



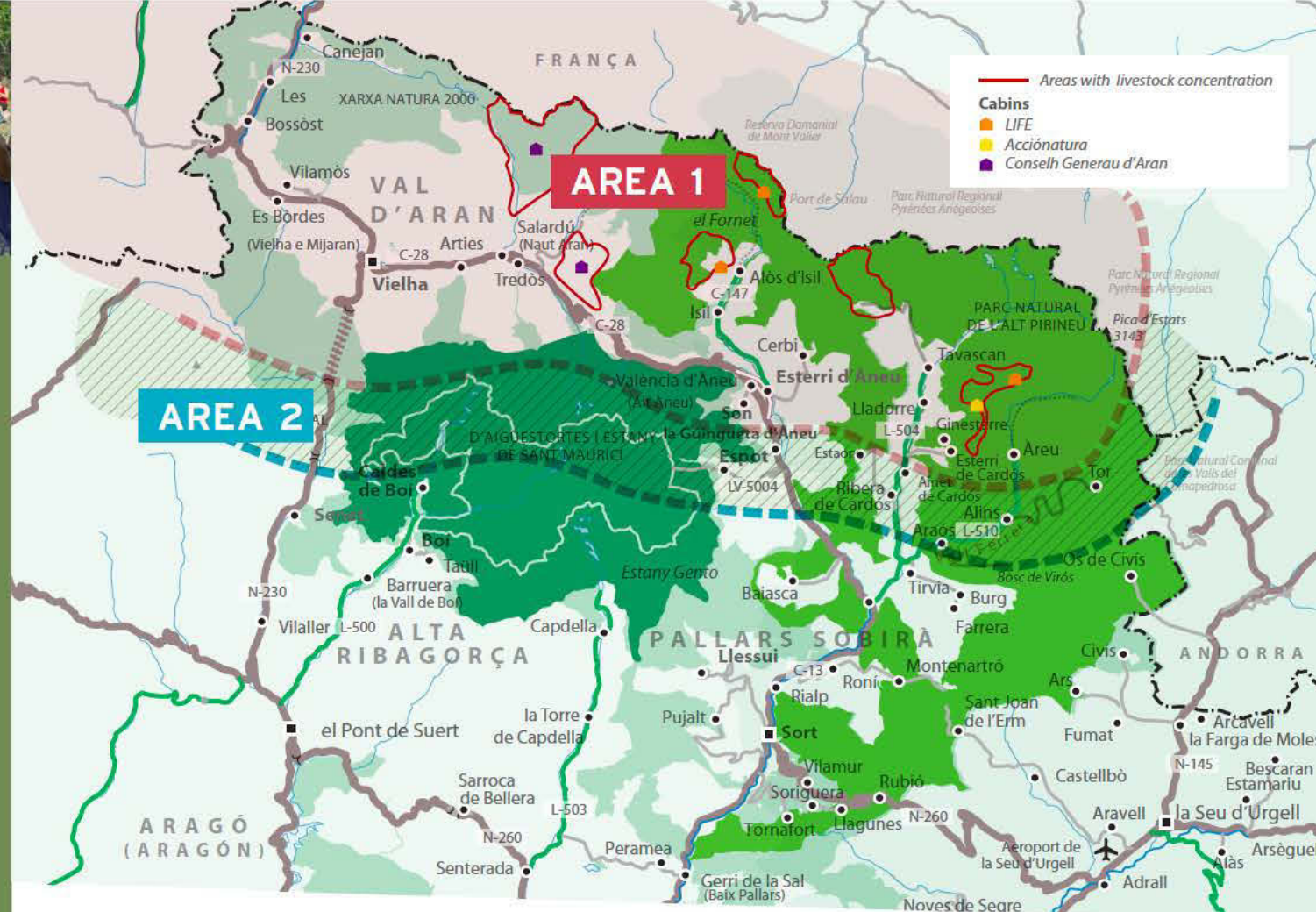
Goals and Initiatives

The LIFE13 NAT/ES/001394 Programme aims to address the challenges posed by the brown bear. It is being carried out in the counties of Alt Pallars and Val d'Aran, and, to a lesser extent, Alta Ribagorça, Pallars Jussà and Alt Urgell. Some of the actions are focused on the Alt Pirineu Natural Park.

The fundamental goals are:

- To improve prevention and avert conflicts with livestock owners and beekeepers, and to provide support for these production sectors.
- To encourage the different local environmental sectors to get involved in the design of the policies to be implemented in the next few years.
- To improve public awareness of the brown bear so that the animal becomes a part of the economic fabric of these mountain areas.
- To draw conclusions that may prove useful for similar projects and may be applied to any European region in the future.
- In conclusion, achieving these objectives will help conserve the brown bear while guaranteeing population growth and genetic variability.

The project includes 35 different actions. These include damage prevention, participation, volunteering, public information, public-use land management in relation to the brown bear, improvement of people's awareness of the species, classes for children and teacher training, publication of awareness-raising materials, organization of technical and professional seminars, and translocation of a new male as a genetic replacement for Pyros.



- Area 1** Permanent presence of the brown bear
- Area 2** Occasional presence of the brown bear

The actions of PirosLife Project will be carried out in the Lleida Pyrenees through different measures and degrees of intensity



Genetic Improvement of the Bear Population

The biological future of the species in the Pyrenees depends on combating the risks associated with the reproductive monopoly of the male Pyros, since he has fathered almost all the litters born in recent years.

All the adult males in the population are descendants of this specimen, with the exception of Balou. This male bear represented an opportunity to preserve or increase the genetic variability of the Pyrenees population. However, he died in 2014 and all such hope was lost.

The LIFE Programme aims to address this need to physically replace Balou and find a genetic replacement for Pyros, who is now elderly and will soon lose his reproductive capacity as he nears the end of his life.

In order to address this issue, a breeding male from Slovenia will be released. It is hoped that this will help prevent future problems of inbreeding within the population and therefore reduce the risk of disease, increase of reproductive productivity and a higher survival.

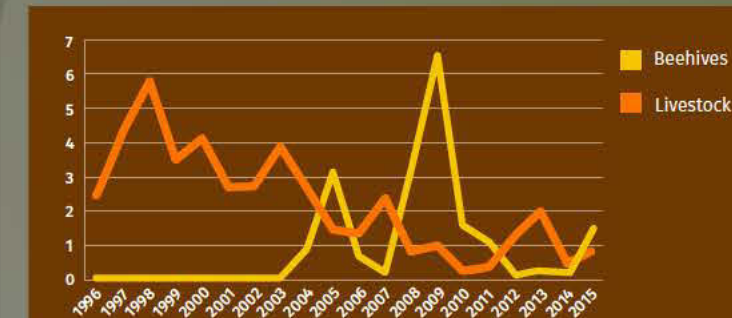
The Coexistence of Extensive Mountain Livestock Farming and Beekeeping with the Brown Bear

The project includes a number of measures to reduce the damage to extensive mountain livestock farming and beekeeping caused by the brown bear.

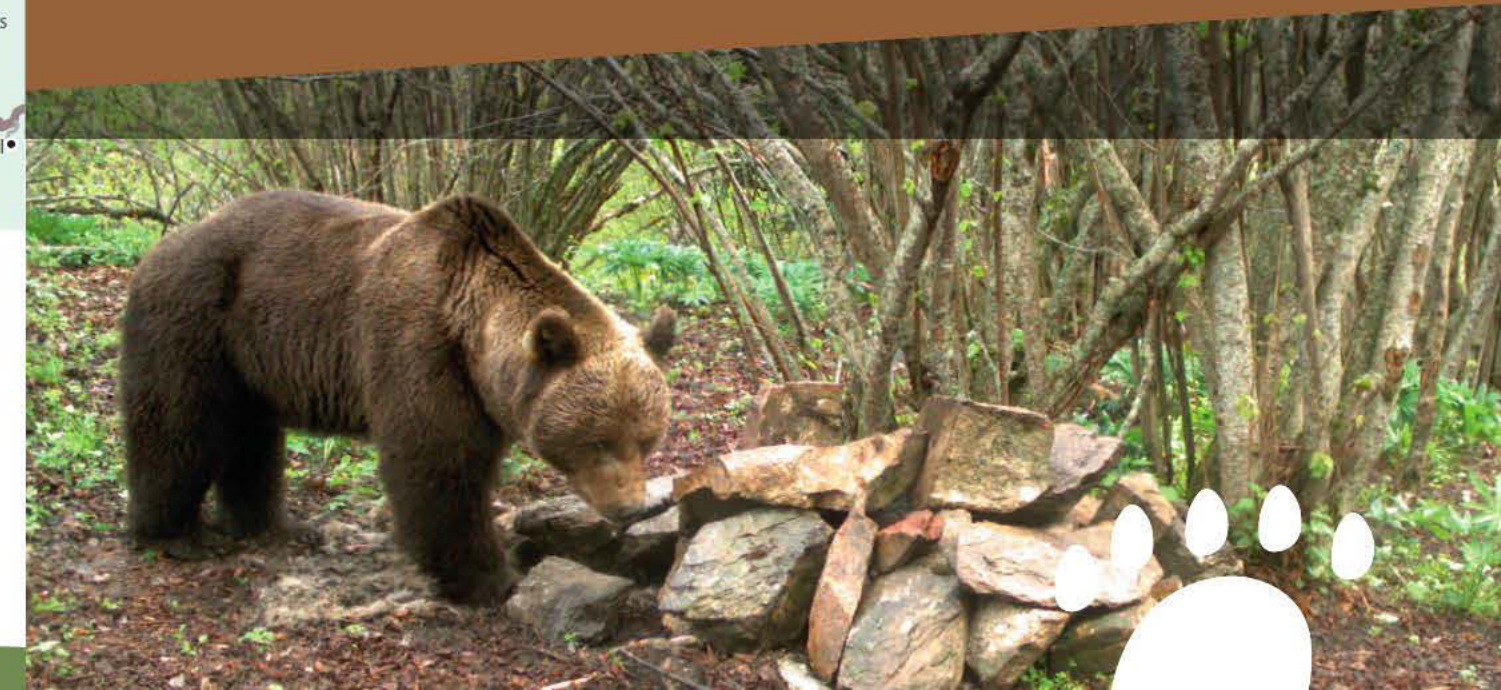
These measures involve bringing the small herds of each livestock owner together into one large herd so that it is easier to apply more specific and effective protection measures. These include recruiting shepherds and herders, building herder cabins in areas with a permanent presence of bears, using electrified fences to protect sheep at night, promoting the use of dogs to protect herds and distributing dogs among livestock owners.

Moreover, students from the School of Shepherds of Catalonia will carry out practical exercises with the herds that have been grouped together. This will provide them with information on the protection measures to be applied and how to herd livestock and behave in areas where brown bears are present.

The administration staff will work closely with livestock owners and shepherds. Work will start with cattle and horse farmers with the recruitment of cattle herders in areas where the brown bear is present. Lastly, an effective system to protect bee farms will be developed.



Number of depredations on livestock and beehives by brown bears in the Pyrenees of Catalonia.



Evolution of the Brown Bear Population in the Pyrenees



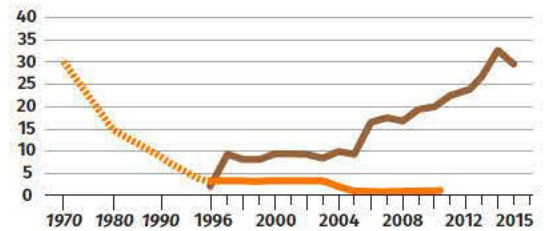
The population has increased slowly and steadily over the last few years. In 2014, 31 different specimens of brown bear were identified. Eighty percent of the Pyrenees population was living partially or entirely in Catalonia.

The annual number of reproductions is very low because females only breed every two to three years and do not start breeding until they reach four to six years of age. Nonetheless, between two and four litters (producing between four and seven cubs) have been born each year. Of these, approximately half survive the first year of life.

This success does not guarantee the demographic viability of the population, since no genetic variability has been made. Today, a single male (Pyros) is the father, grandfather or great-grandfather of most of the bears born in the Pyrenees.

The bears' presence can cause damage or conflicts on livestock and beekeeping activities in the areas most frequented by the bears, what can be minimised with prevention measures.

However, the bear could become key to boosting the socioeconomic situation of the mountain regions where it lives.



Evolution of the brown bear population in the Pyrenees (minimum number of bears detected)



CONSOLIDATION OF A BROWN BEAR POPULATION IN A REGION WITH A FRAGMENTED MANAGEMENT STRUCTURE: THE CENTRAL PYRENEES.

The project is cofinanced by the European LIFE+ Nature Programme, which promotes actions to restore habitats and flora and fauna species in protected areas of the European Union that form part of the Natura 2000 Network.

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The Brown Bear in the Central Pyrenees

ENGLISH

The Brown Bear in the Pyrenees



The brown bear is a native mammal of the Pyrenees. Apart from a period of five to ten years, in the nineties of last century, it has always lived in the Central Pyrenees.

In 1996 and 1997, the French government began an initiative to increase the population of bears in this mountain area, especially in the Central Pyrenees, within the framework of the LIFE Programme funded primarily by the European Union. The initiative consisted of the release of three specimens from Slovenia and continued in

2006 with the release of five more bears. Genetic studies showed that Balkan and Pyrenees bears belong to the same lineage. Eight brown bear specimens were therefore released throughout the Pyrenees: two males (Pyros and Balou) and six females (Ziva, Mellba, Palouma, Francka, Hvala and Sarousse), of which only three are still alive today.

