



Convention on the Conservation
of European Wildlife and Natural Habitats

Standing Committee

Recommendation No. 37 (1992) on the conservation of the Cantabrian bear

(Adopted by the Standing Committee on 4 December 1992)

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

Having regard to the aims of the convention to conserve wild flora and fauna and their natural habitats ;

Considering that both sub-populations of Cantabrian bears are biological and cultural jewels in the crown of the natural heritage of western Europe ;

Considering that the brown bear is seriously endangered in the Cantabrian mountains by poaching, road-building, mining developments and forest fires ;

Recognising the efforts of the Spanish authorities (both the central and regional governments) to protect bear areas and improve conservation of the species ;

Considering that the project for a dam at Vidrieros is likely to be detrimental to the small eastern sub- population of Cantabrian bears ;

Recalling its recommendation No. 10 (1988) concerning the protection of the brown bear (*Ursus arctos*) ;

Recommends that Spain :

1. reconsider the Vidrieros dam project ;
2. increase surveillance of bear areas, especially in the Cantabrian region and mining areas ;
3. pay particular attention to combating poaching and prosecuting offenders ;
4. include crimes against protected species in the penal code to make penalties for bear-poaching deterrent ;
5. strengthen anti-forest fire measures throughout the bear area ;

6. limit all development (roads, open tracks, dams, mine extensions, etc.) in bear areas if they might lead to further isolation of the population ;
7. maintain and reinforce existing recovery plans for the Cantabrian bear ;
8. make one of the aims of the bear recovery plans the recolonisation of the lost area between the two present nuclei ;
9. improve co-ordination between the administrative and political entities of the various regional and central administrations ;
10. create a small consultation unit acting between the four autonomous communities involved and the central government, to oversee all the necessary operations ;
11. encourage research into the Cantabrian bear ;
12. continue and step up educational activities ;
13. take care that tourist activities do not reach the same mass levels seen in other European highland areas.