CitellusLIFE - trend-breaking safety net for European ground Squirrel of the Pannonian region

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Abstract

Based on the results and analyses from Hungary, the nationwide European ground Squirrel (EGS) population trend continues to decline despite all conservation efforts. In light of these findings, we have designed the recently launched seven-year project titled "Ensuring the survival of a viable European ground Squirrel population in the Pannonian region (CitellusLIFE)," which involves 11 partners. The backbone of the Nature and Biodiversity topic project is a colony-level log sheet system covering the entire region. As part of this, a detailed log sheet will be completed for each ground squirrel colony, containing findings regarding the habitat and the EGS, as well as threats and both planned and implemented measures. In addition, potential EGS habitats that are suitable for the species but do not currently host a living colony for some reason (e.g., isolation) are also assigned log sheets. This log sheet system is designed to ensure that necessary interventions are carried out in a coordinated manner at the regional level. With its help, it can be determined on time which interventions are the most urgent and important for which colonies, so that this is most beneficial for the population of the overall region. The activities and measures planned under the project — such as captive breeding, release and translocation, and improvements to the size, quality, and connectivity of habitats — will be implemented where and when they can be most effective. We hope that coordinated interventions will halt and reverse the negative trend observed in the region, which will have a sustainable impact in the long term.

Keywords

long-term monitoring, population trend, CitellusLIFE, Hungarian Biodiversity Monitoring System