

French National Action Plan for the protection of the common hamster and lowland biodiversity in Alsace 2019-2028.

Focus on the new agricultural measure

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National Action Plan (NAP) is a french tool made for biodiversity management. It must be built in cooperation with all the partners involved, who are, in France : Chamber of Agriculture, Environmental Protection Associations, French Biodiversity Office, a zoo park, veterinaries, National Centre for Scientific Research (CNRS)... The local office of the French Ministry of Ecology (DREAL Grand Est) carries out the NAP. The NAP is not a regulatory tool, its purpose is to put in place the local strategy (research, fields measures...) for improving species conditions.

The common hamster is a wild species that, in France, only lives in the Alsace region. The 2012- 2016 plan was the third plan set up since 2000. This NAP was an ambitious scheme and partners could complete priority actions such as creating an agri-environmental measure and setting reinforcement. Unfortunately, those actions didn't allow the populations to increase significantly.

So, the decision was taken to create a fourth plan: the 2018-2028 French National Action Plan for the common hamster and all the biodiversity of the agricultural plain in Alsace. Its aims are to reach a viable population of hamsters and to improve the biodiversity of the agricultural plain while reconciling the economic and agricultural interests.

Improving habitat quality for the hamster is one of the most important action. Farmers are involved since 2007 by increasing the proportion of favourable crops in their rotation. Farmers gather into collective areas and formalize their engagement with a 5 years contract. In 2023, it will be the beginning of the 3rd generation of agricultural measure with new specifications based on the latest scientific results.

France is also involved in a INTERREG project with Germans partners about the hamster : the Cooperation Research project in favour of *Cricetus cricetus* consERvaTion in agricUltural landScapes (CRICETUS 2020-2023). This project contribute to reach the goal of the NAP by improving cross-border cooperation, sharing knowledge, testing new tools and methods to monitor hamsters and optimizing network of breeding centers.

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