

ESTIMATING THE POPULATION DENSITY OF EUROPEAN BADGER AND RED FOX USING CAMERA TRAPS

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The Eurasian badger (*Meles meles*) and the red fox (*Vulpes vulpes*) are common, medium-sized predators in Hungary. Based on these characteristics, it can be assumed that they play a regulatory or even apex predator role in ecosystems. For wildlife managers, the amount of active burrows can be used as an indicator of population dynamics, but is uncertain in itself for determining population size. Following this line, the aim of our study was to improve and refine the estimation of the population based on the number of burrows. The study area is located in the southern part of Somogy County, a special hunting area of the Danube-Drava National Park Directorate. The field survey consisted of two main methodological parts. In the first step, a complete census of burrows was carried out in the area, followed by the deployment of camera traps in the vicinity of the active burrows found. During the survey, a total of 23 burrows were recorded, of which 12 (8 badgers, 4 foxes) were actively used. Based on camera traps and field observations, a minimum number of 11 adults and 9 cubs were recorded for the 8 badger burrow surveyed. For the 4 fox burrow, 7 adults and 8 cubs were observed. Based on the data, the adult density (individuals/1000 ha) was 9.7 for badger and 6.2 for fox in the study area. It can be said that the density of badgers is more than twice the national value, and the density of foxes is approximately the same.