Capra pyrenaica SCHINZ, 1838

D. Roth

Spanish ibex

AL	-	LU	Spueneschen Steebock
BG	Пиренейски козел	LV	Pireneju kaza
CZ	Kozorožec iberský	MK	-
DE	Pyrenäen-Steinbock	MT	-
DK	Pyrenæisk stenbuk	NL	Iberische steenbok
EE	Pürenee kaljukits	NO	Pyreneersteinbukk
ES	Cabra montés ibérica	PL	Koziorożec pirenejski
FI	Pyreneidenvuorikauris	PT	Cabra-montez; Cabra do Gerês
FO	-		
FR	Bouquetin des Pyrénées	RO	-
GR	-	RU	Козёл пиренейский
HR	Pirenejski kozorog	SE	Iberisk stenbock
HU	Spanyol kecske	SI	Pirenejski kozorog
IR	-	SK	Kozorožec pyrenejský
IS	Spánargeit	TR	-
IT	Stambecco iberico	YU	Шпански козорог
LT	-		

The current classification of the Alpine and the Spanish ibex as separate species should be considered tentative. Based on allozyme electrophoresis, the genetic distance between Alpine and Spanish ibex does not exceed a value typical for ungulate subspecies.

Distribution

Endemic to Europe. In the Holocene, distributed on all the mountains of the Iberian Peninsula. At present, dispersed in isolated populations. Mountain areas of the Pyrénées, central and southern Spain.

Geographic variation

Three subspecies are recognized, the fourth, *C. pyrenaica lusitanica* Franca, 1909 became extinct in 1892. The nominate subspecies, formerly distributed in the Spanish Pyrénées, is now restricted to Ordesa National Park; *C. p. victoriae* Cabrera, 1911 is limited to a single population in the Sierra de Gredos Hunting Preserve; *C. p. hispanica* Schimper, 1848 was previously more widespread throughout southern Spain, but is now found in six main areas from Gibraltar to the mouth of Ebro river, including Sierra Morena.

Habitat

Mountain areas of the Pyrénées, central and southern Spain. Spanish ibex live on the cliffs and in the meadows above the timberline but climb down to the forested slopes, especially after snowfall and in spring. They are often found in dry areas where the sparse forests were cut down, or in oak and pine forests.

Population status

C. p. pyrenaica is at present virtually extinct; recent official reports indicate the presence of only two females in Ordesa National Park; priority for immediate conservation action.

C. p. victoriae is restricted to a single population and believed to be stable, with the last official census recording 3300 head.

C. p. hispanica suffered a serious reduction in numbers from a mange infection; today the total estimate is *c.* 7900, subdivided into very small populations.

International legal & conservation status

Bern Convention, Appendix III, but *C. p. pyrenaica* is Appendix II.
EU Habitats & Species Directive, Annex II* & Annex IV (*C. p. pyrenaica* only), Annex V.
IUCN Red List, *C. p. pyrenaica:* Critically Endangered; *C. p. victoriae:* Vulnerable; *C. p. hispanica:* Lower Risk – near-threatened.

Other information

The status of Spanish ibex could deteriorate if such factors as overgrazing and disease transmission by domestic animal occur (in Cazorla y Segura ibex density dropped more than 90% as a consequence of mange

transmitted by domestic goats). *C.p. pyrenaica* is defined as the top priority taxon in the Conservation Action Plan for *Caprinae*. A European recovery plan (LIFE Project) has been started to capture and subsequently to captive breed the last individuals with males of other subspecies in order to recover the population and reintroduce captive-bred animals. Causes of decline are unknown, but there are a number of hypotheses, including competition for food with chamois, inbreeding depression, parasitic infections from domestic livestock, climatic conditions and poaching.

Literature

Alados & Escos (1996)
Engländer (1986) – review
Guiral *et al.* (1997)
Hartl *et al.* (1995)
Shackleton *et al.* (1997)

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