

FEEDING HABITS OF THE GOLDEN JACKAL (*CANIS AUREUS*) ON THE BASIS OF NEW EXAMINATIONS

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The aim of our study based on field research was to evaluate the diet composition and feeding habits of the golden jackal (*Canis aureus*) living in the area of Vajszló (Ormánság region, SW Hungary). During the research period (from autumn 2010 to spring 2012) n=268 jackal scats (feces) were collected on a 13.6 km transect. On the basis of scat analysis we found that jackals consumed primarily small mammals (B%: percentage of biomass consumed, mean 68%), all of which the most dominant species was the common vole (a pest species). Small mammal consumption varied seasonally between 48% and 96%. The secondary food for the jackal was usually the wild boar (including piglets and inwards) with an annual 12%, or plants (16%). Wildlife management point of view is important that jackals consumed cervids mainly in winter (B%, 5.6%). Consumption of cervids during the reproductive period was only occasional (B%, 2.9%), and was not detected in the summer scat samples. Our examination confirms earlier results from Hungary, i.e. the jackal has opportunistic feeding strategy, its diet varies depending on the seasonal food availability, but small mammals are the primary foods in all seasons. The jackal prey mainly on small-sized, open-field living, terrestrial and wild living animals. These shows that the jackal characteristically hunts alone, but occasionally it hunts in pairs or groups.

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