring and self-sustaining population in historical times; “species” in the sense of this Recommendation refers both to species and to lower taxonomic categories, subspecies, varieties, etc. (thus, for instance, the release of a different non-native subspecies into a given territory should also be considered as an introduction);

Taking into account that, in Recommendation No. 57, “Introduction” means deliberate or accidental release, into the environment of a given territory, of an organism belonging to a non-native taxa (species or lower taxa that has not been observed as a naturally occurring and self-sustaining population in this territory in historical times);

Recalling that Recommendation No. 57, recommends that Contracting Parties prohibit the deliberate introduction within their frontiers or in a part of their territory of organisms belonging to non-native species for the purpose of establishing populations of these species in the wild, except in particular circumstances where they have been granted prior authorisation by a regulatory authority, and only after an impact assessment and consultation with appropriate experts has taken place;

Recalling that the methods of eradication should be as selective, ethical and without cruelty as possible, consistent with the aim of permanently eliminating the invasive species;

Considering that feral animals of the domestic species (domestic cats, dogs, goats, etc.) and commensal non-native species (*Rattus* spp., *Mus* spp., etc.) can be some of the most aggressive and damaging alien species to the natural environment, especially on islands, and that in some circumstances the removal of feral and commensal non-native species is a management option;

Considering that the introduction of organisms belonging to non-native species may initiate a process (competition with native species, predation, transmission of pathogenic agents or parasites, hybridisation with native species, etc.) which can cause serious harm to biological diversity, ecological processes or economic activities and public life;

Considering that the species introduced into the territory of a State can easily spread to neighbouring States or entire regions and that the damage which may be caused to the environment of other States gives rise to the liability of that State;

Considering that, at the present state of knowledge, the impact of the eradication of invasive species on native flora and fauna, as well as on the functioning of local ecosystems is likely to be uncertain;

Considering that to be successful in eradicating non-native species a national action plan often requires acceptance by the local community,

Recommends that Contracting Parties:

Regulate or even prohibit the deliberate introduction and trade in their territory of certain species of non-native terrestrial vertebrates;

Monitor introduced populations of non-native terrestrial vertebrate species and assess the potential threat to biological diversity both within their territory and elsewhere. Those species listed in the Appendix to the recommendation are examples which have proved to be such a threat;

Assess the feasibility of eradicating those populations representing a threat to biological diversity;

Eradicate populations for which eradication is deemed feasible in Item 3. Monitor the effect of the eradication on native fauna and flora;

Set up mechanisms for inter-State co-operation, notification and consultation in order to co-ordinate precautionary and control measures for invasive species;

Seek the involvement and co-operation of all interested parties, including organisations and operators who were at the origin of the voluntary release, local and regional authorities, as well as the scientific communities;

Upon understanding the key beliefs which are most directly linked to attitude, gain public acceptance, if appropriate, through launching of public awareness and education campaign informing the general public of the threat represented by introduced non-native species for the indigenous wildlife and its natural habitats;

Communicate to the Secretariat, so that it may in turn inform the other Contracting Parties, of any relevant result achieved as well as any information available on the outcome of the measures adopted.

## **Appendix to the Recommendation No. 77**

### **EXAMPLES OF INVASIVE SPECIES WHICH HAVE PROVED TO BE A THREAT TO THE BIOLOGICAL DIVERSITY**

*Mustela vison* (American mink)

*Ondatra zibethicus* (Muskrat)

*Myocastor coypus* (Coypu)

*Sciurus carolinensis* (Grey squirrel)

*Oxyura jamaicensis* (Ruddy duck)

*Cervus nippon* (Sika deer)

*Procyon lotor* (Raccoon)

*Nyctereutes procyonoides* (Raccoon dog)

*Castor canadensis* (Canadian beaver)

*Trachemys scripta* (Red eared terrapin)

*Rana catesbeiana* (Bull frog)