



## WWF Press Release

### Last chance for Europe's endangered species

27 January, 2000

Brussels, Belgium - WWF, the conservation organisation, today named ten species under threat in Europe - and warned that Europe has one last chance to save these and other endangered species.

The species highlighted by WWF today are the Iberian Lynx, the brown bear, the Harbour Porpoise, the Monk Seal, the Loggerhead Sea Turtle, the Freshwater Mussel, the Atlantic Salmon, the Marsh Fritillary Butterfly, Lady's Slipper Orchid and the Corncrake.



Pair of Monk seals swimming.  
Photo:WWF-Canon/J. Trotignon

"There are less than 650 Iberian lynx left in the wild" said Christoph Walder of WWF. "Monk Seal numbers are estimated at around 500. There is only one juvenile Atlantic Salmon for every six that swam up our rivers twenty years ago."

"The ten species named by WWF today are by no means the only European species at risk. But they demonstrate the impact of the constant destruction of habitats which many animals and plants depend on. For example, the Freshwater Mussel is an indicator of clean water - and has been in decline for many years. Others, such as the Corncrake and the Marsh Fritillary Butterfly, are the victim of intensive agriculture."

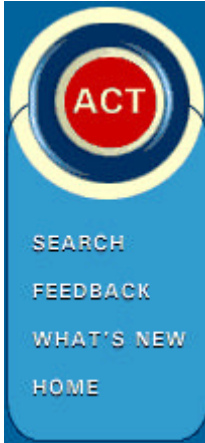
Europe's endangered species can be saved. "Every endangered species in Europe is supposed to be protected under an excellent European nature conservation law agreed in 1992," said Tony Long, Director of WWF's European Policy Office. "But the nations of the European Union have broken every deadline for putting the law, the Habitats Directive, into practice."

The Directive was supposed to become national law in all EU countries in 1994 but has still not been correctly put onto the statute book in any country. Sites for protection under the Directive were due to be proposed by EU countries in 1995 but at least three countries have still to submit a full proposal including Germany. All countries have been asked by the European Commission to propose more sites. Not one EU country has met the requirements of the Directive.

"The Directive can protect the habitats which many of Europe's rare species depend on. It is the last chance for many of Europe's endangered species," commented Tony Long. "WWF is issuing an alert. European governments must act now."

#### For more information:

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