Numbers and distribution

The brown bear used to occur throughout the whole Europe. In the beginning of XIX century its range in Poland had already contracted and was limited to the Carpathians, the Białowieża Forest, the currently non-existent Łódzka Forest and to Kielce region (Jakubiec and Buchalczyk 1987). After World War I bears occurred only in the Eastern Carpathians. In the 1950' the brown bears was found only in the Tatra Mountains and the Bieszczady Mountains and its population size was estimated at 10-14 individuals only (Buchalczyk 1980). In the following years a slow population increase was observed in the Polish Carpathians. Currently the brown bear's range in Poland is limited to the Carpathians and stretches along the Polish-Slovak border. Occasional observations are made in the Sudetes where one migrating individual was recorded in the 1990' (Jakubiec 1995).

The total range of the brown bear in Poland is estimated at 5400-6500 km2. The area available for bears based on the predicative model for the habitat is much larger and may reach 68 700km^2 (within which approx. 29000 km^2 offers suitable breeding sites) (Fernández et al. 2012). Currently experts estimate the numbers of bears in Poland at merely 95 individuals. There are 3 main area of bear occurrence: 1. the Bieszczady Mountains, the Low Beskids, The Sącz Beskids and the Gorce Mountains, 2. the Tatra Mountains, 3. the Silesian Beskids and the Żywiec Beskids. It must be noted, however, that bears only breed in the Bieszczady Mountains, the Tatra Mountains and in the Żywiec Beskids. Poland is the north limit range of the Carpathian population (Swenson et al. 2000).