Predator management in Hungary

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LIFE GREAT BUSTARD

NATURA 2000

Why to do predator control?

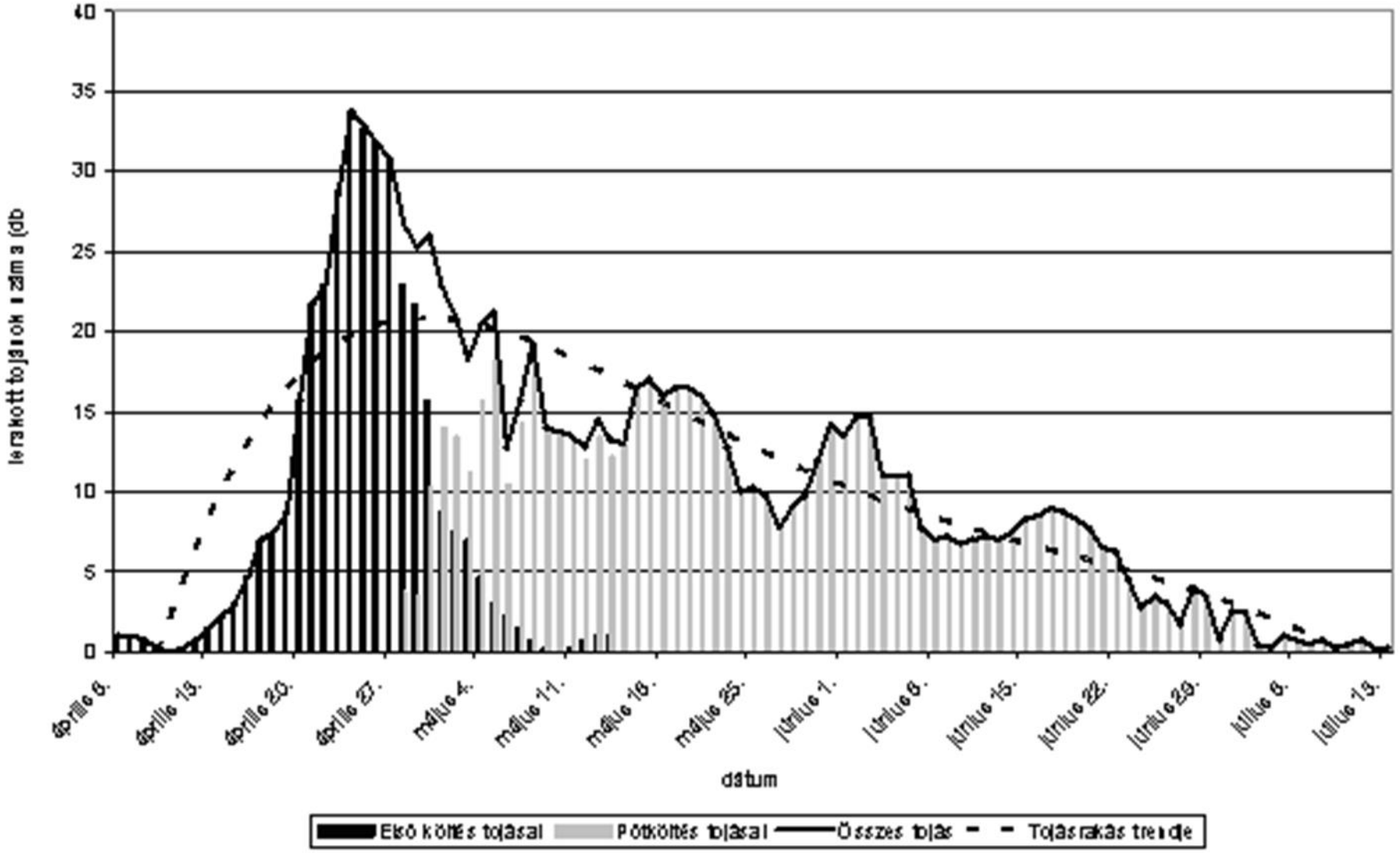
- Key endangering factors according to the international action plan:
  1. Loss of undisturbed open habitats with suitable vegetation structure
  2. Collision with powerlines
  3. Destruction of eggs or chicks during agricultural works
  4. **Predation of eggs, chicks or juveniles**
  5. Insufficient invertebrate food supply
  6. Climate change
  7. **Poaching**
  8. Catastrophic mortality in harsh winters
  9. **Disturbance**

- Cooperation with one of the key stakeholders (hunters)

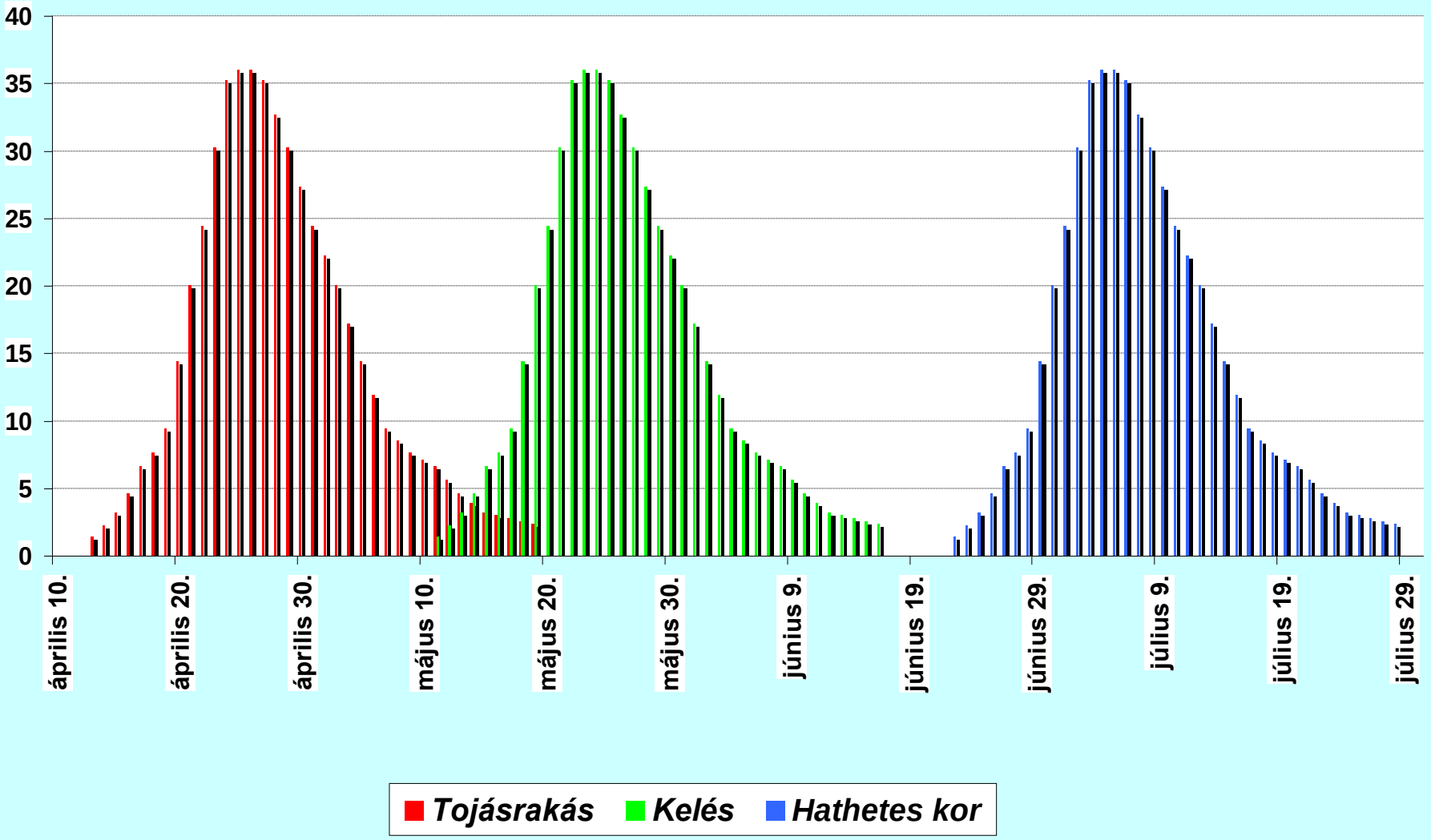
Why to do predator control?

- **Difficult to identify the level of natural predation, but there are some facts:**
  - **Habitat management is essential**
  - **Predator managenet is necessary**
- **Protect priority species (like great bustard) during its sensitive period**

Sensitive period of the Great Bustard



A túzok első költésének normál eloszlású görbéi



Objectives of predator management in the Kiskunság

- Establish an effective, sustainable and applicable preadator management practice
  - Nature conservation and wildlife management together
- Regional cooperation
- Alternative tools to „poiseners”
- GIS based monitoring of wildlife management

Principles of the predator management I.

- Testing and development of legal tools and methods to find the most effective way of predator management
  - Animal welfare
  - Nature conservation aspects
  - Sources to maintenance
- Effective preadtor management shold be done during the sensitive period of predator species
  - The individual-based bonus to professional hunters is contraproductive

Principles of the predator management II.

- Between 01. March and 30. June
  - 2 periods devided
- Focusing on breeding predators on the given area:
  - GIS database of nests and dens
- Catching diary (Google Drive)
- Photo documentation
- GIS database of activities
- **The goal is not the elimination of predators, but to keep their density on a low level during the sensitive period.**

Results – 2014. Spring

	ad	**juv**	
Magpie	170	8	**178**
Hooded crow	198	109	**307**
European badger	32	10	**42**
Red fox	24	45	**69**
Stray feral dog	3	0	**3**
Stray feral cat	3	0	**3**

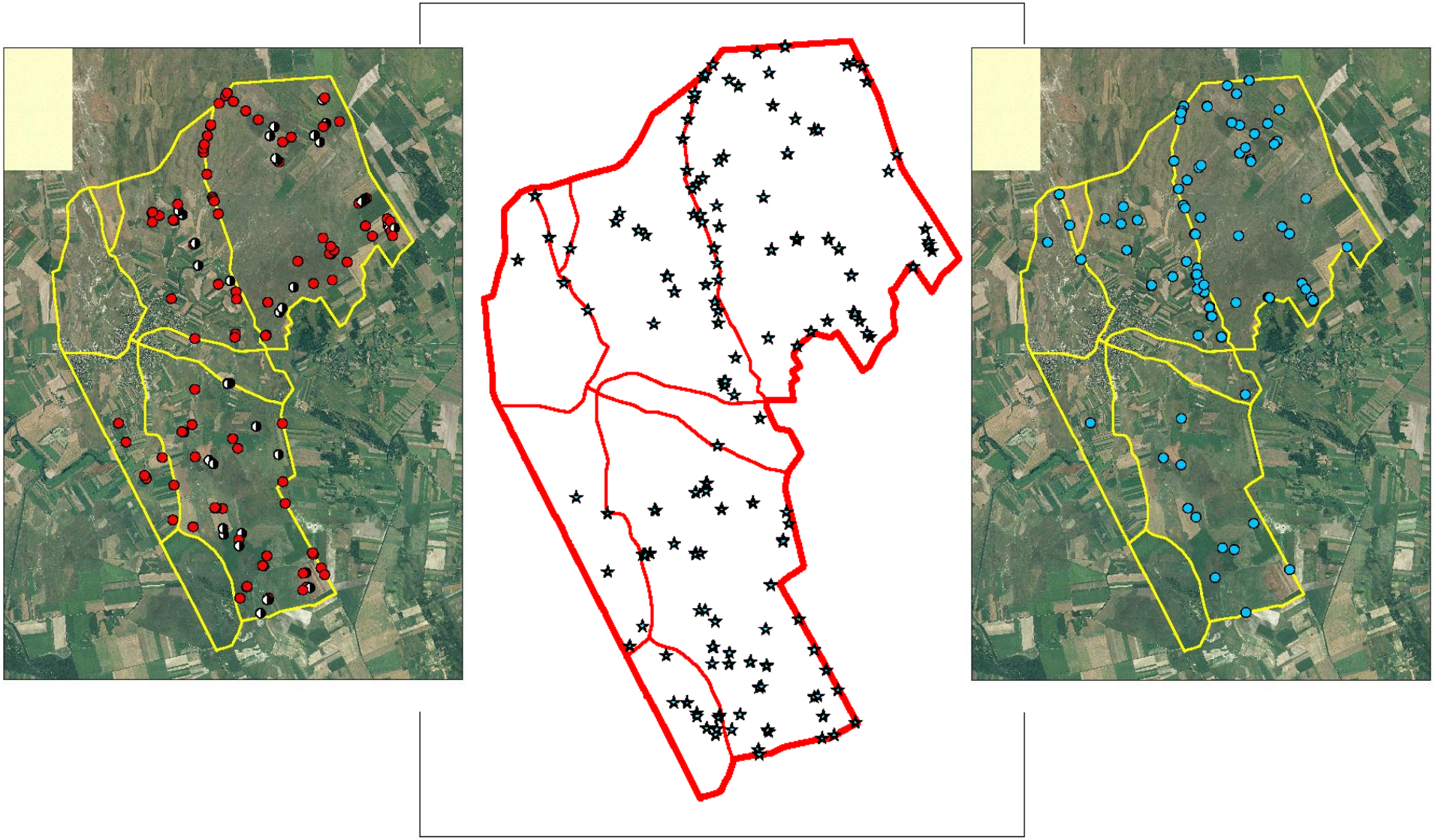
Results– 2015. Spring

	ad	**juv**	
Magpie	164	0	**164**
Hooded crow	150	77	**227**
European badger	7	8	**15**
Red fox	51	4	**55**
Stray feral dog	2	0	**2**
Stray feral cat	1	0	**1**

Results– 2016. Spring

	ad	**juv**	
Magpie	108	11	**119**
Hooded crow	84	64	**148**
European badger	6	0	**6**
Red fox	29	4	**33**
Stray feral dog	1	0	**1**
Stray feral cat	4	0	**4**

Map of Hooded crow nests, dens and trapping activity – 2015.



Age categories

- **Adults (reproducers)**
- „Adults” fully growns, beeing not involved in reproduction (2cy birds)
- Juveniles
  - Growen ups
  - Still not growen ups
- Chicks and cubs

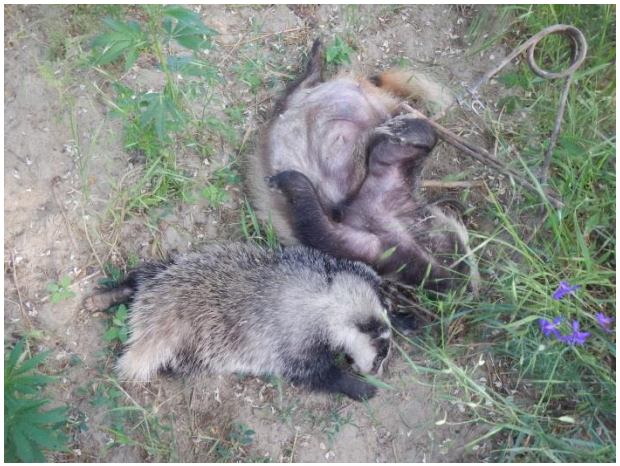
Magpie (*Pica pica*)

- **<u>Larsen-trap</u>**
  - „easy to catch”
  - „side activity”
  - BUT: live decoys (!)
    - Dog food
    - Fresh water
    - Space enough
    - Shelter
- Other: 4 cell corvid trap
- <u>EU legislation!</u>

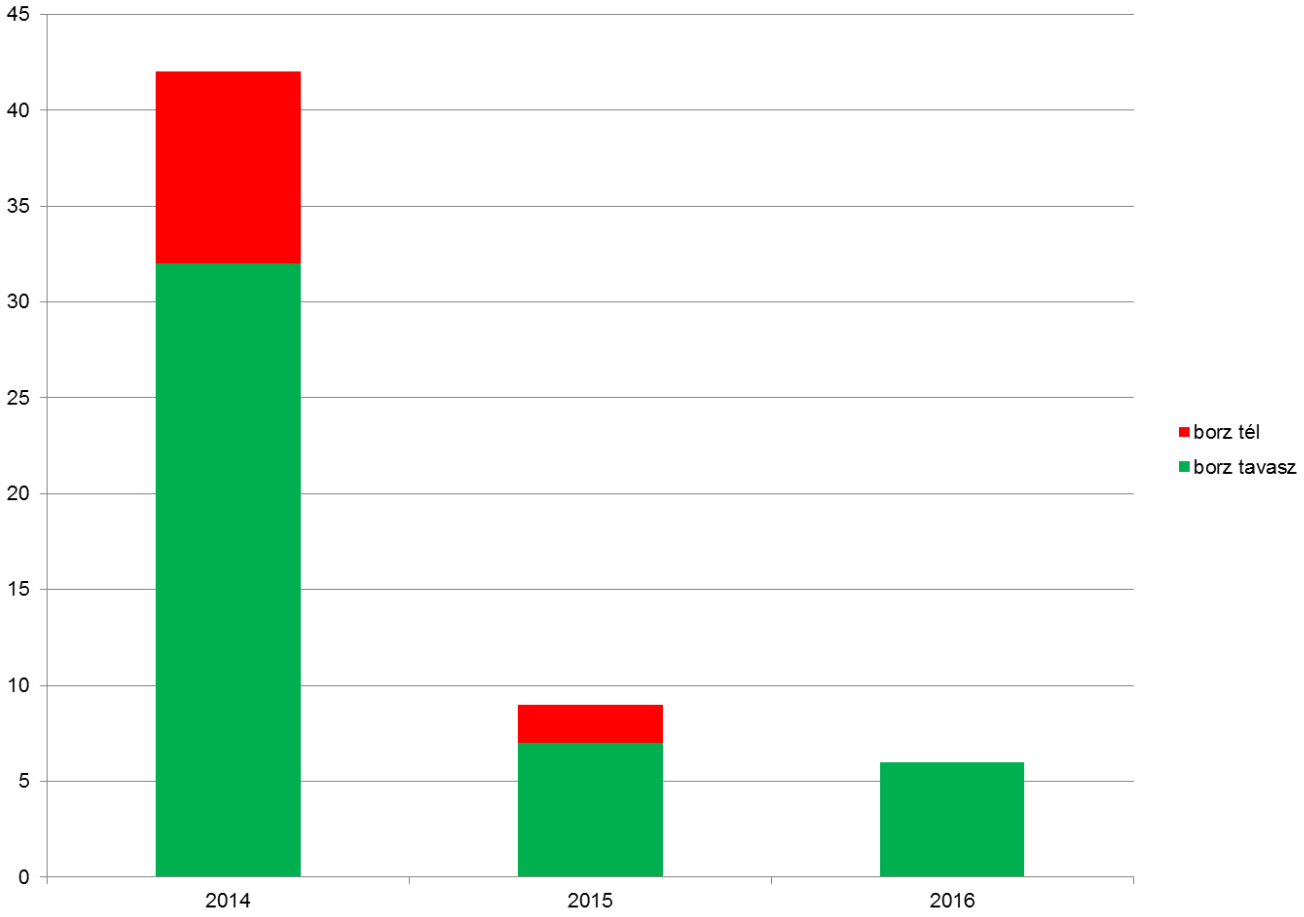
Bags of magpie (only adults)

European badger (*Meles meles*)

- **<u>Conibear trap (killing trap)</u>**
  - „easy to use”
  - 100% success
  - Just for badger!
  - Need more traps
  - Canadian products
  - Placement
- Others: Swan-neck trap, 4 cell corvid trap, restraining cables
- <u>EU legislation</u>!



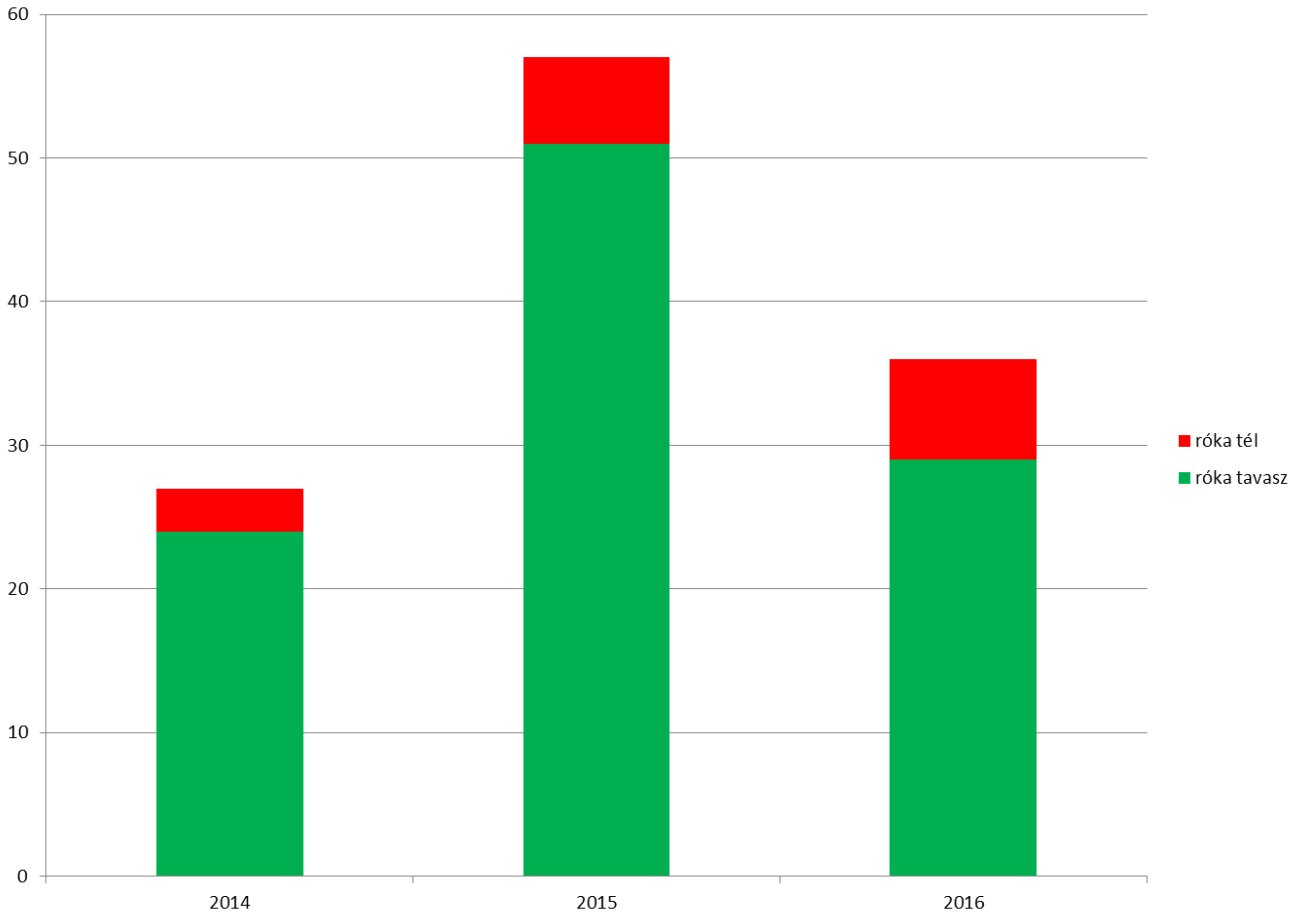
Bags of badger
(only adults)



Red fox (*Vulpes vulpes*)

- **<u>Swan-neck trap (killing trap)</u>**
  - Only at dens
  - Propper setting
  - Full coverage
  - Baits
  - „preparation of baits”
  - Daily checking in the early hours
  - Deodorization
  - Cath the females
  - 1-5 days(!)
  - Dens used by both badgers and foxes
- Others: 4 cell corvid trap, restraining cables, shooting

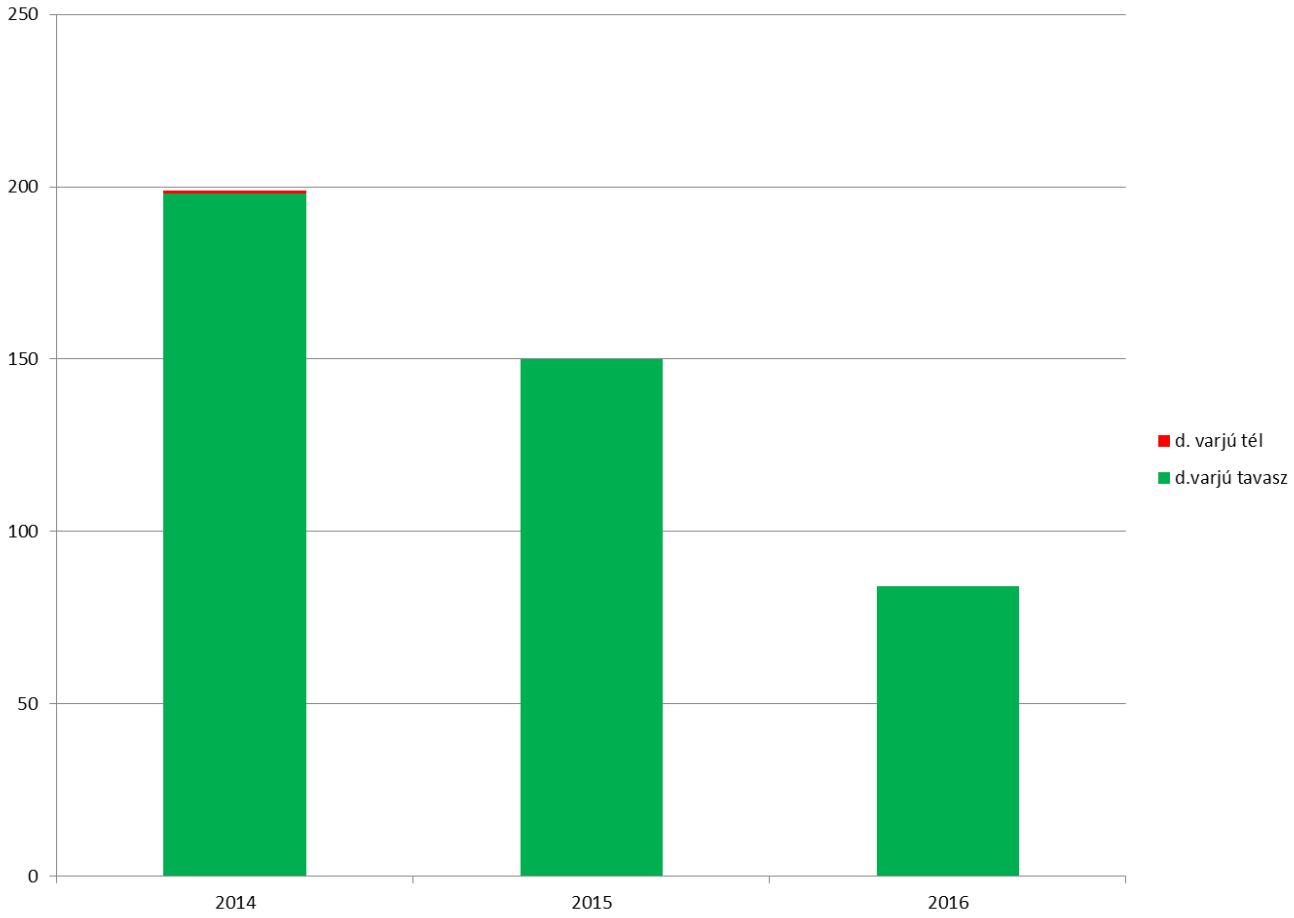
Bags of red fox
(only adults)



Hooded crow (*Corvus cornix*)

- **4 cell corvid trap**
  - Right next to occupied nests
  - „multiplated catching”
  - Live baits: egg, meat, weat/corn, fresh water
  - Regular movements of the trap (really effective)
  - Extreme weather conditions
- Others: Larsen-trap, shooting, „collect chicks”
- Ladder-trap: not systematic, might be necessary
- EU legislation!

Bags of hooded crow (only adults)



Stray feral animals

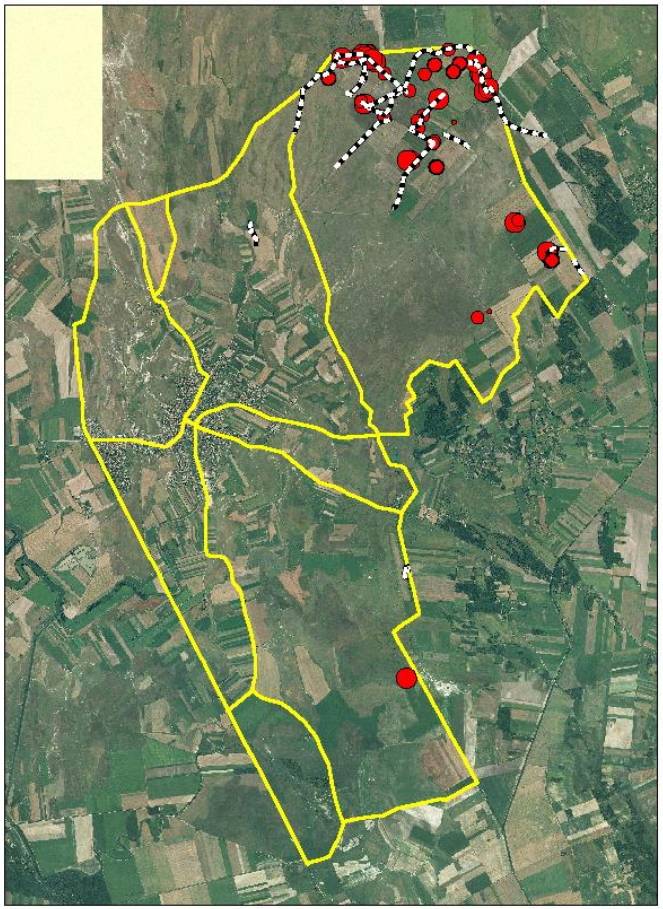
- **Shooting**
  - Far from settlements
  - Written pre-inform farmers and animal keepers
  - Regular contact
- Others: Swan-neck trap, restraining cables

Carcases

- „Documentation”
- Only for adults or fully growns
- Birds:
  - Use as baits
  - Falcon projects of MME
- Universities
  - Sceletons (dep. of anatomy)
- Never let out on field, so as not to feed predators…!

Wild boar (*Sus scrofa*)

- Shooting; „zero tolerance”
- Shooting in the sensitive period…
- Habitat management is the priority (~ GB habitas are NOT suitable for wild boars!)
- Continous monitoring of signs (GIS database: signs, snouting, wallows, camera traps, night vision cameras, etc.
- Regular, but not permanent on GB habitats, and it is a favourable situation, that we want to keep…

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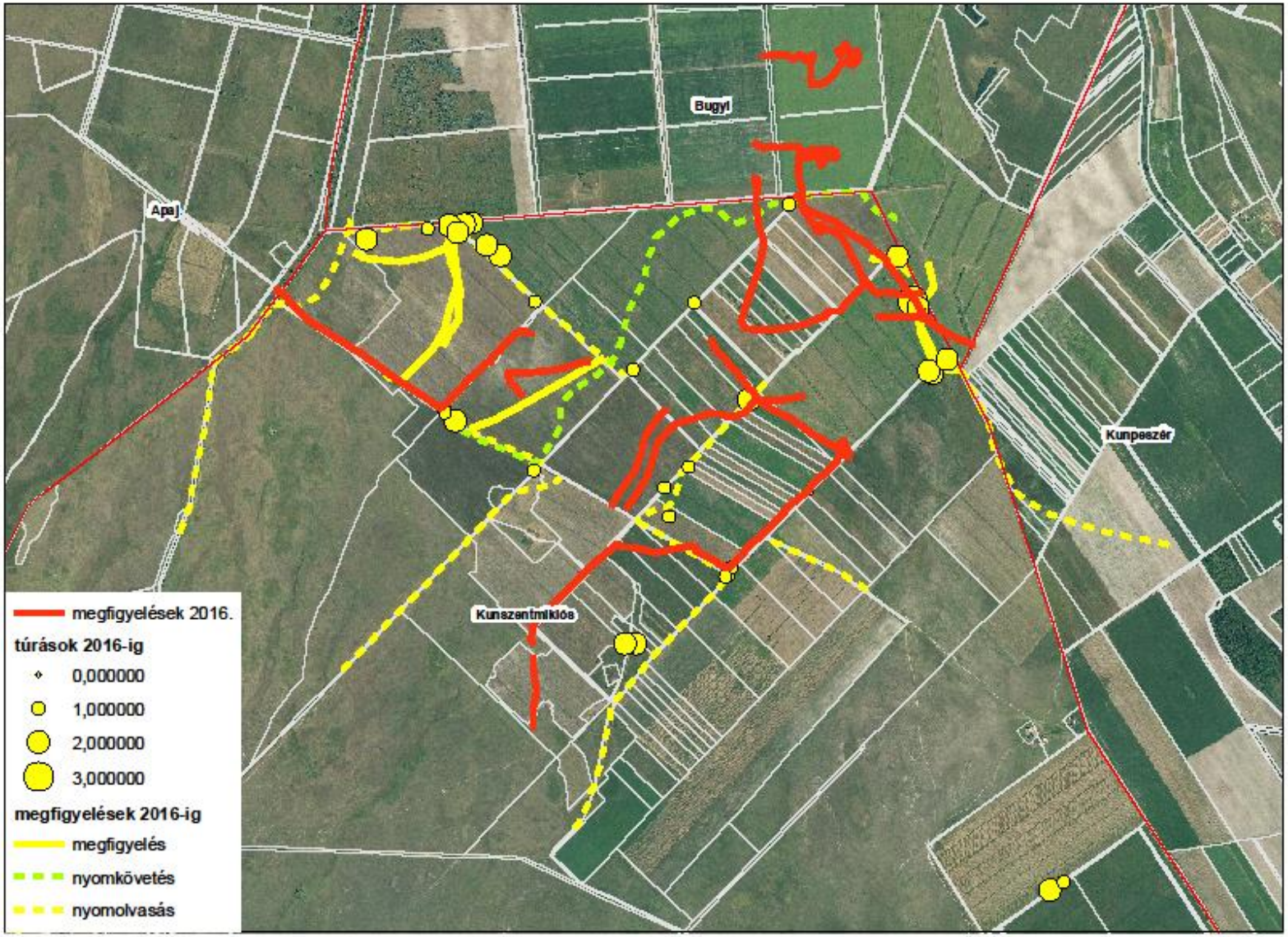
Wild boar movements on GB habitats (nights and days…)



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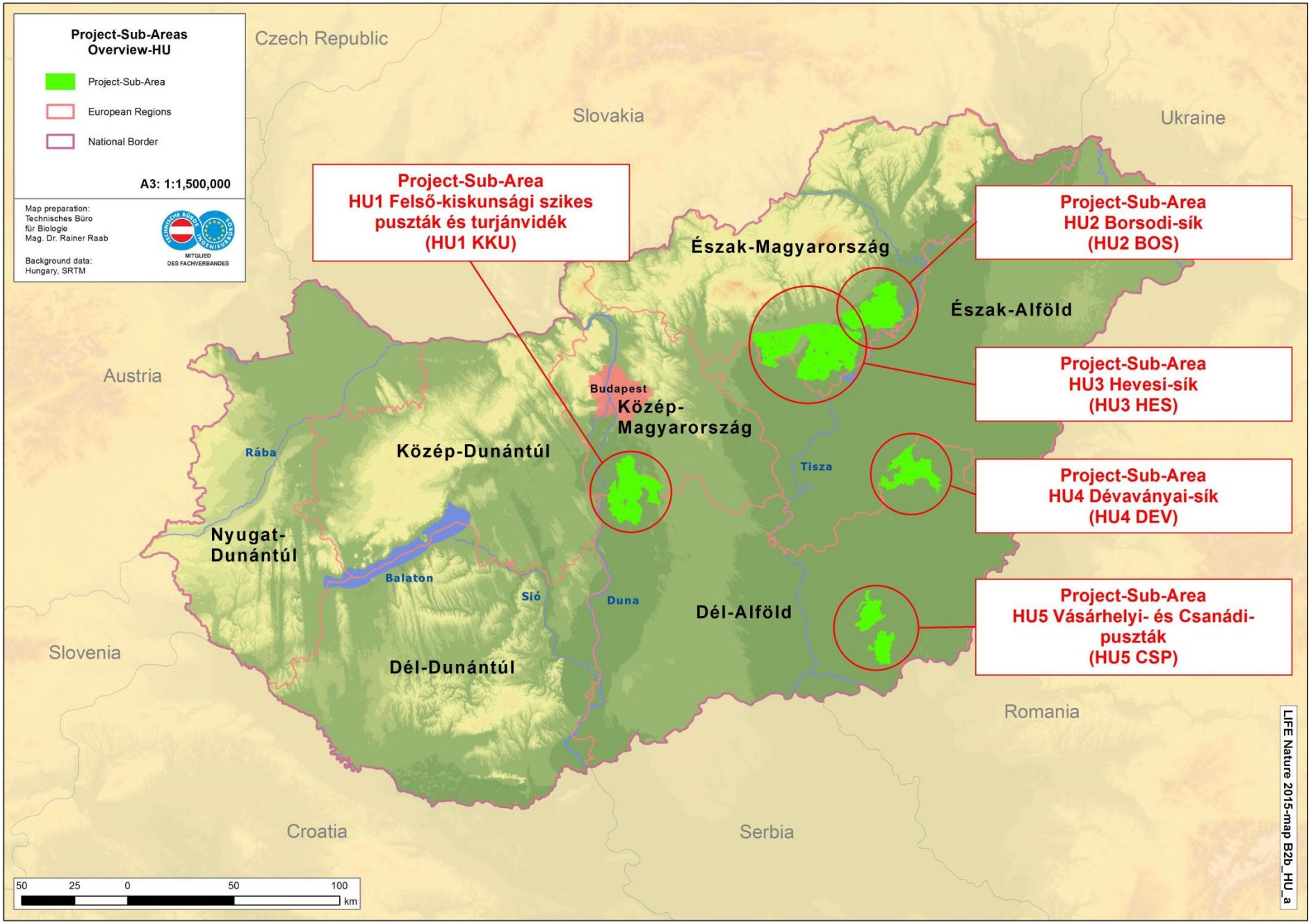
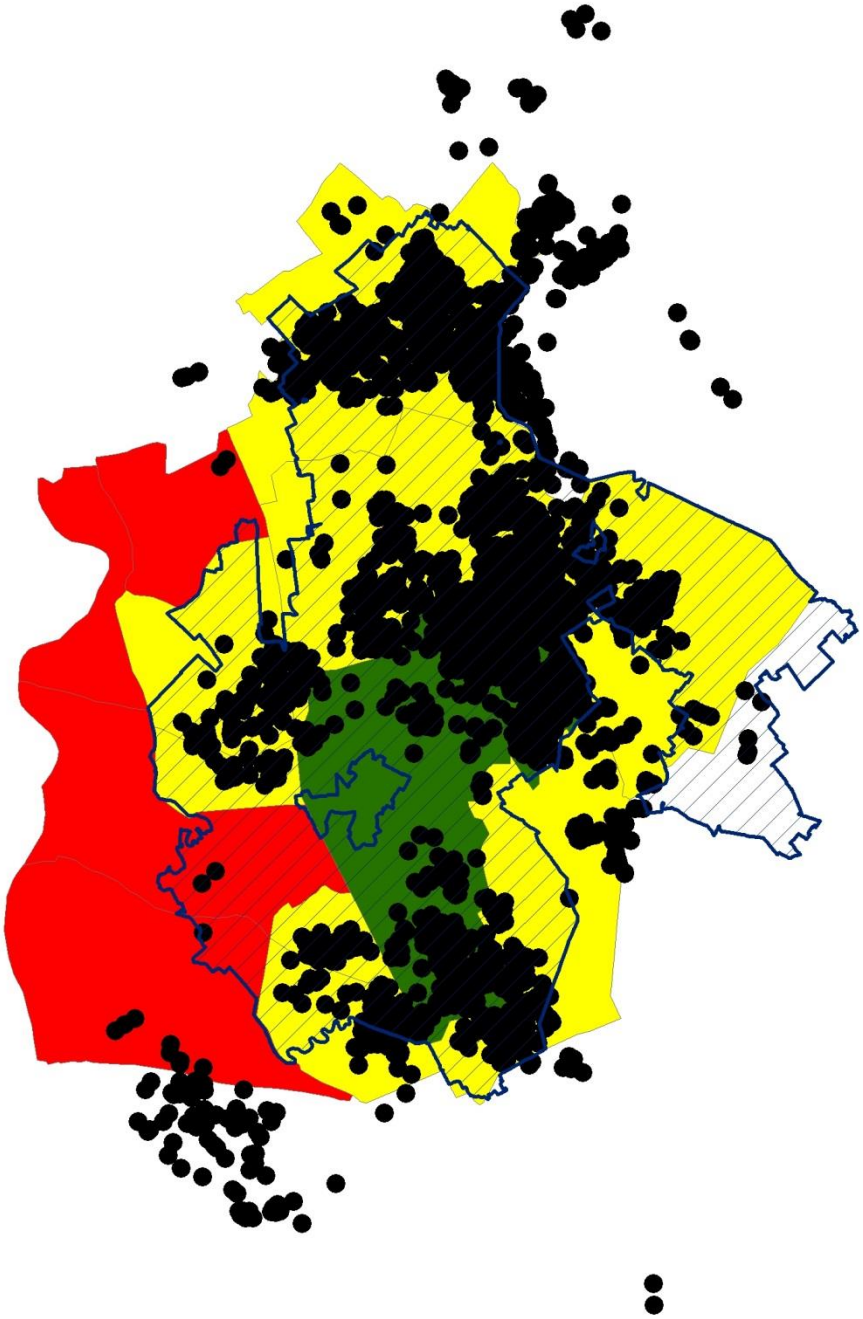
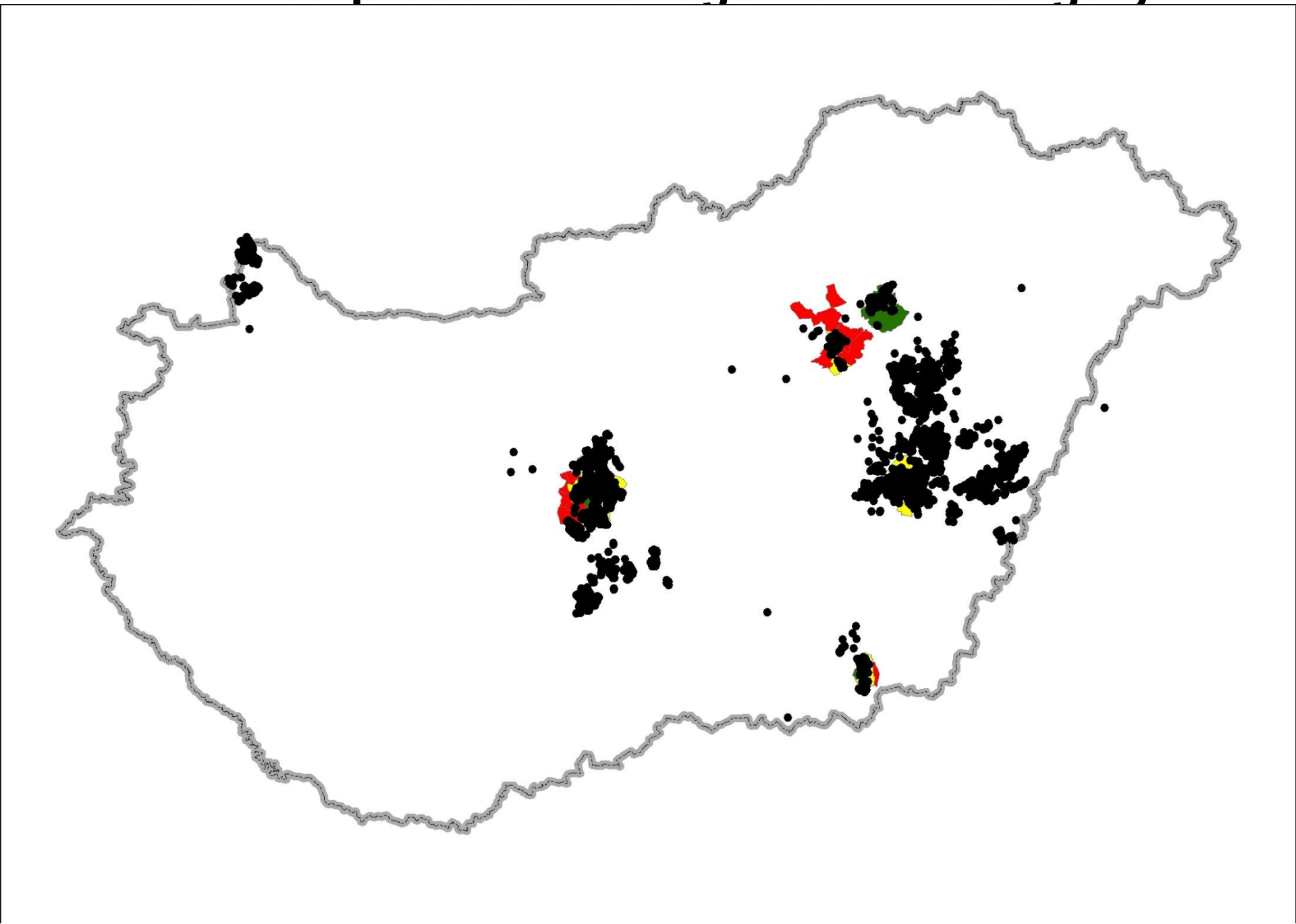




- GB observations
- Hunting units managed by KNPD
- Overlap by SPA
- Identify potential cooperating units in the buffer
- Create priority zones

Planned predator management in Hungary



Participation in the Great Bustard LIFE project

- Focus on National Park Directorates own hunting units „plots”
  - In proposal ca 25 000 hectares
  - Excluded: FHNPD, DINPD and HNPD
- Buffer zones around plots: 80 000 hectares (potential)
  - In proposal: minimum 25 000 hectares

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