

A possible approach to the
“conservation”
of the mammal populations
of ancient anthropochorous origin
of the Mediterranean
islands

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Civilisations

have been present continuously
in this region for over 10.000 years,
modifying entire landscapes, disrupting or
destroying the majority of native biocenoses,
and introducing many new
species



Virtually no ecosystems have been left
untouched



The legacy
of the global redefinition
of the original ecological equilibrium
raises not inconsiderable
problems of
conservation and management

First of all,
in the great majority of the cases it is impossible to
reconstruct the natural ecosystems of the past,
irretrievably destroyed and lost
thousands and thousands of
years ago



And in regard to the vulnerability of the ecosystems
of the Mediterranean islands,
it is even critical to prevent further
introductions

But this leaves the question
of how to treat the allochthonous populations
of certified ancient anthropochorous
origin

If, in fact, the eradications of rats,
Rattus rattus (L., 1758) ...



... feral goats...



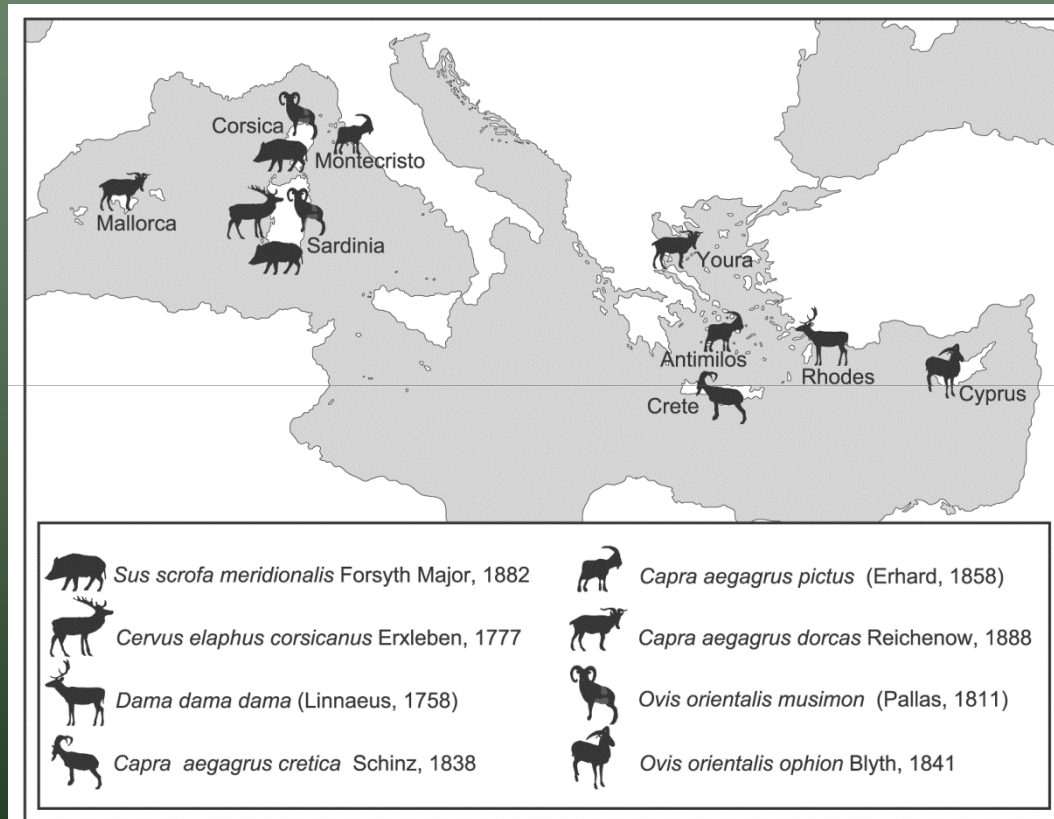
... and rabbits imported in recent historical times, is
in many cases fundamental for the recovery of island
ecosystems,
several of the other anthropochorous *taxa*
represent invaluable historic document;
images which remain fixed in time
and history

Nor should we overlook the fact that many of them constitute some of the few available points of reference for the understanding of the biological and ecological characteristics of their wild continental ancestors, by now long extinct

They therefore deserve to be protected, also considering them in terms of a veritable “cultural heritage”



Unlike the case of artistic monuments,
however,
here we are dealing with living organisms which
interact with the environment in which they have
been introduced artificially and they have survived
since ancient times.



Their protection and their study can provide an opportunity for testing a range of different evolutionary theories

While the importance of these anthropochorous populations is not comparable, from a biological point of view, to that of veritable wild populations in their natural habitat, their elevated validity as environmental entities lies in their representing singular historical , cultural, anthropochorous and biological documents

Thank you

