

# Habitat disturbance and degradation

The brown bear is highly sensitive to disturbance caused by human. The vast majority of factors negatively affecting its conservation status are related to human activities.

The pressure to transform bear habitats in Poland has increased. Development of old and building new ski resorts in these animals' refuges are among the most important problems.

Many authors indicate that the reason for chaotic development of mountain areas is the lack of spatial development plans for municipalities and towns which lie within the brown bear range. Our experience shows, however, that the major conflicts related to bear and other large carnivores' habitat transformation occur in places which do have such spatial planning documents and that the spatial planning improper for species conservation also involves legally protected areas such as landscape parks or Natura 2000 sites (ex. the Pilsko Mountain in the Korbielów municipality, the Czarny Groń Mountain in the Andrychów municipality).

Only dense, large-area forest complexes may sustain healthy and stable populations. Habitat degradation caused by developing and using ski slopes entails worsening the conditions of existence, shrinkage of available territories and disturbance of ecological structures such as food base. As a consequence the population may leave the area