

Convention on the Conservation of European Wildlife and Natural Habitats



Standing Committee

Recommendation No. 78 (1999) on the conservation of the Red squirrel (*Sciurus vulgaris*) in Italy

(Adopted by the Standing Committee on 3 December 1999)

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 fauna and its natural habitats;

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

Recalling that Article 11, paragraph 2.b, of the Convention requires Contracting Parties 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 Article III.4 of the Convention on Migratory Species 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 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*”;

Recalling Recommendation No. R 14 (1984) of the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe, which calls on the member States to prohibit the introduction of non-native species into the natural environment;

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;

Recalling the report to the Council of Europe on the Introduction of non-native organisms into the natural environment (de Klemm, 1996);

Noting that the *Sciurus vulgaris* is listed in Appendix III of the Convention as protected fauna species;

Noting the severe damage that *Sciurus vulgaris* populations have suffered in Great Britain since the introduction of *Sciurus carolinensis*;

Noting that the main threat to the survival of *Sciurus vulgaris* on the European continent comes from competition with the Grey squirrel *Sciurus carolinensis*;

Noting the threat to woodland biodiversity from bark-stripping by grey squirrels, which has eliminated smooth-barked native trees in some British woodlands;

Conscious of the critical importance of the possible expansion of the introduced Grey squirrel *Sciurus carolinensis* to the rest of Europe;

Noting that previous efforts to eradicate *Sciurus carolinensis* in Italy have not been successful due to administrative or legal barriers;

Conscious that only a very firm control policy by Italy to halt and reverse the increase in population and range of the non-native *Sciurus carolinensis* to a level that prevents spread to other countries can result in the long term survival of the endangered *Sciurus vulgaris*;

Desirous to avoid a further degradation of biological diversity in the continent;

Noting that eradication of *Sciurus carolinensis* in Italy is a fundamental instrument in the conservation of *Sciurus vulgaris* in the whole European continent,

Recommends that Italy develop and implement without further delay a national control programme to eradicate the Grey squirrel *Sciurus carolinensis* and remove all legal and administrative obstacles that have hindered previous eradication efforts.