

## DISTRIBUTION AND CONSERVATION ASSESSMENT OF SPERMOPHILUS CITELLUS IN TIMIS COUNTY, ROMANIA

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**Abstract:** *Spermophilus citellus* is a protected species under European Council Directive 92/43/EEC (Annex II and IV), Bern Convention (Annex II) and assessed by the IUCN Red List status as Vulnerable at European and global level. We followed the distribution of the species in Timis county and the threats to the species.

### • Introduction

The states with the most protected areas for *Spermophilus citellus* are Bulgaria (92 areas, 30.07% of the EU total), Hungary (83 areas, 27.12% of the EU total) and Romania (81 areas, 26.47% of the EU total). In Romania it is present in the Pannonian, Continental and Steppe bioregions, from the extra-Carpathian area to the western, southern and eastern state border.

### • Material and method

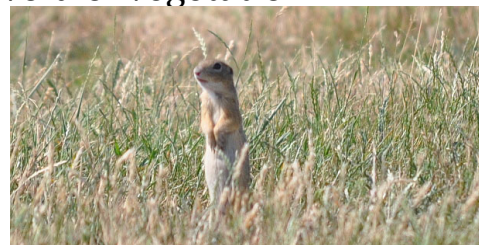
Through direct observations made in the last five years on individuals and their galleries we have followed the distribution, abundance and conservation status of habitats in Timis County.

### • Results and discussions

Agricultural practices are the most important threat. Satellite imagery, Field observations were correlated with CORINE Land Cover data and soil data. We analysed species preferences and habitat fragmentation in Timis County conditions.

### Conclusions

Changes in floristic composition by replacing the short species with tall ones that exceed the length of the *Spermophilus citellus* body, cause abandonment of surfaces and retreat to roadsides or higher areas devoid of vegetation.



*Spermophilus citellus*. Photo F. Prunar at Cenad

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