Abstract

Squirrels (Sciuridae) represent a numerous and ecologically diverse family of rodents with almost worldwide distribution. However, their numbers have been declining globally in recent years, mainly due to degradation and fragmentation of their natural habitat due to human activity. As a consequence, several dozen species within this family are listed as endangered now and some of them have reached the brink of extinction. One way to stop the animal extinction is to breed them *ex-situ*, followed by subsequent reintroduction, repatriation and enhancement of wild populations. Endangered squirrels and their relatives can be bred in in zoos and reintroduced to the wild. Although some sciurid rodents are popular in zoos, they do not always represent endangered species and they rather represent species that are attractive to visitors. The aim of this bachelor thesis is to summarize which sciurid rodents are kept in zoos worldwide, or which of them exist breeding, reintroduction or repatriation programmes, and what knowledge and experience have been acquired through these programmes to date. This knowledge could benefit future planning of conservation projects for small mammals or improve existing methodologies and measures. Additionally, the aim of this thesis is to highlight the importance of breeding institutions in small mammal and less charismatic species conservation and to encourage the development of similar projects.

Keywords

Sciuridae, zoos, human care, Rodentia, reintroduction, translocation