

Inter-specific relationships within protected areas of Romania-Case study: the cohabitation between *Homo sapiens sapiens* and *Ursus arctos arctos* in Harghita Mountains

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Abstract: The official assessments of the European Commission tell that Carpathian brown bear is a vulnerable species. The man-bear relationship must take into account three aspects of the bears' behavior: feeding, protection and aggressivity. The aim of the study is to analyze the typology of the relation between *Ursus arctos arctos* and *Homo sapiens sapiens* within the protected areas in the Harghita County (the Eastern Carpathians). The research methodology was the following: surveying the literature dealing with brown bear's ecology and ethology; undertaking field research; running questionnaires; monitoring the online environment. The results show that the shrinkage of the brown bear's habitat is directly proportional with forest shrinkage. The typology of the man-bear relationships includes *commensalism, food competition and individual intolerance*.

Key words: *Homo sapiens sapiens, Ursus arctos arctos, Carpathian brown bear, relationships*

1. Introduction

The natural ecosystems of the Earth, by their various habitats and the species they shelter, offer key services for the human communities (production, adjustments, support, cultural activities) (Adamescu et al., 2016). For our fellow citizens, the wild fauna of the natural ecosystems must be preserved from aesthetic, recreation, spiritual and systemic reasons. This attitude towards nature can be included in the trend called *biophilia*, which highlights the bond between humans and nature. Supposedly, it stems from the inherent tendency of the people to connect themselves to the natural ecosystems the way our hunter and gatherer ancestors did (Wilson, 1984, quoted by Manea et al., 2015). In other words, in their spare time, the

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