

Potential distribution and growth of Alpine ibex population (*Capra ibex*) in Orsiera-Rocciavrè Regional Park

R. Viterbi¹, Corpo di sorveglianza del P.R. Orsiera-Rocciavrè², B. Bassano¹

¹ Alpine Wildlife Research Centre, Parco Nazionale Gran Paradiso, Italy

² Parco Regionale Orsiera-Rocciavrè, Italy

The presence of ibex in the Orsiera Regional park is the result of three operations of reintroduction of 18 individuals (from Gran Paradiso National Park) released from 1995 to 2001. The aim of this study is to analyse the growth of this population and the potential distribution. With the help of the wardens of the park was possible to map the distribution of the ibex in the years 2003 and 2004. Suitability has been predicted by the Discriminant Function Analysis and a comparison between the potential and the real distribution was done: the predictive model correctly classified the 87,2% of the original sample units and classified like suitable 1731 ha (277 U.d.G.) that correspond to 15% of the whole Orsiera Regional Park. We also evaluate the overlap between this model and the suitability study done in 1994 before the reintroduction. No significant difference were found in the number of units sample classified like suitable in the two models and more than 60% of the unit samples of predicted presence are common to both. Two census were done and counted a population of 19 individuals in 2002 and of 26 in 2004 with increase rate from 2002 to 2004 approximately of 36%. The two model suggest a good suitability of the Park to sustain a population of about 200 individuals, but, up to now, this ibex population doesn't seem to confirm the higher increase rate that normally occurs in new populations. We can look for the reasons in the isolation of the territory and in the smoothness of relieves but we need to monitor deeply the population with yearly census and distribution mapping to evaluate the opportunity to supplement the founding group.