

EURASIAN WOODCOCK MONITORING IN HUNGARY BETWEEN 2009-2021

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To preserve the traditional spring hunting of the Eurasian Woodcock (*Scolopax rusticola*) in Hungary, while also assuring its sustainability, a monitoring program was maintained with the coordination of the Hungarian Hunters' National Association. The primary goal of the program was to estimate the size of the migrating population in the country based on synchronized census data and to track its long term changes.

The program was maintained successfully with national coverage in the last 13 years, and it was based on synchronized roding surveys performed weekly, 12 times each spring. The observers used standardized paper forms to record data on the number of contacts (woodcocks seen and/or heard). Hunting of woodcock between 2010–2021 was only allowed for the participants of the monitoring program with strict regulation and obligatory sample collection from each bird. The main purpose of sample collection was to assess the sex- and age structure of the population and to evaluate their trends.

According to the results, no significant trend could be observed either in the population size or the sex- and age composition between 2009 and 2021. The proportion of males was above 75% each year, while the proportion of first-year birds and adults was almost identical in the annual hunting bags. The measure of harvesting was very low, compared to the size of the population, and it had no significant, detectable impact.