

Population and major wildfires

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Abstract

Paper carried out within the CILIFO project (Iberian Centre for Research and Fight against Wildfires) (<https://cilifo.eu>), of the Interreg Spain-Portugal Cross-border Cooperation Programme (POCTEP), in its subproject B.1.2.2. Characterisation of historical wildfires, where anthropic factors of major fires (LWF, larger than 100 hectares) were studied. The relationship between the two was analysed, taking from the former the most cited in the scientific literature. The influence of demographic evolution on the production of LWF was approached by crossing population data at the municipal scale with the spatial distribution of the affected areas in the province of Huelva, the most forested and with the most LWF in Andalusia. Within the context of wildfires as a complex phenomenon, the results indicate that their determinant is not the mere population loss -because it takes place in areas both not affected and heavily affected by LWF- but loss of inhabited places and resident population outside the municipal capitals, which requires to focus, within the framework of policies for both fire prevention and fight against rural depopulation, not so much on the maintenance/recovery of the population as on secondary settlements.

Keywords: wildfires, depopulation, CILIFO, Huelva.

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