

# Resolution

## concerning the preservation of the Šumava National Park (Czech Republic)

The Bohemian Forest, with its two national parks (Šumava NP and Bavarian Forest NP), forms a unique forested zone in Central Europe and one of the largest forested areas between the Atlantic ocean and the Ural Mts. The large size of the Bohemian Forest allows long-term persistence of natural ecosystems. Nowadays, mountain spruce and mixed forests in all life stages, together with peat bogs and mountain meadows create a unique mosaic of biotopes, affluent by rare and endemic as well as endangered species like lynx, otter, pearl mussel, capercaillie, owls, woodpeckers and hole-nesting songbirds.

The Šumava NP, established in 1991 to protect the most valuable parts of the Czech side of the Bohemian Forest – together with the neighboring Bavarian Forest NP – forms the largest non-intervention area in the Central-European cultural landscape. Therefore, the first transboundary Central European Wilderness Area of international importance – Europe's Wild Heart – has been established here in 2008. The Šumava NP was included in the list of World Biosphere Reserves in 1990 and Šumava peat bogs are an important Ramsar site. The whole region of the Šumava NP is a Natura 2000 protected area – both in terms of the bird directive and the habitats directive).

Because of long-lasting disputes regarding its proper management, several international expert missions (IUCN, Ramsar, European Council, Europarc Federation, PAN Parks) visited the area several times and expressed their recommendations. Based on these and on many years of extensive on-site studies, an important body of Czech scientists from the Academy of Sciences of the Czech Republic and several prominent Czech universities, defined those areas in the Šumava NP (available at [www.infodatasys.cz](http://www.infodatasys.cz)), which should be left untouched by any human activities (especially logging), in order to preserve their unique ecosystem processes and associated biological communities, still existing only in a few places in central and western Europe. Recent activities supported by the Czech national government and regional bodies seek to open Šumava NP for development and reduce the extent of non-intervention zones below the area previously defined by experts. Concretely, the draft of the new law that we have received from our Czech colleagues would imply an imminent risk of a couple of activities that would compromise the area's biodiversity, such as salvage logging in areas proposed as potential core zones, building touristic infrastructure within the NP (i.e., Modrava, Horská Kvilda, Prášíly), opening new trails in the most sensitive areas (peat bogs, capercaillie), canoeing on the Upper Vltava river (pearl mussels), establishing new tourist attractions in the most sensitive parts of the NP core zone (new winter pub in Březník, new restaurant & exhibition – Roklanská chata), reestablishing or repairing old roads in core zone areas, or privatization of land close to the villages inside the NP converting them from meadows to land for construction. This is expected to result in irreversible losses of precious natural areas with high conservation value of European relevance, which would be in disagreement with the current international and national legislation.

The Society for Conservation Biology (SCB) Europe Section urges the Czech government to halt any further human interventions and disturbances, at any sites defined by the above-mentioned national and international experts as non-intervention areas. Especially, construction of a new chairlift in the Hraničník-Smrčina area (a current core zone of the NP), any privatization of state properties around villages inside the NP, building new roads/trails or reconstruction of old forest roads in the above-defined core zones of the NP, are considered to be potentially detrimental. Other means for economic development of local communities and ways, how these communities might profit from the existence of the NP, must be developed. This will require a shift of economic activities from the current exploitation and hard tourism infrastructure projects to a diverse economy, which will be compatible with both sustainable standard of living of local human communities, and maintenance of vital ecological processes, levels of biological diversity, and continued existence of endemic and/or threatened species. The SCB Europe Section is prepared to offer their experts to help in looking for these ways.

The Society for Conservation Biology Europe Section urges the EU Commission, national governments, the scientific community and the general public to express their desire for continued protection of the Šumava NP as an important component of European natural and cultural heritage. Both the EU and European governments are challenged to help in providing the means for the Šumava NP to become a model for simultaneous implementation of nature conservation and development of local communities.