

MAMMAL RESEARCH AND CONSERVATION CAPACITIES GAPS AND NEEDS ASSESSMENT

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This document presents the results of a nonexhaustive research on the current needs in mammal research and conservation in Eastern Europe. This research is an initiative of The Habitat Foundation, The Netherlands. The results are based on responses of mammal specialists from 17 countries. Many thanks to all who reacted.

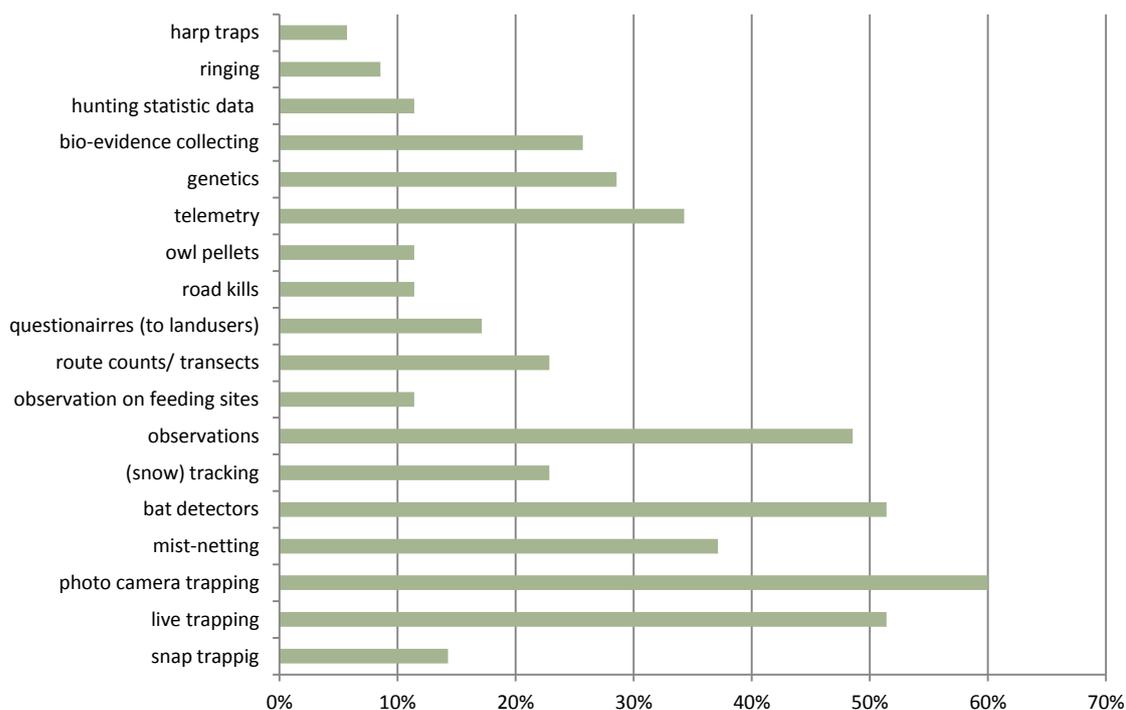
The information was collected with questionnaires, sent to 182 persons in 23 countries in Eastern and South-eastern Europe working on mammals. Nearly 19 % responded, representing 17 countries. No replies arrived from Slovak Republic, Poland, Moldova, Kazakhstan, Latvia and Cyprus.

Of those who replied, 54% work in governmental research organisations (institutes, universities and museums) and 40% work in NGOs, which are rather wide nature conservation NGOs than NGOs specialised in mammals. No significant differences between the replies of GO representatives and NGO representatives were found.

The replies were analysed and grouped. The results and the conclusions are presented here.

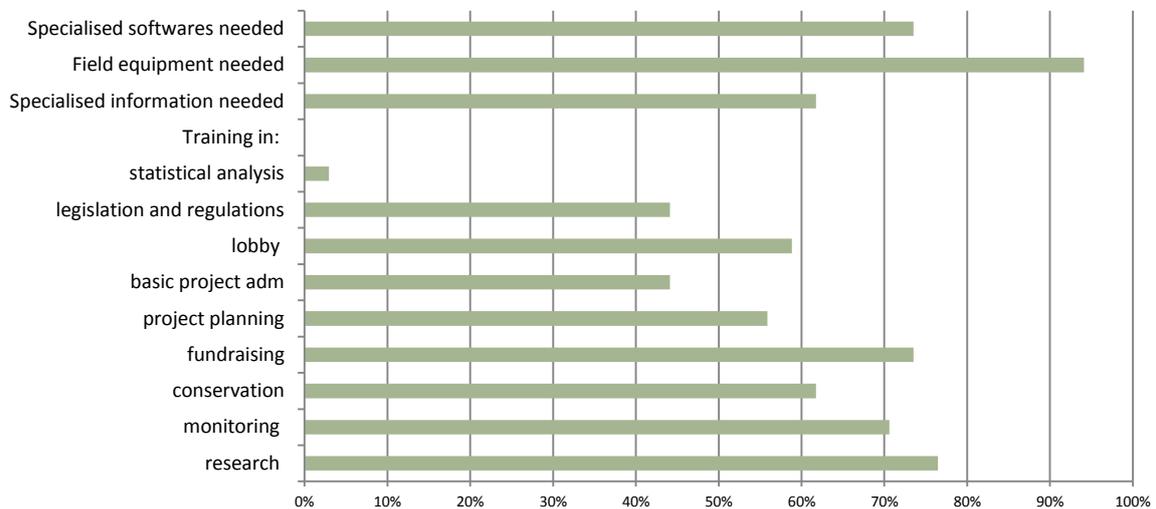
THE CURRENTLY APPLIED TECHNIQUES

Nearly all existing research techniques were mentioned. It is impressive to see that nevertheless all the problems and obstacles reported, there is a rich diversity of applied techniques. The mammal specialists in Eastern Europe are creative, inventive and do their job in the best possible way.



NEEDS IN EQUIPMENT AND TRAINING

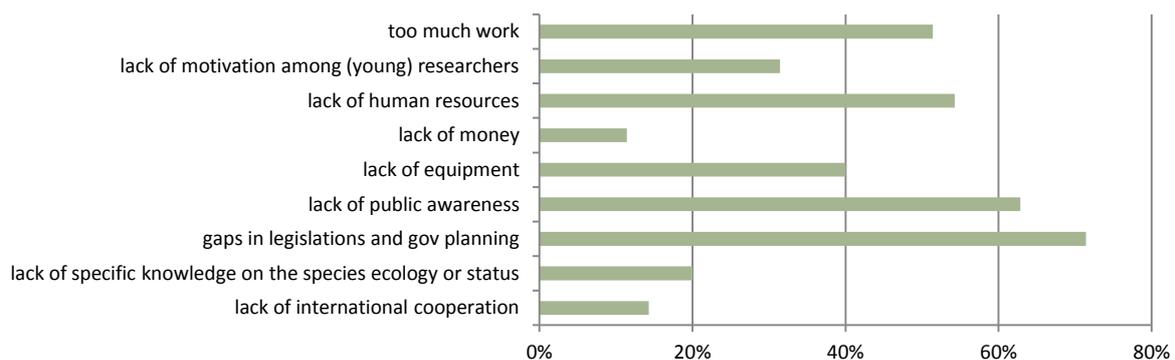
A group of closed-end questions defined the needs, such as equipment, information and training. For the possible training sessions, a subdivision was made. Training in statistical analysis was proposed additionally by one of the interviewees, it was not mentioned in the questionnaire.



Nearly everyone (94%) reported a lack of equipment. The preference to use legal good software was mentioned by 62%. More information is welcome too. Some colleagues specify that information such as species identification guides in the local language are missing and find having one published in their own language very important as this will increase the interest and knowledge on mammals in the country. Having a local species ID guide is considered a good form to boost the local nature conservation. The preferred training is research, which is to be expected for biologists. And then comes the fundraising and lobby techniques, which are the ways to address the related problems such as the problems with the law enforcements and the weaknesses in the laws. A possible strong lobby work can eventually address and communicate these items professionally. The fundraising is also the main way to address the related consequences such as the lack of equipment and human recourses, mentioned in the next graph.

MAIN PROBLEMS FACED BY MAMMAL RESEARCHERS AND CONSERVATIONISTS

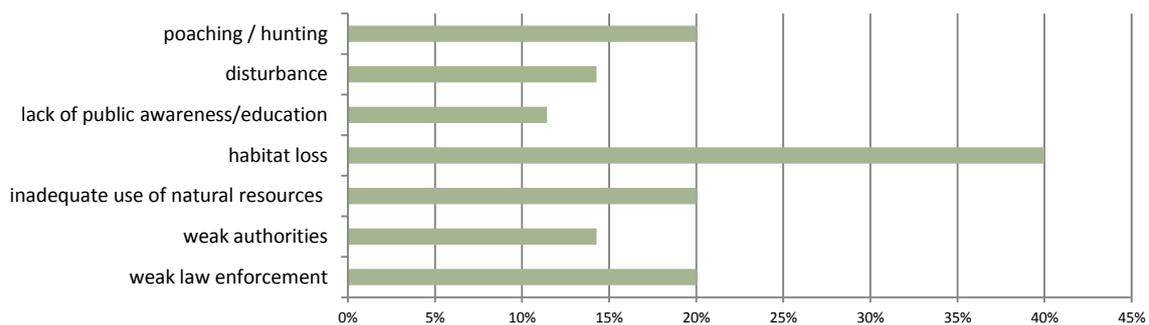
An open-end question “What are the main problems in the work on mammal research and conservation?” There were few replies such as: too many (problems) to be mentioned. Many people did list the problems they find most important.



The first three replies seem to be connected. The next problems mentioned are the gaps in the relevant legislation (and law enforcement, as mentioned in the next chart) and lack of public awareness are also important issues that need extra attention.

MAIN NATURE CONSERVATION THREATS

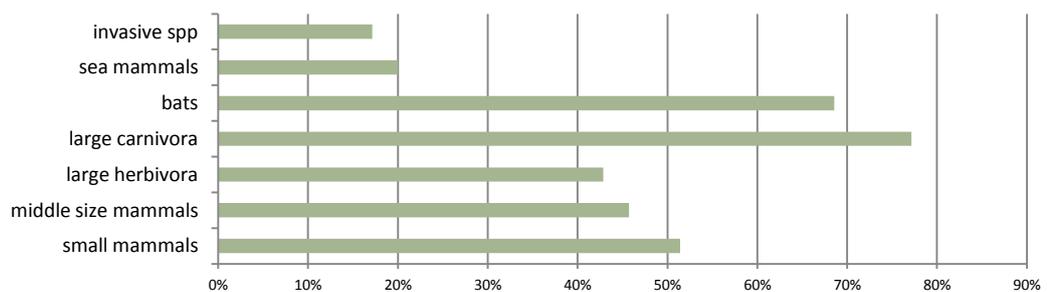
The major threats to the nature in Europe nowadays are known, that is why there was not a question about the main nature conservation threats. The results are rather indicative since not everybody was asked this question. This information came from the replies that were misplaced or spread among the answers to other questions. The threats to the mammals are apparently an issue that bothers the interviewees, which is understandable, and they decided to share their problems here.



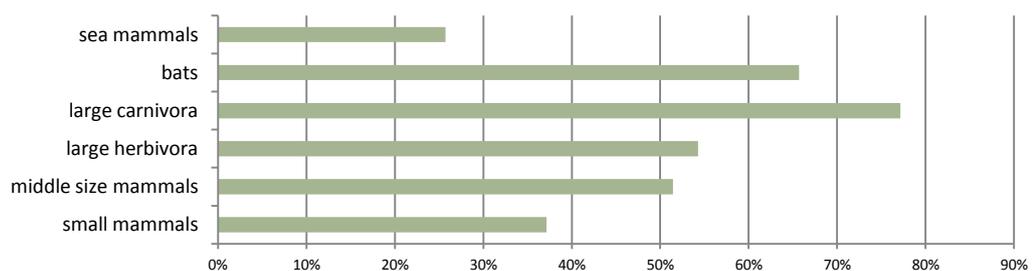
MONITORING AND RESEARCH NEEDS

The next two charts present the needs in monitoring and research per groups of species. The replies here are somewhat affected also by the people who replied and the way they replied. So, the bat experts say bats need extra work because that's their area of expertise. This doesn't mean all the other species are studied enough.

GROUPS SPECIES THAT NEED EXTRA RESEARCH



GROUPS SPECIES THAT NEED MONITORING



VOLUNTEERS

About 70% of the organisation use the help of volunteers. The volunteers take part in rather physical work under the nearly constant supervision of staff personnel, and tasks with limited responsibilities. The use of volunteers for citizens science is in an early development phase in Eastern Europe.

GENERAL CONCLUSIONS

The presented results might be slightly biased by the professional interests of the interviewees, his own opinion on the situation in the country and the capacities of his organisation. Yet, the similarity in the answers is significant.

The main conclusion from this initial research is that we need to build capacities on how to build capacities or to find the ways to establish and develop mammal working groups in every country so people can stand together against the problems they face.

The quality of the work and the knowledge of the scientists and mammal specialists in Eastern and Western Europe does not differ. The difference is mainly in the available resources they have, namely finances and labour. The constant work on acquiring more resources exists everywhere. There is a difference in the practical knowledge on getting more. In Western Europe, there are already more solutions.

The labour problem is partially solved via "citizens science ". Currently, it is developed only in few countries in Europe, but that is immediately visible in the available biodiversity data. There is simply much more biodiversity data. Perhaps, this successful example can be transferred to more countries.

The support of biodiversity research and monitoring is arranged differently among the countries in Europe. There are countries where it depends solely on a governmental budget, in other countries it is arranged via the national legislation, donations, gifts, crowdfunding, grants, membership fees, paid service, such as ecological advises and consults for infrastructural projects.

This experience and practical knowledge can be exchanged and will give a boost to the development of the nature conservation and research sector.

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