



Influence of the kid on space use and habitat selection of female Alpine ibex

Stefano Grignolio, Iva Rossi, Elisa Bertolotto, Bruno Bassano & Marco Apollonio

Mammalian females change their behavior during the last stages of pregnancy and during the weaning as a response to new energetic requirements and antipredator behavior. From March 2001 to December 2004, we studied the effects of parturition and weaning on home-range sizes and habitat selection in 28 female Alpine ibex (*Capra ibex*) in a 1,700-ha free area in the Gran Paradiso National Park (Western Italian Alps). We calculated Kernel home range enclosing 95% of each female's locations according to seasonal and bimonthly timescales. Pregnancy did not seem to modify spatial behavior. Lactating females showed smaller home ranges than nonlactating ones after the birth period in June–July. Hot summers slowed kids' growth and prolonged maternal care, modifying mothers' behavior. In summer 2003, which was hotter and drier than usual, weaning females showed even smaller home ranges. Because of their use of antipredator tactics during the weaning season, lactating females showed a higher use of safer habitats, such as rocky slopes. Our results are consistent with the findings of previous cervid and bovid studies, and they suggest that ungulate mothers may move to suboptimal, but safer, habitats during weaning to reduce the predation risk for their offspring.

THE JOURNAL OF WILDLIFE MANAGEMENT: Volume 71, Issue 3 (2007), pages 713–719,
DOI:10.2193/2005-675

<http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.2193/2005-675/abstract>