

COMMON RACCOON *PROCYON LOTOR* (LINNAEUS, 1758): FIRST RECORD ON TRANSCARPATHIAN REGION (UKRAINE)

Common Raccoon *Procyon lotor* (Linnaeus, 1758): first record on Transcarpathian region (Ukraine)

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According to the latest revision of the mammalian fauna of the Transcarpathian region (Bashta, Potish 2007), the raccoon is classified as a species whose observation is likely to take place in the future and was not part of our fauna at the time of the publication. However, in Hungary and Slovakia, neighboring Transcarpathia, since 1998, the species spreads naturally and is detected more and more often. The active dispersal of the species is closely monitored by theriologists of the middle Danube lowland (Csányi et al. 2022). In Ukraine, the status of the species is not established, and there is an opinion about its self-introduction from the territory of Belarus through the valley of the Prypiat River (Nikolaichuk, Zagorodniuk 2019). Good source for obtaining information about the raccoon spread are the photo traps, which in the last 4 years are often used by game managers to protect hunting areas and to a lesser extent used by scientists.

Since 2019, the monitoring of predatory mammals has been organized on the territory of the National Park "Zacharovanyi krai" using camera traps as part of our study on predators tracking. On January 27, 2023, our trap recorded a photo of the raccoon, and it is a new species for fauna of the Transcarpathian region (Fig. 1).



Fig. 1. Raccoon in the beech forest of the National Park "Zacharovanyi krai". We captured the picture by a camera trap

The camera trap was located in a beech forest. The nearest populated point is the Lysychevo village. This is the first documentary confirmation of the species on the southern slopes of the Eastern Carpathians. The significant remoteness of the animal from the lowland areas indicates that the species has already colonized the Transcarpathian plain and spread to the mountain parts of the Eastern Carpathians through the river valleys.

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