

Convention on the Conservation of European Wildlife and Natural Habitats



Standing Committee

Recommendation No. 50 (1996) on the conservation of *Margaritifera auricularia*

(Adopted by the Standing Committee on 6 December 1996)

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;

Recalling that Article 1, paragraph 2, of the Convention requires that Contracting Parties give particular emphasis to the conservation of vulnerable and endangered species;

Recalling that *Margaritifera auricularia* is listed in Appendix II of the Convention, even if it had not been observed and was thought to be extinct for 80 years;

Recalling its Recommendation No. 35 (1992) on the conservation of some species of invertebrates listed in Appendix II of the Convention in which Spain is invited to survey and take appropriate means to protect *Margaritifera auricularia*;

Congratulating the government of Spain for having undertaken research actions that have resulted in the discovery of a population of *Margaritifera auricularia*, a species thought to be presumably extinct and of which no living specimen had been found since 1917;

Desirous to contribute to the implementation of the Pan-European Biological and Landscape Diversity Strategy and, in particular to its actions regarding threatened species;

Concerned that the only known colony of the species has been found in a canal (canal Imperial de Aragón) which has been subject in the last fifty years to a process of cementation in a good part of its length and which is periodically dragged, both actions being largely incompatible with the survival of the species;

Having been informed of plans to floor the canal to improve its efficiency for water transport;

Being aware that the presence of the species in the bed of the river Ebro, in Catalonia, has been ascertained;
Taking account of the serious risk of extinction of the species,

Recommends Spain to:

- establish, as a matter of urgency, recovery plans for the species as foreseen in the Spanish conservation law for species which are endangered;
- give appropriate protection and management to the sites where the species survives;
- carry out a full survey of the canal Imperial and appropriate sites in the river Ebro and tributaries (especially the river Jalon);
- promote research on relevant aspects of the biology and conservation of the species giving special attention to the identification of host freshwater fish species;
- consider carrying out a captive breeding and re-introduction programme.

Recommends member states of the European Union to:

– consider listing *Margaritifera auricularia* in Annex II of the Directive on the conservation of natural habitats and of wild fauna and flora, taking into account the fact that when the Directive was adopted no living population of the species was known.

Recommends France and Italy to carry out surveys to search for the species in sites where it is known to have occurred.