

Stakeholders acceptance for wild boar in Flanders (Belgium)

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Abstract

Wild boar reappeared in Flanders (Northern Belgium) in 2006, after several decades of absence. The original management goal was to eradicate the limited number of local small populations, before a viable wild boar population would re-establish in Flanders. However, due to the lack of support for both this management objective as for the management actions required to achieve this goal, the authorities were quickly forced to abandon this policy. In 2011 the Flemish authorities decided that wild boar, being a native game species, should be managed, based on local stakeholders acceptance capacity and the principles of adaptive impact management (Riley et al. 2003). For this purpose 10 game management zones (GMZ) were delineated, covering the whole region, and local stakeholder groups were asked to collaboratively determine the management objectives within each of these GMZs.

The Research Institute for Nature and Forest (INBO) was given the tasks to (1) provide annually for each GMZ the available data on wild boar impacts and, (2) to report the stakeholders acceptance for these impacts as well as for the current policy goals and management tools. For this last purpose, INBO performed two surveys. The first questionnaire targeted the three main stakeholder groups (nature conservation NGOs, hunters, farmers) inquiring their acceptance of the current impacts, their support for the current policy priorities and, for the currently available management tools for wild boar management in Flanders. The second survey questioned the (general) public attitudes towards wild boar, and their support for the current wild boar policy and acceptance of management tools.

Our presentation focuses on the outcomes of the stakeholder group survey. Results reveal a moderate agreement among the different stakeholders about prior impacts for wild boar management, being, different forms of damage to crops and gardens, car collisions and, to a lesser extent the negative impacts on biodiversity. Stakeholder groups strongly differ in supporting the current management tools. It appears that institutional roles and ethical reasons are defining one's position, rather than the nature of the impacts itself.

Topic Areas

Management of Human-Wildlife Conflicts: "Other" Species in Europe

Natural Resource and Conservation Stakeholders: Managing Expectations and Engagement