



Francesco Marinilli in his lab

Photo by Mario Cipollone

Pietro Asci, beekeeper of the Gioenco Valley whose honey has received remarkable awards, such as the organic and the Slow Food brands, has always been sensitive to the conservation of the bear and its natural environment, although the bears have "visited" his apiaries several times. *"Salviamo l'Orso gave me a fence. I have not had any damage to that apiary since, while elsewhere the bear came in and destroyed many hives. I do not mind that the bears eat my honey. I would even give 100 kilos to it, but it destroys the hives and disperses the swarms, stopping production. This is why we need to protect our apiaries. The Bear's Honey project is not just for the bears, but concerns the whole ecosystem, even the human communities that still live there and that help keep it alive with ancient activities such as beekeeping".*



Bear's damages at Pietro Asci's beehives

Photo by Angela Tavone

Geremia Saltarelli and **Pietrantonio Costrini**, both of them from Pescasseroli, are real apiculture enthusiasts. Pietrantonio is also an advisor to Salviamo l'Orso and remarks on the benefits of this project for the natural environment and especially for the "human dimension" related to this species, preventing damage to beekeepers without limiting itself to mere aiding, but encouraging a direct engagement of the beekeeper in the conservation action.

The Bear's Honey project is still in progress, but the portion of honey which was donated to the association in its first year has allowed Salviamo l'Orso to equip two other beehives with electric fences and buy other beehives. The expectations for the years to come are encouraging, but the success of this project also depends on your support!

Please, help us raise funds to buy more electric fences or adopt a beehive by making a donation to Salviamo l'Orso:

<http://www.salviamolorso.it/progetti/donazioni/>

A project by



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THE BEAR'S HONEY



Photo by Francesco Culicelli



"He shared the caves with our ancestors, the mountains with our fathers and cradles with our children. The bear: part of our story."

Carlo Frapponti

THE BEAR AND THE BEE: TWO RINGS OF THE SAME CHAIN

The **Marsican brown bear** (*Ursus arctos marsicanus*, Altobello 1921) is an important indicator for the quality of its habitat. The IUCN considers it as a critically endangered species (with an estimated population of about 50 bears, almost all in the ALMNP) and for this reason it has been included in Habitat 92/43 / EEC and in an Action Plan for its Protection (PATOM).



Photo by Angelina Iannarelli

The bear loves fruit

Similarly to the Marsican brown bear, the **Italian bee** (*Apis mellifera ligustica*, Spinola 1806) is threatened by the human alteration of ecosystems, mainly due to atmospheric pollution, diseases and competition with alien species. The decrease of these insects is worrying because they are a fundamental ring of the "ecological chain" that sustains life on The Earth.

"If the bee disappeared off the surface of the globe, then man would have only four years of life left. No more bees, no more pollination, no more plants, no more animals, no more man."

Albert Einstein

Albert Einstein



The **"Bear's Honey"** project, which was implemented thanks to the contribution of **Patagonia & Tides**, refers to the close relationship between the bear and the honey bees, not only because the bears love honey, but above all because its omnivorous diet is made up of over 80% fruit and depends on the fundamental role that bees play.

The **main aims of the project** are: 1) to enhance the biodiversity of the ecosystem and increase the amount of food available to the Marsican brown bear, through endemic pollinator insects such as the Italian bee; 2) to reduce conflicts with bee keepers through the installation of electrified fences. In agreement with Salviamo l'Orso, the honey produced by this project will create a fund for the compensation of damage caused by bears outside the protected areas. This strategy is aimed at publicizing as much as possible the best practices of coexistence with the bear, making beekeepers more aware of the need to protect their business and see the bears no longer as a competitor, but as an added promotional value of the territory and their product.

THE PROTAGONISTS' VOICES

Project beekeepers all work in the **Bear's Lands**. Their bees contribute significantly to the preservation of the ecosystems. **Ferdinando Fantini**, a renowned organic beekeeper of the Peligna Valley, suffered bear damage in the summer 2014. Since then, Salviamo l'Orso has protected his apiary in Pettorano sul Gizio with an electric fence that was purchased with the "Genzana Bear Smart Community", while another one in Sulmona

was secured in April 2014 with the "Bear's Honey" before Peppina the bear tried to raid it a few months later. *"I thought the bear could go down to the outskirts of Sulmona and I asked Salviamo l'Orso if I could also have a fence built there. I did not have to ask twice! Without the fence, I would have suffered thousands of euros in damages to hives and scattered swarms."*



Photo by Mario Cipollone

Ferdinando Fantini takes care of his bees

Tiziana Tarulli and **Francesco Marinilli**, award-winning beekeepers from Cocullo, joined the project without hesitation. Their apiaries in the Sagittario Valley were protected by electrified fences and since then they have not been raided by any bears, differing from what happened to Francesco two years earlier. Tiziana praises this initiative *"which allows them to take part in the Conservation of the Marsican bear and its environment. On the one hand, providing a portion of honey that the association re-invests in the purchase of electrified fences to reduce the conflicts between bears and beekeepers, while on the other hand, allowing the bees to continue undisturbed to do their pollinating"*. Francesco hopes that even the institutions, such as national parks, will adopt this initiative.