

# Protection of large carnivorans in the EU legislation and national legislations of Europe

## Abstract

Large carnivorans, including the brown bear (*Ursus arctos*), the lynx (*Lynx lynx*) and the wolf (*Canis lupus*), have become nearly extinct in Central Europe in the past and have only returned to our wilderness in recent decades. The return of large carnivorans is therefore responded to by the legal systems of the countries concerned, as well as public international law and European Union law. The reasons for the special protection and legal regime of large carnivorans stem mainly from their biological differences, way of life, potential conflict with humans and higher levels of endangerment.

The aim of this work is to conduct a thorough analysis of the legal protection of large carnivorans on an international, European and national scale. The protection of large carnivorans cannot be effectively addressed within the territory of a single European state, as carnivorans, especially in Central Europe, normally cross national borders. Great attention is therefore paid to EU law, which provides the basis for the legal protection of large carnivorans in most European countries. From the national legal systems of Europe, the legal systems of the Czech Republic, the Slovak Republic and the Federal Republic of Germany were selected for comparison.

The work is divided into two main parts. The first part is focused on the study of social reality, i.e. the collection of relevant information about the life, occurrence and endangerment of large carnivorans. While the second part of the thesis examines the applicable law and its application, at the international, EU and national levels.

The means of legal protection of large carnivorans are critically evaluated in terms of their effectivity. The basic questions to which this work seeks answers include (i) why to provide special protection to large carnivorans, (ii) what protection do major international conventions provide to large carnivorans, (iii) what instruments does the European Union offer for large carnivore protection, (iv) what means of legal protection are provided to large carnivorans by selected national legislations, (iv) how effective are individual means of legal protection enshrined at the EU and national level, and (v) what changes should occur in the Czech legislation in order to protect large carnivorans more effectively.

**Key words:** large carnivorans, biodiversity, protection of specially protected animals