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Research on the European wild boar population (*Sus scrofa crofa L.*) in the Timiș county, Romania

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Abstract

The wild boar represents one of the most required species by the hunters of Romania and abroad. Thus, in this paper, the evolution of wild boars population in the Timiș county (the west of Romania) is presented for a period of 10 years, from 2014 to 2023. During the year 2019, the highest number of specimens had been registered, namely, 3122 and in the following years the livestock decreased mainly because of the African swine fever (ASF). To get a management of the best quality, concerning the hunting economics and hunting mainly, there is the Hunting Complex in Sarlota, possessing an enclosed terrain of 1204 ha, where the wild boar represents one of the main species. There is a hunting museum nearby, that is a good source of professional information. In the Barzava area, in the Arad county, hybridization is practised rarely for commercial use, between the domestic swine and the wild boar.

Keywords: wild boar, game, hunting park

Introduction

The increasing request for game meat in restaurants make its processing already an industry. The European wild boar (*Sus scrofa scrofa L.*) represents one of the most widespread game species in Romania, being found from the Danube Meadow to the mountains. This “senior of the forest” as ROUCAUTE (1973) called it prefers the forest as a biotope but also areas covered in rich grass “this being proof of its ecological plasticity” CRACIUNESCU (2014).

Sometimes this species is criticised for the damages it produces to agriculture, albeit debatable.

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Figure 1. Wild boar from Timis Country. Orig. Matiuti M.

Material and methods

The data in the scientific paper come from the Ministry of Forests and Water as well as from the Transylvanian Rare Breeds Association's (TRB) database for the period 2014-2023. These data refer to the wild boar population in the Timiș country, in the West of Romania (Figure 1).

Results and discussion

According to the literature in the field (MEYNHARD, 1988; SELARIU, 1995) wild boar evaluation is done annually, the methods used to be mainly the direct observation and tracks reading in the spring after the last snowfall. „This is because after winter has passed mortality stops in wild boar herds” (SELARIU, 2001). Figure 2 presents the evolution of wild boar herds in Timiș County in the period 2014-2023.

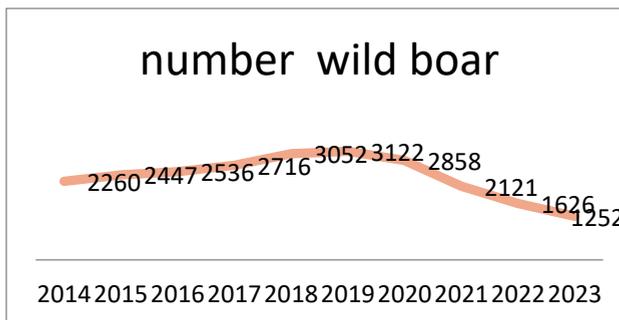


Figure 2. The evolution of wild boar herds in the period 2014-2023 (according to the Ministry of Environment, Water and Forests, 2023)

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The diagram shows an increase in wild boar herds in 2019, when they reached 3122 specimens, then following an accelerated decrease in their number. The increase is due to high temperatures during winter and food abundance, followed by a decrease mainly caused by the African swine fever (ASF) starting in 2021 (UNGUR et al., 2021).

For a qualitative management of the game economy and hunting in Timiș County, there is the Sarlota Hunting Complex which operates in a deciduous forest with a fenced area of 1204 ha under the administration of the National Forestry Administration (Figure 3). This is a continuation of the Hunting Park established in 1904 by the Austrian count Siegfried von Wimpffen for two important reasons: "The organization of hunting parties and the protection of agricultural crops on the estates around the Sarlota forest, against the damage caused by wild animals" (CRACIUNESCU and GARGAREA, 2017).

The natural feeding conditions, as well as the complementary feeding offer very good conditions for the main species found here: the European fallow deer (*Dama dama*), the wild boar and the European mouflon (*Ovis aries musimon P.*).

In the park there are hunting installations and facilities, observatories, feeders, salt pans, hay storages, water wells.

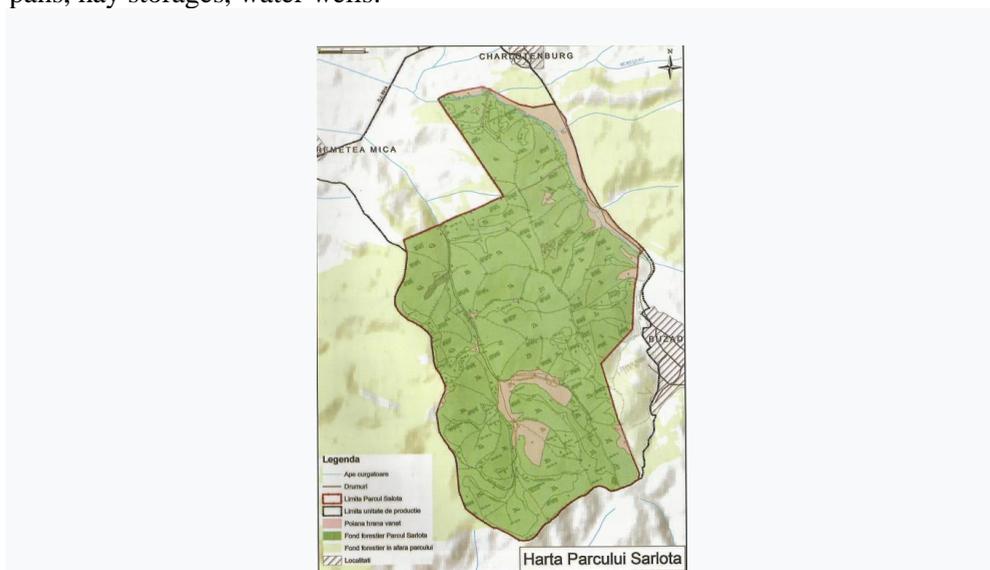


Figure 3. Map of the Sharlota Hunting Park
(after CRACIUNESCU and GARGAREA 2017)

In 2014, the Charlottenburg Hunting Museum was inaugurated near the park, which represents a source of information on the evolution of game and hunting in Banat,

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with a rich collection of trophies, taxidermy and photographs from different periods of the existence of the hunting park (Figure 4).



Figure 4. left: Hunting Museum. Orig. Matiuti Carmen, right: Hybrid from Barzava. Database TRB

For commercial purposes rarely in some areas of western Romania, for example Barzava (Arad county), hybridization between domestic pig and wild boar is being practiced (Figure 4).

The resulting products have the boar-like phenotype and are sold to private hunting funds. This practice is almost abandoned today. The research undertaken in the Barzava area during 2002-2010 demonstrate this according to Figure 5 (MATIUTI et al., 2010).

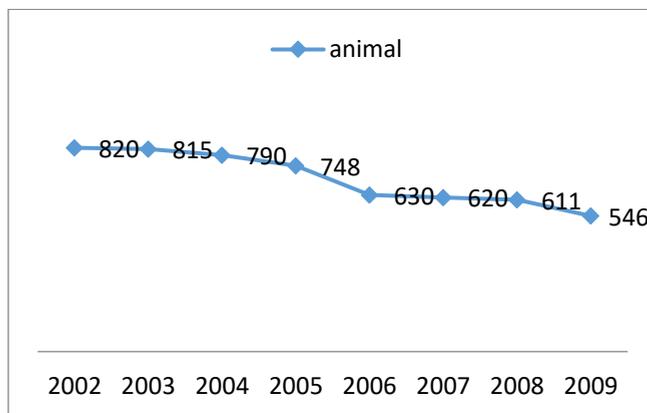


Figure 5. Number of hybrids in period 2002-2009

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Conclusion and recommendation

The wild boar remains a valuable species for trophies, meat, fur and heart valves which are used in heart surgery. The healthy and vigorous wild boar population from Romania won numerous gold, silver and bronze medals in international hunting trophies contests.

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