

Status and Population dynamics of ibex in Stelvio National Park (Lombardia & trentino)

Stelvio National Park, Italy

According to centuries of active extermination all over the Alps, ibex disappeared from Stelvio ranges before the half of XIX century. Around 1920, the area of Livigno (that in 19XX will became part of Stelvio NP) was first re-colonized by natural dispersal from Grisons and, after settlement of protection policies and activation of re-introduction programmes, by the end of the '60 ibex became again a constant presence in Stelvio National Park. In Zebrù Valley, Lombardia sector of Stelvio NP, between 1968 and 1969, 29 ibex were released, coming from Grisons (CH) and Gran Paradiso National Park. Re-introduction project was successful and in 1973 the park rangers could estimate the presence of 80 ibex. Starting from this first colony, other re-introduction programmes were managed inside the Park. Ibex captured in Zebrù Valley were released in Brescia sector and in same areas of High Valtellina (SO) like Fraele Valley, Rezzalo Valley, Gavia Pass. At present we can outline five different ibex colonies in Stelvio NP, deriving from these operations and natural dispersion: Livigno, Zebrù – Braulio, Cancano, Gavia – Redival, Rezzalo - Canè. According to census data, currently in Stelvio area 1063 ibex are present, almost exclusively in Lombardia sector, with a small colony that partially ranges in Trento district near Park's limit. For historical colonies local density are rather high: 20,5 animals / 100 ha in Braulio Valley, 18,5 animals / 100 ha in Livigno and 8,2 animals / 100 ha in right Zebrù Valley. Since 2001, yearly the Park has been making a standard count by block-census, and for the 1973- 1997 period an historical abundance estimation series exists. By the time series we may estimate an annual increase rate of about 8-9%.