EFFECT OF ACTIONS SUPPORTED BY THE NATIONAL GAME MANAGEMENT FUND ACCORDING TO THE HUNTERS IN HUNGARY

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Since 2017, grants from the National Game Management Fund support the development of the habitats for the game species by providing hiding and feeding places for them, and by the effective control of their predators. We evaluated the effects of these management actions on the local wildlife populations with a questionnaire survey among the game managers that have been supported between 2018–2020. We asked them about their impressions or measured data regarding the size and quality of the game populations treated during the program, comparing the condition before and after the interventions, specifying the methods in case of measurements. The 241 answers covered 35% of all the supported hunting units. The majority of applicants (94%) rated their own management actions as effective, while only 2% reported the contrary. Wildlife managers collected data to measure the efficiency relatively infrequently ($14 \pm 9\%$ of the beneficiaries for each variable group in each target area, min-max: 3–44%). Much more often they relied on their non-scientific observations and intuitions ($63 \pm 14\%$, min-max: 36–93%). We recommend that it is also necessary to evaluate the efficiency on the basis of scientific data, at least with smaller samples at the level of game management units. They should measure the use of the treated areas by the game species, and the changes in the quantity and quality of the populations (e.g., camera trapping at drinking and feeding sites; spotlight counts of brown hares, estimating the reproduction, condition or trophy quality indices).