

MAMMAL
CONSERVATION EUROPE

Annual Report 2022-2023

CONTENT

INTRODUCTION 1

STRUCTURE 3

ACTIVITIES THIS YEAR 4

INTRODUCTION

Mammal Conservation Europe aims to conserve and restore thriving populations of native European mammals and their habitats.

We will achieve this by exchanging knowledge between partner organisations, and by building capacity for mammal conservation across Europe. Through working together, we can provide a much stronger voice for mammal conservation. We will also be more effective at conducting research, and be in a better position to apply for funding to benefit all partners. Such a model has been used effectively for many years for bird and butterfly conservation, and we believe that it is time for the mammal conservation community to come together in a similar way.

History

MCE was initiated and founded by eight Non-Governmental Organisations, and builds on the collaborative network established through the European Mammal Atlas II project. The founding organisations were: Mammal Society (UK), European Mammal Foundation, Dutch Mammal Society (Netherlands), Hellenic Zoological Society (Greece), Italian Mammal Society (Italy), The Mammal Protection Working Group at The Hungarian Ornithological and Nature Conservation Society (Hungary), German Society for Mammalian Biology (Germany), and Protection and Preservation of Natural Environment in Albania (Albania).

MCE became legally registered as an independent not-for-profit, non-governmental association in the Netherlands in November 2021. A copy of our statutes can be found on our website www.mammals.eu.

Mission

Mammal Conservation Europe uses evidence-based advocacy to achieve thriving populations of European mammals. We are therefore establishing and maintaining a network of mammal experts and NGOs, ensuring an efficient flow of information to policymakers, lobbyists and the private sectors, and facilitating improved surveillance and conservation action for mammals across Europe. The network is highly inclusive, and we aim to involve mammal conservation partners from across Europe, with members of the network supporting each other to achieve our common goals with all legal means available.

STRUCTURE

There are **currently** 15 member organisations of MCE. Other organisations that share our aims and ambitions are welcome to join us. In addition, people and organisations who share or sympathise with the goals of MCE, but do not wish to become a member, are invited to support our work by making a donation via the MCE website. Other contributions, including research equipment, literature, advice and/or other specific help are also welcome. Please, contact us on: info@mammals.eu

The board comprises members of each of the eight founder organisations, and meets monthly to oversee the activities of MCE. The structure of the board is as follows:

Chair:	Fiona Mathews
Hon Treasurer:	Svetlana Miteva (previously Daan Jacobs)
Hon Secretary:	Wilmar Remmelts
Ordinary Members:	Gabor Csorba, Frank Zachos; Sandro Bertolino, George Mitsainas, Bledi Hoxha.

Board members are eligible to serve for a maximum of 4 years, after which time they may be reappointed for a maximum of one further term. To avoid simultaneous change of the entire board, members will resign by rotation. Member organisations are eligible to propose new board members when vacancies become available.

ACTIVITIES THIS YEAR

This year our activities have focused on three areas:

1. Establishing the Garden Dormouse Restoration Initiative

The garden dormouse *Eliomys quercinus*, is one of Europe's fastest declining mammals. A Working Group has been set up, involving about 50 researchers and conservationists from 20 countries, representing almost the complete geographical range of the species. Six extremely well attended online meetings have been held to date, indicating the commitment of participants to collaborate in this species restoration project.

The goals of the initiative are to identify the main drivers for the decline of the species, develop a systematic monitoring protocol applicable across its range, and to identify sustainable conservation strategies. Actions have including sharing information between members by means of the regular online meetings, and setting up an online recording platform on [iNaturalist](#) through which citizen scientists and researchers? can report sightings. More than 600 records have already been obtained, and these are verified by a panel of the Initiative's members. Data and reports are being collated from experts from each country which will be summarised into a scientific paper on the status of the species. We have also begun fundraising efforts, and are discussing options for achieving larger scale funding to support species reintroductions (eastern part of range) and habitat restoration and connectivity improvements (remainder of range).

2. Working with partner organisations in efforts to influence policy

Our main activities this year have related to wolves. In particular, we were surprised by the press statement from the European

Commission urging member states to use all available legal frameworks to control wolf populations. It was highly unusual for such a statement to come directly from the office of the European Commission President, bypassing the normal processes; and we were also concerned that the call for evidence made in the statement lacked any controls on the quality of information that could be submitted. We therefore wrote to Mrs von der Leyen, and also the European Commission's Director General for the Environment, expressing our concerns.

In addition, we have continued to work with partner NGOs to secure the EU's Nature Restoration Law, and co-signed an open letter of concern about the irresponsible promotion of hydropower without adequate consideration of the impacts on wildlife in Europe.

3. Sharing information through a) establishing our website and social media and b) organising meetings to provide future opportunities for networking and knowledge exchange.

Our website is now fully functional (www.mammals.eu) and includes regular updates about our work. In addition, we have a social media presence on X (formerly Twitter). In addition to our first Annual MCE Meeting which will be held online in March 2024, we will host a session at the European Congress of Mammalogy in Patras, September 2024.