

Ursus arctos LINNAEUS, 1758



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Distribution

World: Holarctic. Throughout the Palaearctic mainland from western Europe to the Far East and Japan. Extinct in the British Isles, much of Western Europe, European Russia, China, Korea and south Japan. North America: north Mexico, Rocky Mountains, north and north-west Canada and Alaska.

Europe: restricted to mountain ranges (Cantabrian Mts., Pyrénées, Abruzzi, eastern Alps, Dinaric Alps, Balkans, Carpathians and Caucasus), with lowland forests occupied only in northern Russia, Fennoscandia, Estonia and Latvia. On the verge of extinction in the western Pyrénées. Reintroduced to the central Pyrénées in 1996, but not yet included on the map.

Geographic variation

Polymorphic species with taxonomic situation not fully determined at present. Seven to eleven subspecies are recognized with large differences in body size and fur colour.

Habitat

Forest zones of the Palaearctic and Nearctic but inhabits also tundra, steppes, edges of deserts. In areas of dense human population, restricted to higher, inaccessible mountain areas.

Population status

Estimates over the last 50 years show an almost 100%

Brown bear

AL	Ariu	LT	Rudasis lokys
BG	Кафява мечка	LU	Bronge Bier
CZ	Medvěd hnědý	LV	Brūnais lācis
DE	Braunbär	MK	Кафеава мечка
DK	Brun bjørn	MT	Ors
EE	Pruunkaru	NL	Bruine beer
ES	Oso pardo	NO	Bjørn; Brunbjørn
FI	Karhu	PL	Niedźwiedź brunatny
FO	Bjørn	PT	Urso
FR	Ours brun	RO	Urs; Urs-brun
GR	Καστανή αρκούδα	RU	Бурый медведь
HR	Mrki medvjed	SE	Bjørn
HU	Barna medve	SI	Rjavi medved
IR	-	SK	Medved' hnedý
IS	Skógarbjörn	TR	Ayı; Boz ayı
IT	Orso bruno	YU	Медвед

increase in the European population. The Carpathian population of 7500 individuals is the most numerous, then the Balkan population of 3000 and the Scandinavian one of 1000. The Scandinavian population constitutes the western part of the Euro-Siberian continuous range.

International legal & conservation status

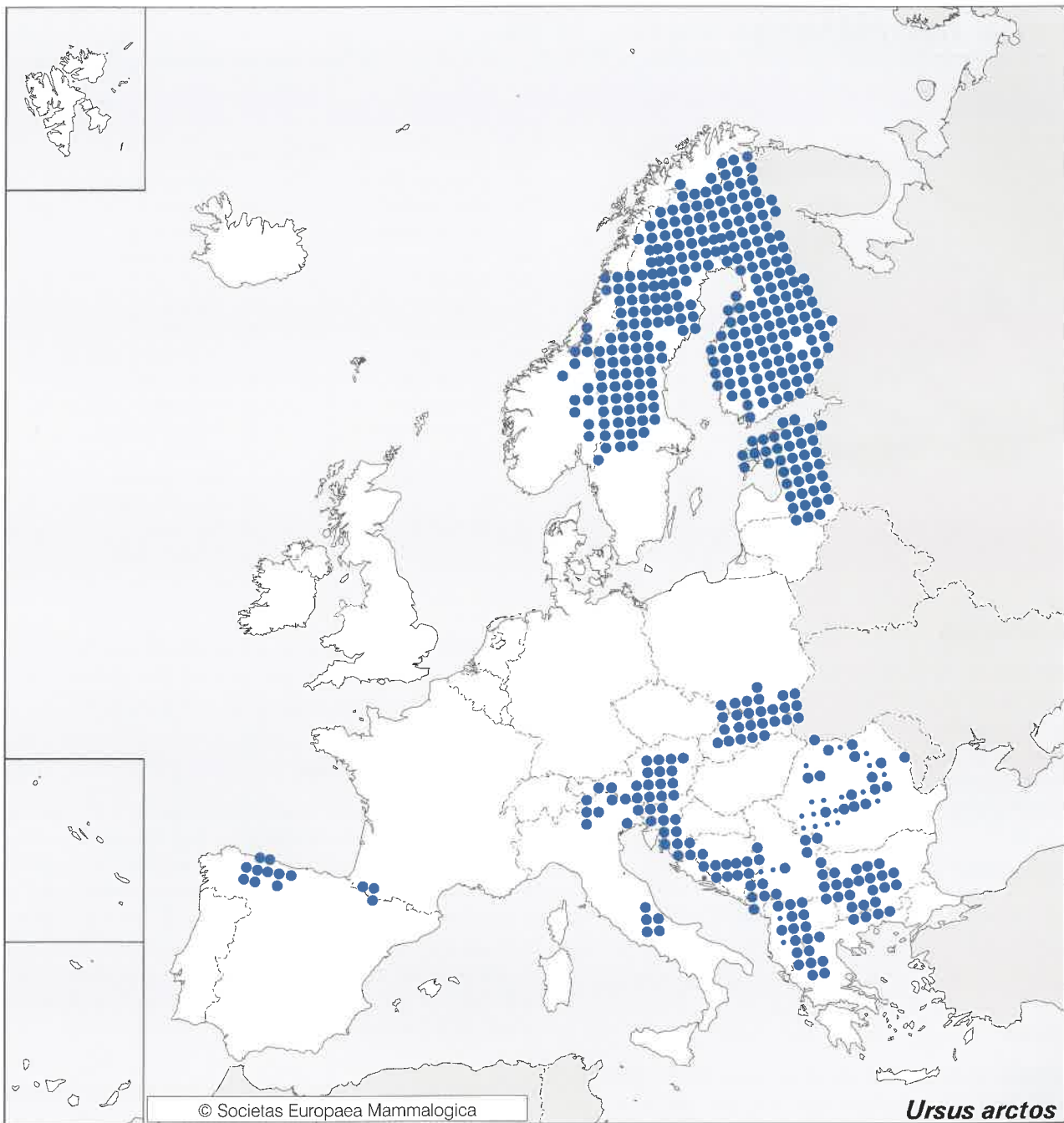
Bern Convention, Appendix II.

EU Habitats & Species Directive, Annex II* (except Finnish and Swedish populations), Annex IV.

CITES, Appendix II, EC 338/97, Annex A.

Other information

A game species in many countries and also illegally hunted. Causes damage to agriculture: oat crops, domestic animals and beehives. Synanthropization a serious problem, especially in areas of heavy tourist traffic (national parks), though attacks on people exceptional. Usually lives singly. The brown bear is omnivorous, eating berries, roots and leaves, also small and big game, carrion and fish. Body mass of new-born young 350–500 g; adults in Europe up to 450 kg. No true hibernation but winter rest with body temperature 3–4° below normal.



Literature

Jakubiec (1993)
 Sørensen (1990)

Z. Jakubiec