

Proceedings

Invasive Raccoon Dog (*Nyctereutes procyonoides*) and Raccoon (*Procyon lotor*) Monitoring in Lithuania Based on Camera Traps Data [†]

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Abstract: Invasive mammal species outside their natural range are causing damage to the native ecosystems. Raccoon dogs were first observed in Lithuania in 1948 and since then spread across the country. Surveys of this species stopped in 1997, therefore numbers and trends currently are unknown. Raccoons were first observed in 2012, with only a few sporadic reports over the decade. Both species are listed as an EU species of concern. Between September 2019 and July 2021 we evaluated distribution and densities of these animals using camera traps (system with a motion trigger/sensor that activates a camera to take a photograph when an animal is present) at 85 locations with a total sampling effort of 11,501 camera trap days. Raccoon dog was identified in 57 locations (67.1% of all surveyed) and raccoon 1 location (1.2%). The average relative shooting frequency of raccoon dogs was 5.12 photos/100 days and that of raccoons was 0.18 photos/100 days. The abundance of raccoon dog was not uniform. In northeastern part of Lithuania their relative shooting frequency was significantly higher than in western part (6.26 and 2.31 photos/100 days, respectively; $p < 0.05$). Raccoons were present in only one location, however, during the study period they were registered 21 times. This indicates that a viable population has developed and it can become a source of further invasion in the nearest future, requiring immediate control actions. Research was funded by contract No. 05.5.1-APVA-V-018-01-0012.

Keywords: invasive mammals; raccoon dog; raccoon; camera trap; relative shooting frequency

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