

CAUSED HEALTH PROBLEMS BY CARNIVORES LIVING IN URBAN AREAS**SZÓCS, E.¹ – HELTAI, M.¹**

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Those carnivores that sometimes visit or live in urban habitats may be the vectors of numerous diseases that are hazardous for humans and their house animals. The closeness of citizens and the special environment means advantageous life conditions for several species. The density of different species living in inhabitant areas is often higher than in their natural habitats, furthermore some sources in cities (like food, hiding and roosting places etc.) attract big groups of animals. At these attractive places individuals meet more often with each other and with other species. When carnivores first appeared in urban habitats wildlife managers hoped that they will help to control the population of herbivores that occurred in high numbers in some cities and caused remarkable damages in urban habitats. But in contrast to their expectations the carnivores chose garbage, pet food, and easy preys as pets first of all for nutrition and attacked people more often. These factors together increase the risk of getting and spreading diseases, infections and zoonoses like toxoplasmosis and rabies. Although when hearing the word carnivore everyone thinks of rabies first of all but other pathogens and parasites brought in by them mean more danger.

People generally may get diseases hosted and spread by wild animals living in urban areas with the transmission of their pets and house animals. The house animals often host bacterium, viruses or parasites without symptoms and they continuously defecate the pathogens. The most eye-catching danger - almost everyday problem – for health in cities are the scats left by stray pets (cat, dog) and by urbanized carnivores (red fox, stone marten, raccoon etc.) The scats accumulated in higher amount offer a great substrate for the piling of different pathogens that may cause infection in higher concentration. Above these the scats contain the eggs of various helminths and round-worms that may infect people randomly and the evolved malady can cause blindness or it can be fatal. The eggs of these parasites are so small, that can't be seen by eyes, but they might be anywhere where infected animals occurred (for example in parks, playgrounds, sand boxes). In this case a stone marten that moved to an attic of a dwelling-house might become a potential health hazard.