

Question for written answer E-003429/2017
to the Commission
Rule 130
Mireille D'Ornano (ENF)

Subject: Wild rabbit population in Europe

The concentration of the wild rabbit population, *Oryctolagus cuniculus*, is estimated at between 0.5 and 10 rabbits per kilometre across Europe, representing a decline in population of approximately 30% over the last ten years. This decline has chiefly been caused by the myxomatosis virus, the viral haemorrhagic disease and habitat loss.

The impact wild rabbits have both on the environment and on the status of the wild rabbit population across Europe is controversial.

These rabbits damage agricultural crops to such an extent that in certain areas they are empirically considered to be pests.

Other studies highlight the growing scarcity of wild rabbits in Europe and their fundamental role within European ecosystems. A Spanish study (Emerging infectious disease, No 12, volume 20, December 2014) points out that the scarcity of wild rabbits is a threat to the Iberian lynx population in Spain, an endangered species included on the Red List of the International Union for the Conservation of Nature and protected by Directive 92/43/EEC.

Does the Commission intend to monitor trends in wild rabbit populations in Europe in order to determine the need to set up programmes to monitor, or on the other hand reintroduce, wild rabbit populations in some areas?