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CONVENTION ON THE CONSERVATION OF EUROPEAN WILDLIFE
AND NATURAL HABITATS

Standing Committee

35th meeting
Strasbourg, 1-4 December 2015

**RECOMMENDATION No. 178 (2015) ON THE CONTROL
OF FERAL UNGULATES IN ISLANDS OF THE
MEDITERRANEAN AND MACARONESIAN REGIONS**

*Document
prepared by
the Directorate of Democratic Governance*



Convention on the Conservation
of European Wildlife and Natural Habitats

Recommendation No. 178 (2015) of the Standing Committee, adopted on 4 December 2015, on the control of feral ungulates in islands of the Mediterranean and Macaronesian Regions

The Standing Committee to 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, especially endangered and vulnerable species, including endangered and vulnerable migratory species;

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 its Recommendation No. 99 (2003) on the European Strategy on Invasive Alien Species;

Recalling its Recommendation No. 128 (2007) on the European Charter on Hunting and Biodiversity;

Recalling Decision VI/23 of the 6th Conference of the Parties of the Convention on Biological Diversity, on alien species that threaten ecosystems, habitats or species, and the definitions used in that text;

Recalling that the 10th Conference of the Parties of the Convention on Biological Diversity adopted the Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011-2020 with its 20 headline Aichi targets for 2020, in particular Target 9 devoted to invasive alien species (IAS): “By 2020, invasive alien species and pathways are identified and prioritised, priority species are controlled or eradicated, and measures are in place to manage pathways to prevent their introduction and establishment”;

Having in mind the EU Biodiversity Strategy to 2020, endorsed by the Council of the European Union in June 2011, and in particular its Target 5, calling on Member States to combat IAS so that by 2020 IAS and their pathways are identified and prioritised, priority species are controlled or eradicated, and pathways are managed to prevent the introduction and establishment of new IAS;

Recalling its Recommendation No. 91 (2002) on Invasive Alien Species that threaten biological diversity in islands and geographically and evolutionarily isolated ecosystems;

Recalling its Recommendation No. 153 (2011) on the Charter on the Conservation and Sustainable Use of Biological Diversity on European Islands;

Welcoming the EU Regulation 1143/2014 on invasive alien species and looking forward to its full implementation by Member States;

Noting that feral ungulates may have very serious negative effects on the rich biological diversity of islands of the Mediterranean and Macaronesian Regions;

Conscious that Mediterranean and Macaronesian islands have a very high rate of endemic species protected by Appendices I and II of the Convention;

Referring to the report “Feral ungulates in the Mediterranean and Macaronesian islands” by Mr Joan Mayol [document [T-PVS/Inf \(2015\) 2](#)],

Using the term “feral ungulates” for non-native ungulates in a wild state after escape from captivity or as a result of intentional introduction;

Recommends that concerned Contracting Parties:

1. Clarify, where needed, the legal status of feral ungulates, both those that are the result of ancient introduction on islands and those that result of recent abandonment from livestock owners or accidental escape;
2. Consider, as a general rule, feral ungulates as invasive alien species having possible negative effects on island native biodiversity;
3. For ancient introductions that may have conservation or historical interest, manage those populations of non-native ungulates in a way that minimises their impact on native biodiversity, avoiding as appropriate giving them a conservation status as protected species;
4. Reverse, as far as possible, recent introductions of feral or wild ungulates into islands in the Mediterranean and Macaronesian Regions, particularly in those where they are having a serious negative impact on native biodiversity;
5. Promote in Mediterranean and Macaronesian islands a stricter enforcement of legislation on registration, identification and health control of ungulates so as to avoid irregular or illegal herding in natural areas;
6. Avoid subsidies and incentives for free-ranging herds in Mediterranean and Macaronesian islands that may result in a substantial increase of feral ungulates;
7. When controlling feral ungulates in Mediterranean and Macaronesian islands, prioritise their elimination from small uninhabited islands, protected areas and their buffer zones;
8. Include, where relevant, control of feral ungulates in Mediterranean and Macaronesian islands in management plans of Natura 2000 and Emerald Network sites; wherever control or eradication of feral ungulates is not feasible consider fencing as a tool to protect native biodiversity from the negative effects of those animals;
9. Consult hunters and the herding community when preparing eradication or control plans for feral ungulates in Mediterranean and Macaronesian islands so that support and cooperation measures to be implemented are, as far as possible, agreed;
10. Favour, when eradicating or controlling feral ungulates, the engagement of professionals with the help of voluntary hunters, avoiding that hunters are left as only actors of controls, as many past experiences have shown they might have an incentive in making control activities take many years or become permanent;
11. Collect appropriate information on feral ungulates in Mediterranean and Macaronesian islands, particularly in small uninhabited islands, in protected areas and for ancient introductions;
12. Promote research on the effects of feral ungulates on native species and also on the interaction of different invasive alien species on native species, as the removal of one alien species only may affect the populations of other alien species;
13. Promote awareness with local communities on the negative effects on biodiversity, landscape and the economy of feral ungulates involving as far as possible different actors so as to get community support for removal of animals;
14. Promote the active participation of Macaronesian and Mediterranean islands in an efficient international network of island managers, in order to i) share lessons learned on past initiatives and ii) to be granted access to a series of internationally recognized standards, guidelines and recommendations addressing natural resources management and specifically for feral ungulate management . According to its future development and implementation, promote participation in the “Small Sustainable Islands” ecolabel initiative and corresponding network.

Further recommends appropriate authorities of Spain to:

Continue and reinforce controls of feral ungulates in the whole island of La Gomera, in particular in National Park of Garajonay, its buffer zone and other protected areas of the island, making sure that there is co-ordination among the different administrations involved (Agriculture, Environment, National Park, Regional, Island and local authorities) and a common strategy is implemented, hopefully resulting in permanently eradicating feral ungulates and illegal herding in the whole island.