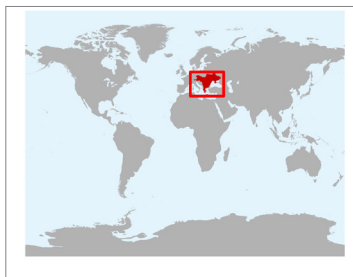




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Geographical range

Amazing Species: European Ground Squirrel

The **European Ground Squirrel**, *Spermophilus citellus*, is listed as 'Vulnerable' on the IUCN Red List of Threatened Species™. As its name suggests, this species is found in central and south-eastern Europe, its range being divided in two by the Carpathian Mountains.

The European Ground Squirrel is undergoing a serious decline, primarily as a result of the conversion of steppe grassland and pasture into cultivated fields or forestry, both of which are unsuitable for this species. Populations have become fragmented and although some large and apparently stable subpopulations still exist, the European Ground Squirrel has been lost from peripheral parts of its range, such as in Germany, where it went extinct around 1985.

Appendix II of the Bern Convention and Annexes II and IV of the EU Habitats and Species Directive list the European Ground Squirrel to ensure its conservation and protection. Individuals were reintroduced to Poland in 2005, and a project was recently initiated for further reintroductions into Germany. More research is needed into the ecology, population status and potential threats of this species, in order to inform appropriate conservation measures.

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