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OBSERVATIONS ON SOME MAMMALIAN SPECIES FROM THE SUBCARPATHIANS NORTH-WEST OF RÂMNICU SĂRAT TOWN (ROMANIA)

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Abstract. Field investigations conducted in 2005 and 2006 in the Subcarpathian region North-West of Râmnicu Sărat town were aimed at following the presence and dynamics of 17 species belonging to the Lagomorpha Brandt, 1855, Artiodactyla Owen, 1848 and Carnivora Bowdich 1821 orders.

Résumé. Des recherches sur le terrain effectuées au cours des années 2005 et 2006 dans la région subkarpatique située au nord-ouest de la ville Râmnicu-Sărat ont eu le but d'enregistrer la présence et la dynamique de 17 espèces de mammifères appartenant aux ordres Lagomorpha Brandt, 1855, Artiodactyla Owen, 1848 et Carnivora Bowdich, 1821.

Key words: fauna, mammals, Subcarpathians, Buzău County, Romania.

INTRODUCTION

A knowledge of various geographical species in Romania's animal world is of great importance for science. Whenever the studied species have also an economic value, then research results can successfully be applied to realities on the ground.

The Subcarpathian unit makes the transition from mountain to plain, so it has numerous and varied ecosystems. Unfortunately, intense and lasting human impact has resulted in the fragmentation, degradation and occasionally even destruction of these ecosystems. In view of it, the animal world itself has been affected by these imbalances, despite the great taxonomic and ecological heterogeneity of its component elements (the Subcarpathians stretching out between two major natural units) with visible quantitative changes, in particular.

General information on the region's mammals is found in works by Drugescu (1989), Murariu (2004, 2005) and Geacu (2005). The investigations carried out by the author in 2005 and 2006 revealed the presence and dynamics of the 17 important species of the region, belonging to Artiodactyla, Carnivora and Lagomorpha orders.

PHYSICO-GEOGRAPHICAL CHARACTERISTICS OF THE STUDY REGION

Field investigations covered the outer Subcarpathian region, more precisely the hills between the Râmnicu Sărat Valley (in the East) and the Călnău Valley (in the West), extending on the administrative territories of Topliceni, Buda, Pardoși, Valea Salciei, Murgești and Grebănu communes situated in the North of Buzău County close to its border with Vrancea County.

The study-area is 20 km long from North-West to South-East and 4.5-8 km wide, and is situated in 45°23'-45°31' northern latitude and 26°50'-27°00' eastern longitude. Total surface-area is nearly 14,000 hectares.

Geomorphologically speaking it belongs to the Vrancea Subcarpathians, the 260-650 m high hills being part of the outer Subcarpathian Hills. Among them, Părului Hill (547 m) situated 2 km South-West of Buda Village, Vultureni Hill (321 m) one kilometre South of Dedulești Village, Strigei Hill (423 m) 3 km West of Băbeni Village, Plopi Hill (506 m) in the proximity of Pardoși Village, Baba Hill (586 m) 3 km South-West of Băbeni Village, etc. The highest altitude is in the Piatra Albă Hill (638 m), 2 km South-East of Chiperu Village (Fig. 1). In some sectors, altitudinal variations over short distances are significant (e.g. in Baba Forest the altitude drops from 505 m (Vulturului Hill) to 294 m (Izvoru Pietrelor Valley) along 0.9 km only).

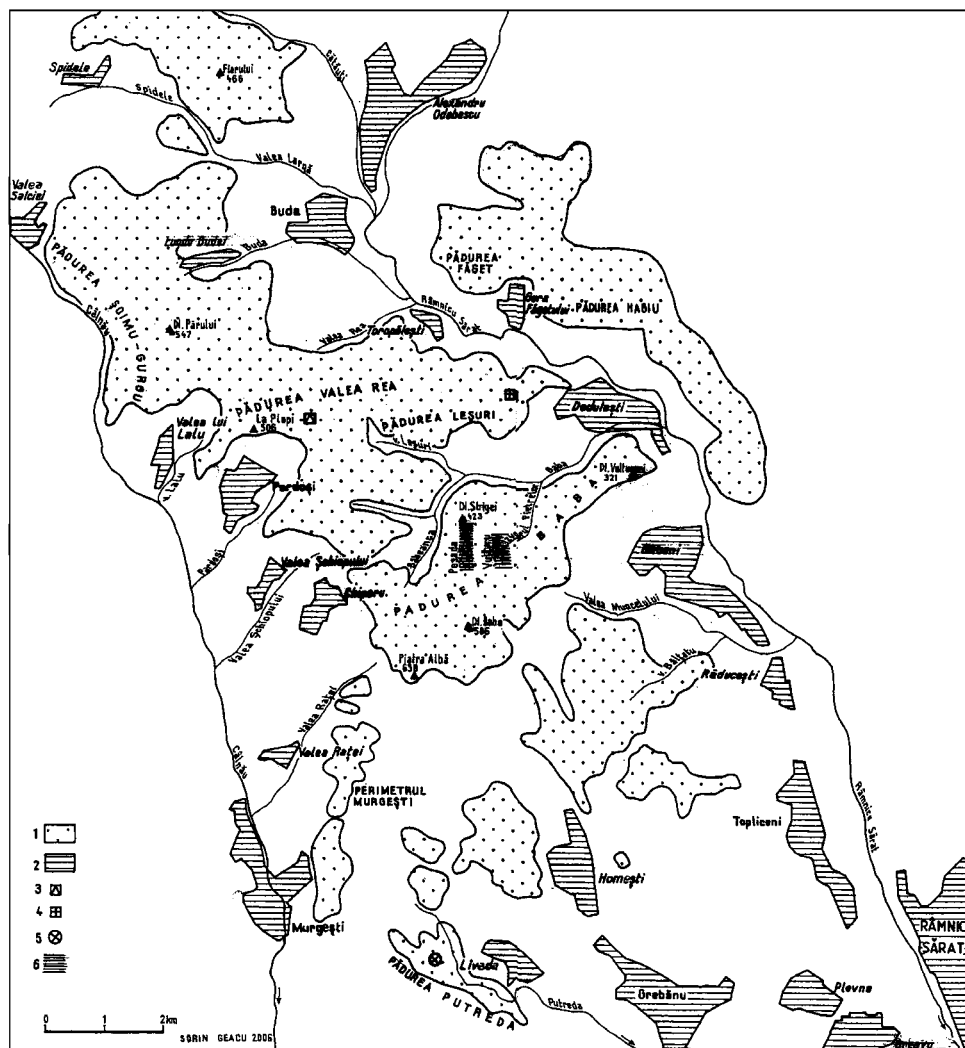


Fig. 1 – Map of the Subcarpathian region North-West of Râmnicu Sărat town. 1, forests; 2, localities; 3, Fallow deer accommodation enclosure; 4, Mouflon accommodation enclosure; 5, Rabbit colonisation site; 6, Fallow deer billing sites.

All in all, the region presents a number of summits, with distinct declivity, aspect of slopes and sectors of land degradation.

The region's climate was analysed based on the data found at the Râmnicu Sărat Meteorological Station. The findings have revealed that the annual average air temperature is 10.5°C, with a maximum in July (22.1°C) and a minimum (-2.6°C) in January. Seasonal average temperatures are -1.1°C in winter, 10.4°C in spring, 21.2°C in summer and 11.4°C in autumn, with an absolute air maximum of 40.6°C (August 11, 1963) and a minimum of -26.2°C (January 11, 1940). So the annual average and absolute thermal amplitude is 24.7°C and 66.8°C, respectively. The first day on which the average temperature showed = 0°C was February 12, the last one December 28, with a frost-free interval of 186 days (March 9 – September 28). The highest relative air humidity values were recorded in December (82%), the lowest ones (63%) in July. Annual average sunshine duration is 2,127.4 hours (68.7% in the warm season and 31.3% in the cold one); the sunniest month is July (281.9 hrs).

Annual average precipitation are 563.4 mm, 39.7% in the cold season and 60.3% in the warm season, most of them in July (82.9 mm) and fewest (29.6 mm) in February. The thickest snow layer, averaging 4 cm, occurs on the first ten days of January.

Some brooks (Valea Largă (with Spidele, Fulgeriș and Titilele tributaries), Buda, Valea Rea, Baba (with Izvoru cu Pietre, Băbeanca and Leșuri tributaries), Valea Băbenilor, Valea Muncelului and Bălțatu) flow towards the Râmnicu Sărat River, others run into the Călnău: Valea lui Lalu, Valea Șchiopului and Valea Raței. Most of them are temporary, often torrential. The longest brook is Baba (only 6 km). The Râmnicu Sărat River flows at a low rate (2.09 m³/s), seasonal flow rates (% of the annual mean) are 45.2% in spring, 21.6% in summer, 19.4% in winter and 13.8% in autumn. Running through different rock structures its average water mineralization value is 2,366 mg/l.

Small lakes occur on some slopes (used by deer or wild boars to bathe in). Such a lake is „Rampa la fântâna lui Petrea”, no more than 2 m deep at the most. These lakes are supplied by natural springs. One lake (1,500 m²) is found also in Baba Forest.

The study-area is richly forested (6,000 ha – 43% of the surface), the mixed foliated forest areas of the hills belong to the nemoral belt. According to the last Regionalisation of vegetation in Romania (Ivan, 1992), the „Subcarpathian durmast and hornbeam forests” are listed under the „foliated deciduous mesophile forest” unit.

There are several forest belts, the tree belt including: *Quercus petraea*, *Carpinus betulus*, *Acer campestre*, *Acer pseudoplatanus*, *Fagus sylvatica*, *Fraxinus excelsior*, *Tilia* sp., and *Cerasus avium*. The sunlit slopes are covered mainly by durmast stands while the shady ones by beech stands. Among shrubs one finds: *Corylus avellana*, *Ligustrum vulgare*, *Cornus mas*, *Cornus sanguinea*, *Crataegus monogyna*, *Rosa canina* and *Sambucus nigra*. They are best represented in glades or on the forest edge. Grasses have a variable coverage. Artificial plantations are *Robinia pseudacacia* and *Fraxinus ornus*.

Stands of the same age are prevailing. Those aged 100-140 years old cover some 400 hectares. In the North of the area (West of Buda Village), stands average 40-50 years and are between 12 m and 16 m high. The beech forest at the source of the Buda Brook (400-544 m alt.) contains beech stands 120-150 years old and 22-25

m high which cover 56 hectares. On the southern slopes of the Ferului Hill North of the small Valea Largă Village, is the Fața Ferului forest where 120-150-year-old and 20-23 m-high durmast and hornbeam stands occupy 45 hectares. On the northern slopes is the Dosu Ferului Forest with 15 hectares of 155-year-old and 25 m-high beech stands. In the forest extending West of the Dedulești and Băbeni villages most stands are 65-75 years old. The Baba Forest has small portions with secular durmast and lime stands, and about 30 hectares of 140-year-old beech stands (up to 27 m high, the trees averaging 44 cm in diameter).

Meadows cover some 2,500 ha (18% of the study-area), orchards occupying more than 500 hectares.

Soils (dominantly brown luvisols and grey soil) are formed on deposits of Romanian age (sands, sandy clays and clayey sands).

Villages are small (70-800 inhabitants) and they are situated at the margin of the territory in question (6 in the Râmnicu Sărat Valley and 8 in the Călnău Basin) so that traffic is slow, the animals enjoying the quiet they need.

NATIVE SPECIES

a). The Roe deer (*Capreolus capreolus* L.), Cervidae family

It represents the largest cervid population. Studies of the 1971-2006 period revealed that the biggest effectives (260-500 specimens) had existed in the 1971-1983 period, with 514 individuals in 1980 alone. As from 1981, migration, hunting or poaching led to the steady decrease of this species (Tab. 1) so that only 162 individuals were still left in 2006.

Table 1

Numerical dynamics and sex structure (%) of the Roe deer population over the 1971-2006 interval.

Year	1971	1973	1974	1977	1979	1980	1981	1983	1984	1986
No.	290	352	316	260	275	514	366	384	238	241
M	41	40	38	38	40	36	44	41	32	33
F	59	60	62	62	60	64	56	59	68	67

1989	1991	1993	1995	1997	1999	2003	2004	2005	2006
206	200	134	80	94	102	143	164	167	162
27	30	49	50	51	47	52	48	49	48
73	70	51	50	49	53	48	52	51	52

The sex ratio shows females to prevail over the males, excepting the years 1997 and 1998 when the balance tipped in favour of the latter (48 males and 46 females), as it did in 2003 (74 males and 69 females). Equal values were registered in 1994 and 1995. Twice as many females as males were reported in 1975 (85 males and 176 females), 1976 (90 males and 180 females), 1985 (72 males and 151 females), 1986 (80 males and 161 females) and 1988 (24 males and 155 females), while in 1987 the number of females to males nearly trebled (56 males and 160 females).

An impressive number of specimens from large effectives were hunted before 1982: 25 in 1971, 21 in 1972, 32 in 1973, 51 in 1974, 37 in 1975, 41 in 1976, 30 in 1977, 20 in 1978, 33 in 1979, 37 in 1980 and 62 in 1981, the last figure standing for the greatest number of Roe deer hunted in this region.

The majority of males were hunted in 1973 (25) and 1974 (23), females in 1976 (36) and 1975 (32). After 1982, a number of 1-6 Roe deer would be hunted annually. However, there were years when no specimen fell to the gun. The toll of the hunting season 2005-2006 was 7 Roe deer of which 2 males and 5 females. Many of these animals were intended for selection and trophies (hunters coming from Romania, Germany, Portugal, etc.). Some of the trophies harvested here are quite valuable, for example the specimens shot that on May 17, 1971 (166 CIC points), on May 25, 1974 (160 CIC points), May 25, 1975 (139 CIC points) and August 14, 2001 (103 CIC points).

b). The Wild boar (*Sus scrofa* L.), Suidae family

An omnivorous species, the wild boar is seen in all the forests of the study-area. In the 1960s and early 1970s, only 1-4 boars were signalled.

Beginning with 1976, cynegetic management raised their numbers to 17; then 21 in 1977; 28 in 1978, 30 in 1979 up to a maximum of 51 in 1980. In each of the following years there were 35-45 specimens. From 1985 to date the population rose to 18-30 individuals, most of them (18) in 1995, 1996, 1998 and 2002.

The greatest number of wild boars were shot in 1981 (22) and 1980 (16), that is, in the very years when most boars were signalled. In the other years the annual harvest was of 1-6 specimens, no boar hunting in 1974, 1982, 1987 and 2002.

c). The Fox (*Vulpes vulpes* L.), Canidae family

The area contains about 15-35 specimens. Over 1971- 1989, 278 foxes were shot, most of them in 1987 (32) and 1978 (30) (Tab. 2).

After 1990, an average of 2-4 foxes / year, and 11 in 2003 would be hunted. There were cases when foxes attacked Roe deer kids.

Table 2

Fox specimens hunted over 1971-1989.

Year	1971	1972	1973	1974	1975	1976	1977	1978	1979
No.	20	23	21	27	10	12	6	30	5
1980	1981	1982	1983	1984	1985	1986	1987	1988	1989
2	7	10	13	10	10	12	32	20	8

d). The Hare (*Lepus europaeus* Pall.), Leporidae family

While over the 1971-1980 period, the local hare population numbered 250-500 specimens, from 1981 up to recent years no more than 60-200 could be seen. In 2006, estimates put the population at some 330 individuals. There is no annual hare hunt in the study-area. The greatest number of hares (45) was shot in 1997.

e). The Wild cat (*Felis silvestris* Schr.), Felidae family

Only a few specimens (4-8) can be seen. Most of them (10) were signalled in spring 1986, and only 2 in March 1980. Over the 1971-1986 interval, a number of 26 Wild cats were hunted, the majority (5) in 1986, and one specimen in each of the following years: 1971, 1972 and 1981; two in 1975, 1977, 1982 and 1984; three in 1973 and 1985 and four in 1979. There were cases when Roe deer kids were attacked by Wild cats.

f). The Badger (*Meles meles* L.), Mustelidae family

I could see its burrows in the Baba Forest. A number of 10-20 badgers were annually observed in the study-area, the fewest (6) in 1979. Over the 1971-1985 period, 38 were shot: every year in 1971, 1980 and 1985; 2 in 1975 and 1978, 5 in 1972, 8 in 1974 and 9 in 1973 and 1976.

g). The Pine marten (*Martes martes* L.), Mustelidae family

Although it does exist in the forest of the region, the Pine marten is still a rare mammal, only some 3-13 specimens / year being detected. There were years when they appeared to be more numerous, e.g., 2002 (18), 2001 (17), 1986 (15) and 2003 (14).

h). The Polecat (*Mustela putorius* L.), Mustelidae family

It is usually seen in the surroundings of human settlements, yet also in the forest, especially among wood piles. A number of 199 Polecats were hunted over 1971-1987, most of them (28) in 1983 (Tab. 3) and only sporadically over the past two decades (e.g. 2 in 1997, etc.).

Table 3

Polecat specimens hunted over the 1971-1987 interval.

Year	1971	1972	1973	1974	1975	1976	1977	1978
No.	2	9	11	16	6	12	12	4
1979	1980	1981	1982	1983	1984	1985	1986	1987
9	2	6	-	28	16	20	18	28

i). The Weasel (*Mustela nivalis* L.), Mustelidae family

This small carnivorous mammal is present especially in the Râmnicu Sărat Valley, most individuals (32) being reported in the spring of 1992; 5 individuals were shot in 1999.

SPECIES ARRIVED FROM HIGHER REGIONS

a). The Red deer (*Cervus elaphus* L.), Cervidae family

The careful management of high-altitude hunting funds increased Red deer effectiveness before 1990. They would enlarge their area into the lower hill forests and the plain region even. Another reason that had led to the migration of this species is probably its search for forests with undergrowth, but also of mixtures of variously-aged stands over small areas (where it could find a varied source of food), and the croplands adjoining these forests.

Quite a large number of Red deer specimens (21, 10 males and 11 females) were first seen in the study-area in 1992, at a yearly average of 14 individuals over 1993-1999. The sex ratio was one to one. The number of Red deer detected over the past few years in early spring was of 16 (2000), 17 in 2001 (the same in 2002), 13 in 2003, 9 in 2004, 8 in 2005 and 11 (5 males and six females) in 2006. In terms of age, in 1997 the situation looked as follows: 7 males (4 were 1-3 years old, 3 were 3 to 9) and 7 females (2 young and 4 mature).

The species occurs in the forests of Buda, Cătăuți and Baba, it likes beech better than durmast. It shares the area with the Fallow deer.

b). The Brown bear (*Ursus arctos* L.), Ursidae family

The first two specimens appeared in the study-area in 1983, the same number being seen every year until 1991, no more than one in 1992, 1993 and 1994, and none in 1995.

c). The Lynx (*Lynx lynx* L.), Felidae family

A very cautious feline, the Lynx was signalled in 1980 by the traces it had left in the big forests of the area (2 specimens). For the next two years no trace was found. In 1983, 3 individuals appeared to have passed through the region, a number which, except for 1988, would be observed every year in winter and early spring until 1991.

In 1992, two specimens crossed the region, after that date, no reliable evidence has been found. However, it seems that it does now and then, as stated by the villagers of Pardoși who had seen it in the forests nor of their settlement in May 2004. In some years, traces of Lynx on snow were found at the site named Vultur in Baba Forest.

d). The Wolf (*Canis lupus* L.), Canidae family

The presence of the Wolf in the study regions ecosystem, over the past 35 years, can be certified only until 1998, with sporadic occurrences to date. The largest number (5) in 1980 and 4 in every following year (1977, 1978, 1981, 1983, 1984, 1985, 1988, 1990 and 1991); 2-3 individuals in the other years of that period and only one in 1973.

A number of 40 specimens were hunted over the 1971-1988 interval, most of them in 1977, 1979 and 1981 (5 in each year) (Tab. 4), and no more were hunted after 1989 (Murariu & Munteanu, 2005).

In 1984, wolves had attacked two Red deer (male and female) in the Făget Forest near Buda Village and one Red deer at the site named Stufosa, in 1985.

Table 4

Wolves hunted over the 1971-1988 interval.

Year	1971	1972	1973	1974	1975	1976	1977	1978	
No.	1	1	1	-	2	3	5	3	
1979	1980	1981	1982	1983	1984	1985	1986	1987	1988
5	2	5	3	2	2	1	-	2	2

SPECIES ARRIVED FROM THE SOUTH

The Jackal (*Canis aureus* L.), Canidae family

An invasive species coming to Romania from the South, it reached also this Subcarpathian region following the Râmnicu Sărat Valley. The first specimens (8) were reported in 1971. They caused much damaged killing over 60 Roe deer (more than 20% of the effective). Three individuals were seen over the next years, 3 each in 1972-1973, 2 in 1974 and none in 1975, it having disappeared from the area.

SPECIES INTRODUCED BY MAN

a). The Fallow deer (*Dama dama* L.), Cervidae family

An initiative to this effect dates to 1968, when a number of 24 individuals from the Șarlota hunting park (Timiș County, the North of Banat) were brought in on March 2, 1969.

For three months they were kept within an enclosure to accommodate, then they were released into the wild. The enclosure (3 ha) was created in the Valea Rea Forest (340 m alt.) on the northern slope of the Nișcăveni Hill (at 3 km South of Buda Village). It was fenced in by a 2.5 m-high wall and guarded. There was a water source in its midst, supplied through wooden troughs and refreshed daily. The daily food consisted of maize, willow leaves, lucerne and lime leaves. Salt was placed on the ground.

The 9 males and 15 females kept there were 2- to -7 years old. At the time, forest specialists considered that the introduction of this species was a success and marked it out as “very good”.

After being released, they were observed for some days. For a time, the herd took possession of a part of Leșuri Forest, initially logged out, the Fallow deer making good use of the young wood and undergrowth. In 1970, there were 8 individuals more than in 1969, and as many as 35 (18 males and 17 females) in 1971, when some specimens migrated South-eastwards as far as the Crângu Ursului Forest. In 1976, the population grew to 59, enlarging to 88 in 1978, the highest figure registered in the Râmnicu Sărat Subcarpathian area.

In the early 1980s, as some specimens were taken to colonise the Buzău Basin, and harvested for selection purposes, the numbers decreased. However, the effective caught up, staying at 80-82 individuals over the 1987-1992 interval (Tab. 5).

From the 82 individuals (22 males and 60 females) in 1992, numbers kept steadily decreasing to only 5 in 2006, a situation due to increased poaching and migration of some Fallow deer to neighbouring grounds (since 2003 specimens live on the grounds of the Oreavu Hunting Fond) and somehow more intense traffic after forest and/or agricultural areas were returned to their former owners.

The first Fallow deer specimens were harvested in 1973 (2 males, one winning a bronze medal trophy).

Most of them were hunted (for selection or trophies) in 1975 (7 - of which 2 males and 5 females) and 1981 (7 - of which 4 males and 3 females). The full number killed over 1976-1985 was of 18 specimens. In 1986, they found one individual killed by predators; in 2003 one male was shot down for selection purposes.

Table 5

Dynamics of overall Fallow deer effective and sex structure (specimens) over 1969-2005.

Year	1969	1972	1974	1976	1978	1980	1983	1985
No.	24	42	56	59	88	71	86	59
Males	9	20	22	19	38	22	31	18
Females	15	22	34	40	50	49	55	41
1987	1989	1991	1993	1995	1997	1999	2003	2006
81	81	81	56	52	50	48	28	16
21	21	21	18	26	22	22	13	7
60	60	60	38	26	28	26	15	9

In terms of age, the Fallow deer population looked as follows (early spring 1996): from a total effective of fifty, 22 were males, 23 females and one calf (under one year old). In the male group, nine animals were aged 1 to 3; ten 3 to 9 and three 10 and over. The female group included 7 young specimens, 12 were mature and 4 were old.

In 1978, the *Dama dama* populations were formed of several groups of 10-15 (20) individuals each. Today, only 2-3 groups of 4-5 specimens each have been left.

The species billing sites are Posada and Vulturu, both in Baba Forest, 4 km South-West of Dedulești Village, on the Strigii Hill (Posada 400-419 m alt. and Vulturu 300-350 m alt.).

On September 28, 2005, 15 individuals (3 males aged 3 to 9, 10 females – one young, 9 mature and 2 calves under one year old) were seen at Posada. On September 29, 2005, at Vulturu site, there were 16 individuals (8 males of which three 1 to 3 years old, and five 3 to 9; 6 females – 2 young, 4 mature and 2 calves under one year of age).

The Fallow deer uses to drink from the Râmnicu Sărat River in the evening and in the morning. The Baba Brook is a temporary water course, but in some sectors the water is stagnant. The Fallow deer prefers the *Quercus* forests (full of acorns) with undergrowth to the beech forests. Here and there, they would eat the tree-bark of ash, flowering ash and occasionally lime trees. The area's Fallow deer usually populates Baba Forest. They could be seen also in the Bălțatu Valley Forest (at the time the species had large effectives, it reached as far as the Șoimu and Gurgu forests towards the Valea Salciei Village).

A number of 6 individuals (2 males and 4 females) were captured at Hagiu East of Buda (where an enclosure was created to catch the animals) and sent (in 1981) to colonise Valea Largă Forest on the territory of Viperești Commune, the Buzău Subcarpathians. In 1986 this effective numbered 17 individuals, but the sex ratio was disproportionate (11 males and 6 females). Poaching and presumably migration are to blame for the disappearance of this small nucleus in 1991.

b). The Mouflon (*Ovis ammon* L.), Bovidae family

This species was introduced as an experiment in 1973, the individuals originating from the South-West of Dobrogea (Băneasa Forest Range, Constanța County). There were 17 specimens, aged 2 to 5, among them 10 females (some pregnant) and 7 males. Specialists marked the result "satisfactory".

It was early spring when they were brought in, kept two months in an enclosure (March and April), then released. The accommodation enclosure (in Baba Forest), 1.5 ha, was surrounded by a 2.5 m-high fence built from wooden drill pipes. There was a natural water source and the animals used to be fed on maize, maize stalkes and lucerne. Six young were born in the enclosure, but only five survived. The 17 mature individuals and the 5 young were simultaneously released into the wild. At the end of 1973 there were 23 individuals (9 males and 14 females) and only 15 were left in 1974. Their number falling to 7 over the 1975-1976 period.

After staying for several years in Baba Forest, the population began migrating (as from 1978) South-westwards, settling 4 km away from the site of their former enclosure, in the plantations built against erosion on the slopes East of Murgești Village. In 1977, there were 11 Mouflons, 3 males and 8 females, and in the spring of 1978 and 1979 their number had risen to 22 (4 males and 18 females) (Barbu,

1978). In the early 1980s the herd had 36 specimens, subsequently decreasing to a few individuals (1985), none being left in 1987. Few mouflons were hunted, 2 in 1973 and 3 in 1974.

Since the rocky terrain propitious to the species is almost absent in the study-area, it is quite possible that, apart from poaching, migration to rocky regions and predators (mainly wolves) might account for their disappearance from the area. After first being released into the wild (1973), they were attacked by wolves who killed two males and a female.

c). The Rabbit (*Oryctolagus cuniculus* L.), Leporidae family

Physico-geographical conditions being propitious (forest-covered sunny slopes, predominantly sandy-clay soils) the Rabbit could be introduced into the area.

In 1977 the Forestry Department decided on its introduction in the counties of Buzău, Braşov and Ilfov.

A number of 15 specimens were to be brought in Putreda Forest, Buzău County, but only 14 were captured from the eastern part of Moldavia (Corneşti Forest, Ciurea Forest Range, Iaşi County), 8 males and 6 females, aged one year.

The Râmnicu Sărat Forest Range Management appreciated the action of populating the Rabbit in the area, and marked it out as “good”.

Putreda Forest (300-450 m) is crossed by the homonymous valley and lies 2 km West of Grebănu Village. Here and there the valley has cut a 20 m-deep scarp and burrows were dug into its sides.

After two years the number of this population had risen to 24 (a 42% increase). In 1981 (Barbu, 1981), only 6 remained, a few being seen there also in 1982, but none in 1983, the last specimens being killed by foxes.

THE PROTECTION OF MAMMALIAN SPECIES

In winter, cervids, in particular, are given a nutritional supplement: in 2005 they received 15.1 tonnes of lucerne and wheat clover, 6 tonnes of various leafy species and one tonne of various seeds and fruit.

There were 9 feeding spots in the territory and 25 sites of salt distribution on the ground.

In the 1970s and the 1980s, a proposal was made for Baba and Valea Rea forests to be turned into zoological reserves for the protection of the Fallow deer and the Mouflon. On June 23, 1995, by Decision of the Buzău County Council, the Lynx, the Mouflon and the Fallow deer were declared protected species.

The Red deer, the Roe deer, the Fallow deer, the Wild cat and the Pine marten are listed in the “Red Book of Vertebrates in Romania” (Botnariuc & Tatole, 2005).

Conclusions

Field investigations have enabled us to observe the presence and dynamics of some mammalian species over the last 35 years. A number of 17 species belonging to 8 families (Cervidae, Suidae, Canidae, Leporidae, Felidae, Mustelidae, Ursidae and Bovidae) were taken into the study. Nine of them are part of the autochthonous faunistic stock, four have come in from the higher regions of the North, one from the lower regions of the South and three were colonised by man to make use of some free ecological niches (thus acting a zoogeographical factor). Today, it is certain that

11 species do exist in the region (the Roe deer, Wild boar, Hare, Fox, Wild cat, Badger, Pine martin, Polecat, Weasel, Red deer and Fallow deer). Other two species (the Wolf and the Lynx) have an episodic occurrence; four species (the Mouflon, Rabbit, Brown bear and the Jackal) are no longer seen there.

Economically valuable species are mainly the Roe deer, the Wild boar and the Fallow deer. Since physico-geographical conditions prove propitious, the Roe deer and Wild boar populations have exceeded the optimal values set on ecological and economic criteria (the study-area falls into the Roe deer-Wild boar hunting zone).

From a biogeographical viewpoint the region is encompassed into the Dacian Province, and the presence here, even though symbolic, of some mammalian species is a good indicator of the current environmental potential of a region intensely changed by human activity.

OBSERVAȚII ASUPRA UNOR SPECII DE MAMIFERE DIN SUBCARPAȚII DE LA NORD-VEST DE RÂMNICU SĂRAT (ROMÂNIA)

REZUMAT

Cercetările de teren au prilejuit evidențierea prezenței și dinamicii în ultimii 35 de ani a unor specii de mamifere. S-au avut în vedere 17 specii aparținătoare unui număr de 8 familii: Cervidae, Suidae, Canidae, Leporidae, Felidae, Mustelidae, Ursidae și Bovidae. Dintre acestea, 9 specii fac parte din fondul faunistic autohton (*Capreolus capreolus*, *Sus scrofa*, *Vulpes vulpes*, *Lepus europaeus*, *Felis silvestris*, *Meles meles*, *Martes martes*, *Mustela putorius*, *Mustela nivalis*), 4 specii au pătruns din regiunile mai înalte aflate în nord (*Cervus elaphus*, *Ursus arctos*, *Lynx lynx*, *Canis lupus*) una din regiunile joase dinspre sud (*Canis aureus*), iar un număr de 3 specii au fost colonizate antropice (*Dama dama*, *Ovis musimon*, *Oryctolagus cuniculus*), pentru valorificarea unor nișe ecologice libere (omul având astfel și rol de factor zoogeografic activ).

Urmărind problema sub aspect dinamic, astăzi, în această regiune, prezență certă au doar 11 specii (câprior, mistreț, vulpe, iepure, pisica sălbatică, viezure, jder de copac, dihor, nevăstuică, cerb carpațin și cerb lopătar). Alte două specii (lupul și râsul) apar episodic, iar 4 specii (muflon, lapin, urs și șacal) sunt dispărute.

Valoroase economic sunt câpriorul, mistrețul și cerbul lopătar. Favorabilitatea condițiilor fizico-geografice a determinat efective ale câpriorului și mistrețului ce depășesc valorile optime stabilite pe baza criteriilor ecologo-economice (arealul studiat este încadrat zonei cinegetice câprior-mistreț).

Biogeografic, regiunea se află în cuprinsul Provinciei Dacice. Unele specii de mamifere menținute aici (chiar și simbolic), se constituie, după părerea noastră, în „indicatori” ai valorii actuale a potențialului mediului, într-o regiune intens modificată antropice.

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