

# **DISTRIBUTION AND DENSITY OF WILD BOAR (*Sus scrofa*) THROUGH TRACKS SURVEY IN THE ORSIERA ROCCIIVRE NATURAL PARK, PIEDMONT (ITALY)**

Alpe D.

Parco Naturale Orsiera Rocciavrè, via Pacchiotti 51, 10094 Giaveno (To), Italy.

**Keywords:** Wild boar, *Sus scrofa*, Suidae, Distribution.

IBEX J.M.E. 3:209-210

The accurate cartographical survey of species Wild boar (*Sus scrofa*) inside the protect area and in the neighbouring zones started in 1990 at the same time as other ungulates surveys. Since 1985 the ungulate observations made by the Park Guards were noted down, but unfortunately the observations from 1985 to 1990 were not easy to read because their comparative inexactness.

Since 1990 for all animal surveys in the Park, including ungulates, the method of cartography with U.T.M. squares was adopted. Every U.T.M. square was still divided in four parts, called A - B - C - D, to obtain more accuracy (so every square has a side of 500 m). The Park Guards during their usual watching service or during the censuses of other ungulates noted down on special cards not only the place of the observed animals, but also other notes, like sex and presumed age, altitude, habitat and possible snow, in order to have a complete line for every observation. Then these data were filed with the software Rapid File (an advanced Data Base on purpose built by the Park) to be tested and looked up easier. A first result of this work was the compilation of a map with the distribution of Wild boar in the Park and in the neighbouring zones.

In 1987 a study based on the tracks survey following the I.C.A. system (Index Kilometric of Abundance) began. This research, initially born for a study on the wintering of the Red deer (*Cervus elaphus*), was immediately extended to all other ungulates. Also for these surveys, since 1991 the method of cartography with U.T.M. squares was used. Two paths were individuated: I.C.A. 1 and I.C.A. 2, to run 24 hours after the last snowfall. During this journey all the tracks crossing the paths perpendicularly, in ascent and in descent, were noted. This system surely doesn't allow to make exact

tly census of every species, but enables to have useful knowledge on their movements, on the presumable plenty and on possible fluctuation of wild population.

The data picked since 1987 are shown in figure 1. The map of distribution of Wild boar (Fig. 2) was write only on the ground of certain observations. Really, the tracks survey and the "ploughings" allowed to verify that the Wild boar haunts all the Park area and the neighbouring zones, between 400 m u.s.l. in valley bottom and 2000 m u.s.l. and more, especially in summer.

The observations in the Susa Valley slope of the Park are relatively more plentiful, because the border of the Park runs along lower average height than Sangone Valley and Chisone Valley.

Besides, in the Susa Valley slope the more spread arboreal covering and vast chestnut-tree areas give land more suitable for the Wild boar diffusion. In the Chisone and Sangone Valley slopes the wood and bush areas are especially out of the Park territory, and so the observations normally happen out of the protected area or near the borders.

Data till now collected allow us to draw some conclusion; the Wild boar presence inside the protect area is conditioned principally by climate. As a rule during the winter the Wild boar population inclines to move from up to down, like other ungulates (Red deer, Roe deer). It must be noted that these movements are especially conditioned by the snowfall consistence. If the precipitations are not much plentiful the wild boars incline in any case to remain inside the protect area, moving only to feed in the lower zones out of the Park, and they come back before dawn. If snowfalls are abundant and continuous the wild boars come resolutely down the valley, remaining out of

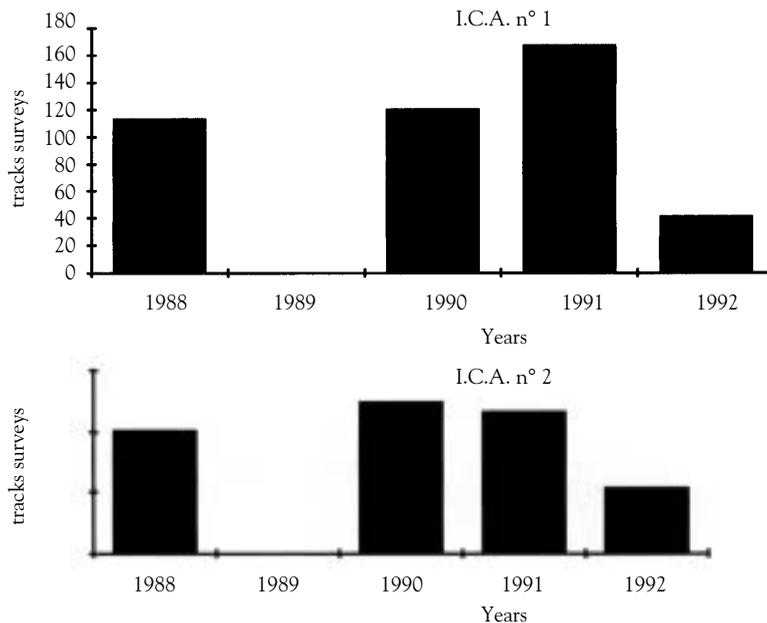


Figure 1 - Tracks survey from 1988 to 1992 on two different paths.

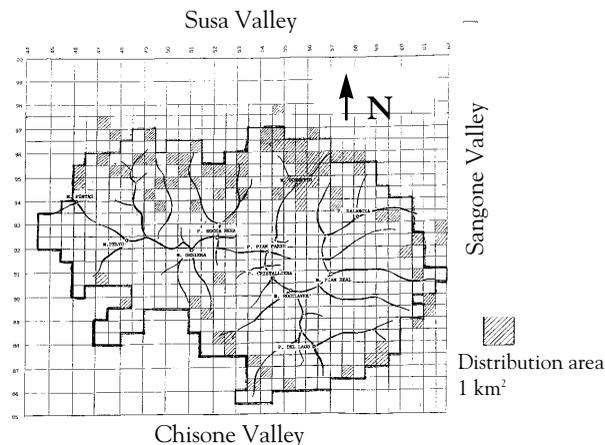


Figure 2 - Orsiera Rocciavré Natural Park

protect area until the climate improves, remaking possible feeding also in the upper zones.

The zones where the Wild boar passes are nearly always the same. If the animals are not frequently bothered, they incline to be very habit-loving during their movements and in the “mudding” areas.

Animal groups had been observed to run along the same paths from one year to another, and often at the same time. The horizontal movements are very restricted and are especially done by subjects trying to colonize new lands

or searching for food, particularly in winter.

The tracks number in 1992 is very low in comparison to those obtained between 1988 and 1991 (Fig. 1). Increased hunting pressure and poaching probably took part to this drop but more observations are needed to conclude anyway.

#### Acknowledgements

The tracks survey was made by the Park Guards: Giuseppe Ferrero, Elio Giuliano, Luca Giunti, Marino Miletto and the author.