



**RAPPORT SUR LA CONSULTATION DES EXPERTS INTERNATIONAUX CONCERNANT LE
COMPORTEMENT DE L'OURS FRANCKA ET
LE PROTOCOLE D'OURS A PROBLEME UTILISE EN FRANCE.**

CONTEXTE

Suite au courrier du 23 août 2007 de la Secrétaire d'Etat chargée de l'Ecologie, l'Office Nationale de la Chasse et de la Faune sauvage a organisé une mission d'évaluation auprès d'experts européens pour évaluer le comportement de l'ours « Francka » réintroduite en 2006 et examiner le protocole « d'ours à problème » utilisé en France.

Un document détaillant l'ensemble des aspects comportementaux de la femelle Francka et le protocole « d'ours à problème » ont été distribués aux experts accompagnés des questions suivantes :

1 - Concernant les principaux aspects du comportement (utilisation de l'habitat, comportement spatial, comportement alimentaire, hibernation, comportement social) de l'ours Francka présentés dans le document joint, considérez vous qu'ils sont comparables à ceux que vous connaissez dans les populations d'ours que vous suivez ? Quel(s) aspect(s) vous semble(nt) atypique(s) ou en marge de l'étendue des variations comportementales que vous observez (ou connus sur l'ours) ?

2 - Concernant le comportement de prédation envers les troupeaux domestiques de l'ours Francka présenté dans le document joint, avez vous observé des situations comparables dans le cadre des programmes de renforcement auxquels vous êtes associés ou dans les populations d'ours que vous suivez ? Si oui, dans quel contexte (conditions d'élevage, types d'habitats, etc.) la prédation se réalise-t-elle ? Quelles solutions ont été mises en place pour réduire la prédation due à de tels individus ?

3 - Quelles remarques ou suggestions concernant le protocole français de gestion d'ours à problème feriez-vous ?

LISTE DES EXPERTS CONTACTES

M. Jonozovic, Institut Forestier de Slovénie, Responsable du département Faune Sauvage, Ljubljana, Slovénie.

P. Genovesi, Institut national pour la faune Sauvage, Bologne, Italie. Vice-président pour l'Europe de l'International Bear Association.

G. Palomero, consultant pour le Ministère espagnol de l'Environnement, Fondation Oso Pardo, Santander, Espagne

J. Rauer, Institut de Recherche d'Ecologie, Université de médecine vétérinaire à Vienne, Autriche.

J. Swenson, Département d'Ecologie et de Gestion des Ressources Naturelles, Université de Norvège, Responsable du projet scandinave ours.

BILAN DES REPONSES

Les réponses littérales des experts sont annexées à ce document.

Parmi les experts contactés seul M. Jonozovic n'a fourni aucune réponse.

Expertise du comportement de l'ours Francka.

P. Genovesi : l'ensemble des données comportementales présentées sur l'ours Francka est conforme à ce que l'on observe dans la province du Trentin, en Italie. Il souligne également qu'à partir des ours réintroduits dans le Trentin, il n'y a pas de corrélation entre les déplacements des ours et le nombre de dommages.

Donc l'ours Francka n'a pas de raison d'être classé comme « un ours à problème ».

Il estime qu'une enquête périodique sur les opinions de la population est un outil indispensable pour mieux évaluer l'acceptation sociale des ours.

G. Palomero : Les éléments dont il dispose au regard de son expérience sur la population d'ours dans les Monts Cantabrique ne lui permettent pas de répondre sur le comportement de l'ours Francka. Il met en relation l'amplitude des déplacements du seul ours mâle suivi par télémétrie en Espagne avec le peu de femelles reproductrices disponibles pendant la période de suivi sur le noyau oriental de la population des Monts Cantabriques.

J. Rauer : Il conclut que l'ours Francka n'a pas eu un comportement atypique. On a observé, dans une moindre mesure en Autriche où la densité d'ovins est plus faible que dans les Hautes-Pyrénées, le même phénomène de forte prédation sur des troupeaux d'ovins en estive. Il émet l'hypothèse que l'augmentation de victime par attaque observé sur Francka pourrait être reliée à l'amplitude des déplacements.

Francka n'est pas un ours à problème, mais un ours qui pose des problèmes. C'est avant tout le contexte local de l'élevage ovin qui est à l'origine de ce type de comportement. Toute mesure de conditionnement aversif dans ce contexte est illusoire. Seule les méthodes d'élevage doivent être adaptées si l'objectif est de maintenir l'ours dans cette partie des Pyrénées.

J. Swenson : Le comportement spatial de Francka après le lâcher est comparable à ce que l'on observe dans d'autres pays d'Europe. Seuls les déplacements en 2007 peuvent paraître « inhabituels ». Il est possible que cet aspect du comportement soit lié à la recherche de partenaires sexuels, phénomène observé dans les populations à faible densité en Scandinavie (Dahle & Swenson 2003. J. Anim. Ecol., 72 : 660667). Son comportement de prédation n'est pas anormal compte tenu que les troupeaux ne sont pas gardés, phénomène souvent observé quand on compare la prédation d'individus entre la Suède, où les troupeaux sont gardés et la Norvège, où ils ne sont pas gardés.

Conclusion : le comportement de Francka ne dénote aucune anomalie par rapport aux autres cas de figure d'ours nouvellement lâchés dont certains se déplacent beaucoup et peuvent selon les cas occasionner plus de dégâts que les autres, notamment sur des troupeaux non protégés.

Expertise du protocole d'ours à problème.

P. Genovesi : Les principes généraux du protocole sont proches de ceux adoptés en Italie. Il considère aussi qu'il faut effectuer une analyse au cas par cas.

Il est crucial de détailler clairement les rôles et les responsabilités de chacun dans ce type de document pour améliorer le processus de prise de décision, et pour réduire autant que possible la part de subjectivité dans la décision.

Il présente 2 tableaux qui présentent d'une part les comportements par degré de dangerosité croissante et d'autre part les mesures à prendre en fonction de différentes situations.

J. Swenson : Il considère que le protocole est excellent et similaire aux protocoles appliqués en Norvège et Suède.

Conclusion : le protocole élaboré en France est similaire à celui préconisé en Italie, Norvège et Suède et aucune modification n'est suggérée.

P.Y. Quenette

M. Catusse

F. Decaluwe

ONCFS – CNERA PAD, Equipe technique ours.

ANNEXE REPONSES LITTERALES DES EXPERTS CONTACTES

Réponse de P. Génovesi : voir fichier PDF.

Réponse de G. Palloméro.

Concerning to your information request:

Cantabrian Mountains are not a good referent for answering your questions because (as you know) there are hardly any sheep livestock in our area and damages in cattle from the 130 cantabrian brown bears are negligible. Important damage are caused in bee-hives but, fortunately, they can be prevented using electrified wires. It is difficult to evaluate if Francka behavior could be ecologically usual based on cantabrian bears data. There are not many radiotracking studies with bears (except of Salsero –a male bear- of eastern population). Data on Salsero showed a home range area of 2447km² between 1985 and 1989. But Salsero lived in eastern population where there were only a few breeding females in that period what could have conditioned its movements.

I have not answered you earlier because I considered our experience could be of little importance for you. I am sorry not to be more useful for your research.

Best wishes,

Réponse de J. Rauer

I think the behavior of Francka was not extraordinary in the sense that there is good chances that any other adult female released in the same area would have behaved quite similar. Expansive roaming seems to be typical for translocated adult female bears (e.g. Cilka in Austria, Vida in Trentino), and in contrast to Cilka and Vida, Francka did not even meet any other bear. High predation on sheep is typical for a setting where sheep are kept unguarded in an area with plenty of cover for bears (sheep in the forest or on relatively small pastures surrounded by forest). The prime example for this situation is Scandinavia where bears from Sweden turn into problem bears when they enter Norway with its highly subsidized sheep farming in forested areas. On a small scale we experience the same problems in Austria in the province of Carinthia where sheep are tended on alpine pastures surrounded by forests. It happened already that sheep had to be taken away from one site because of repeated damages and then the bear moved to the next alpine pasture. But density of sheep in Carinthia is much less than in Hautes-Pyrénées. Concerning the increase of the number of sheep killed per attack in 2007 I suspect (this is just an idea, I do not know any other investigations corroborating this notion) that this behavior may be correlated with the higher mobility in this year. It reminds me to the behavior of the problem bears JJ1/Bruno (disperser from Trentino to Tyrol and Bavaria) and Nurmi (disperser within central Austria). Both moved large distances and both killed several individuals (sheep/goat) per attack and fed only a little or not at all on the individual victims. Nurmi also started feeding on sheep still alive.

The behavior of Francka was not atypical. Was Francka a problem bear? Yes and No. Sure, Francka made a lot of problems. But the labeling problem bear is fixing the reasons for the troubles to the individual bear, to its character and individual development. In the case of Francka, the problem was not this specific bear individual but the situation, the way of sheep husbandry in this part of the Pyrenees.

If the aim is to have bears in this part of the Pyrenees the way of sheep husbandry will have to be adapted (I know this is easily said but a big task; we started a discussion in Tyrol where there are big flocks of unguarded sheep on alpine pastures and everybody tells us in this special Tyrolian situation it's impossible to take any preventive measures). To declare bears like Francka as atypical or problem bear is not an option. Aversive conditioning will not work, there are too many highly rewarding temptations for the bears. And elimination will not work as there would be too many bears to eliminate.

All the best and good luck,
Jörg

Réponse de J. Swenson.

Here are my comments:

1--We have not released bears in Sweden and Norway, so we have no experience with that. However, we know that large post-release movements are common in brown bears throughout Europe. It appears that only the large movements in 2007 are "unusual" for *Francka, although it is important to be aware of the fact that bears show a high degree of individual variation. We have found that males and females move more, and have greater home ranges, where the population is low, and that females can range quite far in search of mates (see Dahle & Swenson 2003--attached). This may explain Francka's large movements that year.

2--I see nothing unusual about Francka's behavior when in areas with unguarded seep. That her predatory rate was "average" in 2006 and many bears show periods of increased predation supports this. We often see that bears that are not predatory in Sweden (where sheep are guarded) become highly predatory when they enter Norway (where they are not guarded). This happens everywhere and is certainly "normal" for bears. Also, the reactions of the shepherds are as in Norway and elsewhere, where bears come into areas with unguarded sheep.

Management protocol--This is an excellent protocol, in my opinion, and is similar to the protocols in Sweden and Norway. It considers all the involved parties (including the conservation of the bear) in a very competent way.

I hope my comments are helpful. Good luck with your work.

All the best,
Jon

- Intervention protocol on a problem bear - Bear technical team, ONCFS - 10th February 2006

- Report on the monitoring of the bear Francka. J.J. Camarra, F. Decaluwe, P.Y. Quenette & P. Touchet

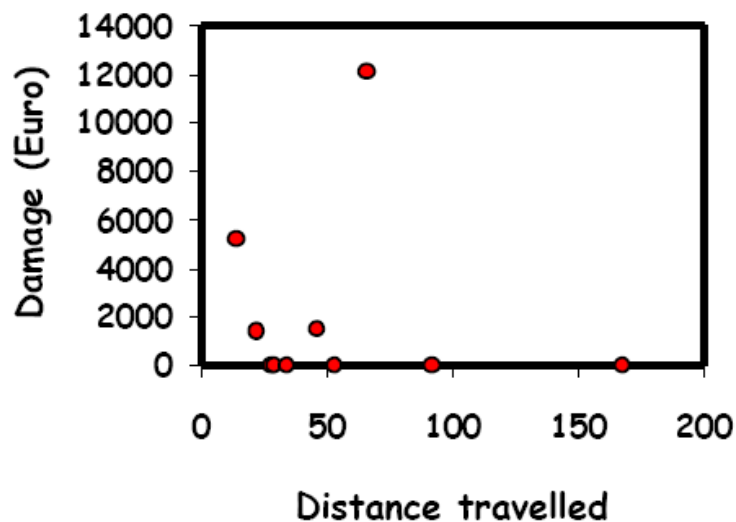
COMMENTS BY Piero Genovesi, INFS, Vice President IBA

I have gone through the monitoring report and the intervention protocol that I received last November 2007.

The data presented in the monitoring report seem to confirm the general ecological patterns that we have recorded in the bear population of the central Alps, that originated from a reintroduction started in 1999. Spacing patterns, diet, predation behaviour, and general behavioural patterns reported in the report do not appear to show different behaviours in respect to what observed in Italy. In this regard, and of the general variability of bears behaviour, I would suggest to be very cautious in using terms such as unusual or abnormal behaviours.

I agree with the conclusion that the behavioural patterns of Francka do not support a classification of this animal as a problem individual.

It is maybe of interest to know that in the Italian reintroduction program we did not find any correlation between the movement, and the damage caused by bears, as shown in the following picture, based on the first 4 years of data.



In respect to the crucial importance of the bear-human conflicts, in the Italian reintroduction program we carried on two quantitative opinion surveys. In my opinion these tools were very useful for a better understanding of the social acceptance of the bears, and I suggest that a periodical survey on the opinions is included in any monitoring scheme of reintroduction programs.

Regarding the intervention protocol, the general principles of the document largely reflect the criteria adopted in Italy, and appear to me reasonable. The basic response tools - based on increased

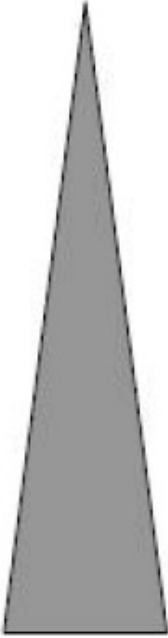
monitoring, aversion techniques, and removal of animals as the last options - are similar to what included in the Italian action plan for the Brown bear in the Alps (that can be downloaded from http://www.minambiente.it/index.php?id_sezione=2643).

Considering the limited number of bears present in the Pyrenees, I fully agree with the principle that – in case of the removal of a problem bear – a substitution release has to be carried on, so that the loss of the individual does not affect the chances of success of the reintroduction.

In our experience, the reference documents on the criteria of intervention, and on the operational aspects of such actions are of crucial importance in bear conservation plan. In this regard, in the Italian experience it appeared to be crucial to provide detailed indications in the documents, including a clear repartition of roles and responsibilities. This both to ensure a speed and effective decision process, but also to reduce as much as possible the subjectivity of the decision process (last but not least to reduce legal risks related to the decisions).

Having said this, I fully agree with the approach adopted in the intervention protocol, that requires - for the most extreme responses (removal or shooting of bears) – an evaluation based on a case by case analysis. In our experience it is not realistic neither advisable to produce protocols that automatically link specific behaviours (or repetition of behaviours) to the removal of habituated bears.

Just for a comparison, following I give you the tables we adopted in the Alps, that have been formally approved by all responsible administrations of the bear range.

	Atteggiamento	Grado di pericolosità
A	orso scappa immediatamente dopo un incontro ravvicinato	
B	orso si solleva sulle zampe posteriori durante un incontro	
C	orso si allontana dalla sua area di frequentazione abituale	
D	orso viene ripetutamente avvistato	
E	orso staziona in vicinanza di apiari, allevamenti di bestiame o capi incustoditi	
F	orso frequenta le vicinanze di case da monte e baite isolate	
G	orso viene ripetutamente avvistato a brevi distanze	
H	orso staziona in zone attraversate da strade e sentieri frequentati	
I	orso causa continui danni lontano da strutture abitate	
L	orso causa danni nelle immediate vicinanze di abitazioni	
M	orso colto di sorpresa si lancia in un falso attacco	
N	orsa si lancia in un falso attacco per difendere i propri piccoli	
O	orso difende la sua preda con un falso attacco	
P	orso è ripetutamente segnalato vicino a fonti di cibo di origine antropica	
Q	orso è ripetutamente segnalato in centro residenziale	
R	orsa attacca per difendere i propri piccoli	
S	orso attacca per difendere la sua preda	
T	orso segue persone	
U	orso cerca di penetrare in strutture con presenza umana in atto (case abitate, ricoveri per pastori abitati, ecc.)	
V	orso attacca senza essere provocato	

Tab 3.1. - Grado di pericolosità dei possibili comportamenti di un orso

Tab. 3.2. Atteggiamenti degli orsi e relative azioni.

Atteggiamento		Azioni suggerite	
		Leggere	Energiche
A	orso scappa immediatamente dopo un incontro ravvicinato		
B	orso si solleva sulle zampe posteriori durante un incontro		
C	orso si allontana dalla sua area di frequentazione abituale	a	
D	orso viene ripetutamente avvistato	a	
E	orso staziona in vicinanza di apiari, allevamenti di bestiame o capi incustoditi	a-b-c-d-h	
F	orso frequenta le vicinanze di case da monte e baite isolate	a-b-e-g-h	
G	orso viene ripetutamente avvistato a brevi distanze	a-b-h	
H	orso staziona in zone attraversate da strade e sentieri frequentati	a-b-h	
I	orso causa continui danni lontano da strutture abitate	a-b-f-h	
L	orso causa danni nelle immediate vicinanze di abitazioni	a-b-e-f-g-h	
M	orso colto di sorpresa si lancia in un falso attacco	a-b	
N	orsa si lancia in un falso attacco per difendere i propri piccoli	a-b	
O	orso difende la sua preda con un falso attacco	a-b	
P	orso è ripetutamente segnalato vicino a fonti di cibo di origine antropica	a-b-c-e-f-h	
Q	orso è ripetutamente segnalato in centro residenziale	h	i-j-k
R	orsa attacca per difendere i propri piccoli	a	i-j
S	orso attacca per difendere la sua preda	a	j-k
T	orso segue persone	a-b	i-j
U	orso cerca di penetrare in strutture con presenza umana in atto (case abitate, ricoveri per pastori abitati, ecc.)		i-j-k
V	orso attacca senza essere provocato		i-j-k

As a general remark, with our experience with so called “problem bears” (in particular Jurka and her cubs), our conclusions are that:

- Considering the limited number of reproductive individuals, removal has to be considered only when all possible alternatives (aversion technique, better management of garbage, prevention measures in the are most at risk, etc) have been applied and have resulted ineffective.
- Also in this case, until the population has reached a minimum threshold of size and reproductive success, removal must be accompanied by substitution releases.
- It is crucial that people living in the bear area perceive that living in a bear area imposes some costs, in terms of risk of economic losses and some limited concern. Damage and risks can be minimised, but not totally avoided.

I hope that my comments are of use.

Piero Genovesi