



Ukrainian Mammal Mapping Conference 2019

Minutes and main outcomes of the Conference

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In order to prepare the first National Atlas of Ukrainian Mammals, inspired by and intend to become part of the second edition of the European Mammal Mapping Atlas (EMMA2), we organized the first Ukrainian Mammal Mapping Conference (UMMC).

The organizing committee of the UMMC was:

- Mikhail Rusin (Inst. of Zool. and Kyiv Zoo) – general coordination
- Marina Shkvyria (Kyiv Zoo) – coordination on site
- Svetlana Miteva (The Habitat Foundation) – fundraising
- Maria Ghazali (Inst. of Zool.) – accounting, support in every activity
- Yegor Yakovlev (Kyiv Zoo and Inst. of Zool.) – on-site coordination, technical support, logo design
- Irina Sinyavska (Inst. of Zool.) – support, registration
- Yevgenia Ulyura (National Nature History Museum and Kyiv Zoo) – registration.

The goals of the UMM Conference were:

- 1) Share knowledge about EMMA2 with the Ukrainian mammalogists.
- 2) Discuss problems about species mapping in different countries and with different taxa.
- 3) Provide information about open-source platforms for storing biodiversity data.
- 4) Gather data about the distribution of mammals in Ukraine.

The UMMC was held on March 28-29 and it was hosted by Kyiv Zoo.

The **first day** of the Conference started with presenting the general information about the Ukrainian Atlas of Mammals, how it is incorporated into the EMMA2, why the idea came to create this atlas, what are the deadlines for finishing the Atlas. This talk was given by Mikhail Rusin (Institute of Zoology and Kyiv Zoo, Ukraine) – a national Coordinator (NC) from Ukraine for EMMA2. Next was the welcoming word (video-record) by Tony Mitchell-Jones – chairman of the European Mammal Foundation (EMF) and coordinator of the EMMA2 project. He emphasized on the importance of sharing biodiversity data, how that happened in the UK and that we in Ukraine should not be afraid of following the same path. Then Svetlana Miteva, presenting both EMF and The Habitat Foundation, provided more information on the EMF structure (Board and Steering Group) the people involved, the work so far on EMMA2, the mammal conservation in Europe, why a network of European mammalogists is important and needed. She gave also a very enthusiastic example of the recently established Balkan Mammal Network.

The second session after the coffee-pause was given to the guests from neighbouring countries, namely Bulgaria, Belarus and Moldova.

Nedko Nedyalkov (Natural History Museum in Sofia, Bulgaria) described how they are collecting data on mammals. His presentation of SmartBirds was interesting; a powerful tool for citizen science, literature and museum data collection and digitization.

Then Irina Solovey (Scientific and Practical Center for Bioresources, Minsk, Belarus) reported about how they are collecting data on the mammal distribution. Very impressive was the level of cooperation between research institutions and different governmental agencies. All of the Ukrainian participants had to admit that there are no such good practices in Ukraine.

The third talk in this session was given by Victoria Nistoreanu (Institute of Zoology, Chisinau, Moldova). She described how they published the first Atlas of Mammals of Moldova. After her presentation the director of the Kyiv Zoo visited the Conference, gave a warm welcoming to all participants and described the obstacles Kiev Zoo overcame during the past years, pursuing the goal to become one of the leading zoos in Eastern Europe.

The session after the lunch was focused on the Ukrainian participation in European initiatives, like the European Breeding Bird Atlas (EBBA2) made by Tetiana Kuzmenko from BirdLife Ukraine (UA) and the Atlas of Reptiles and Amphibians of Europe done by Oleksandr Zinenko, Kharkiv University, UA. They shared different interesting experiences and lessons learned while working on the atlases of these groups. The EBBA2 project was supported via funding (about 50 000€), which enabled them to recruit a number of ornithologists and birders to conduct standardized surveys in almost every 50km grid of Ukraine. It was interesting to hear that many local birders were giving false/not-so-reliable data on the species diversity and density, and it took extra efforts, additional verifications and proof-checking of their data in order to find the correct numbers and species presence.

The Ukrainian Reptiles & Amphibians Atlas was produced very differently. Three researchers from Kharkiv and Chernivtsi received a small grant and digitized literature, collections and their own field data notes, and shared all that data with the team working on the European Reptiles & Amphibians Atlas. The currently available data from Ukraine on Amphibians and Reptiles will be uploaded also in UkBIN, adding it to the **Ukrainian Biodiversity Information Network**. <http://www.ukrbin.com/>

After a short break, the last session of the day was dedicated primarily to data storage.

First Volodymyr Peskov described the collection of National Natural History Museum in Kyiv – the largest collection in Ukraine, containing ca. 20 thousand specimens of mammals, primarily from Ukraine and Central Asia.

Later Natalia Gozak from WWF Ukraine gave a talk, describing the activities WWF is doing on protecting mammals and some other biota. A discussion after her talk arose on what could be the possibilities for cooperation between scientists and pure environmentalists. All parties agreed that there is a potential in such cooperation through organizing summer camps, educating the younger generation, promoting research activities through the wider public. This hot discussion required some time to rest, and after an unplanned coffee-break, the two last presentations of the day were given.

The first was given by Niels Raes from NLBIF. He described what is GBIF, why it is important to store and publish data on biodiversity, what are the benefits of joining GBIF, how Ukraine can become part of GBIF. This was a very interesting presentation. Although Niels was not able to come to Kyiv, he gave a Skype presentation and our participants were able to ask questions and receive replies, which significantly improved the general understanding of the topic.

After such exciting presentations, the last talk was from Nikolay Yunakov, currently stationed in Massachusetts, USA. In his recorded video-presentation he stressed on the benefits of using open biodiversity data, described UkrBIN platform, gave general information how to use it, browsed through it and gave information of the updates that will be implemented in the platform in a hopefully not that distant future. This was very important information, though by the end of the day most of the participants were already tired.

The **second day** of UMMC started with the poster session. For some reason, posters are not yet a popular way of presenting data in Ukraine and it was an additional element - to educate Ukrainian people to present their data in such form. Most of our participants, even quite experienced, later admitted that this was their first ever experience with posters. Several posters presented data of monitoring of mammals in National Parks (Kharkiv and Zakarpatska provinces). Some posters were dedicated to the monitoring of specific taxa. Large data was collected about ground squirrels *Spermophilus*. Lots of localities of *S. suslicus* were reported from the Odessa region. Surprising and reviving result was shown by the rediscovery of *S. citellus* in Chernivtsi region – a species that was believed to have become extinct from Ukraine. Broad data on carnivores from Zaporizhia and from Kharkiv was presented.

After the poster session, Marina Shkvyria (Kyiv Zoo) guided an interesting excursion in the Zoo, focusing on breeding programs that are running in the Kyiv Zoo, in cooperation with The European Association of Zoos and Aquaria (EAZA).

After the lunch, the last session of the Conference was given to specialists in species groups. First was the talk of Karina Vishnyakova from Odessa Marine Institute. She described the OBIS database, how Ukrainians are collecting data on marine mammals and transfer data to this database. She was also very keen on cooperation with the Ukrainian Mammal Mapping Atlas. The quality of the data they collected covers almost every water UTM square in Ukrainian territorial waters in Black and Azov seas.

The second talk was from Lena Godlevska (Institute of Zoology, Kyiv, Ukraine). She described her database on bats, that she intends to publish as a separate Atlas of Bats in Ukraine. This database consists not only of her own observations but also of all published data available so far.

The final talk was given by Marina Shkvyria from Kyiv Zoo. She described how they map the large carnivores of Ukraine (mostly wolf and bear). Marina Shkvyria presented the results of the posters assessment (contest). The 5 best posters in the different categories were chosen and their authors received presents (books on wildlife donated to The Habitat Foundation by people in The Netherlands).

By the end, the participants of the Conference expressed their impressions of the conference and the Mammal Atlas project.

The first three goals of the Conference were achieved during the meeting. The fourth goal was to collect data on the distribution of the mammals of Ukraine. **As a result of the Conference, 24 researchers throughout Ukraine reported 3605 registrations of 99 species of mammals in Ukraine. These records are distributed over 137 CGRS 50 km grids. The best results were provided for Kharkiv, Odesa, Zaporizhia, Chernihiv and Chernivtsi provinces of Ukraine. Zero records were given from Lviv, Rivne and Crimea provinces.**

The presented data is distributed unequally, which gives insights into the regions that are most important for data mobilization and collection work.

The top 3 species by reported locations are *Mus musculus* (286), *Capreolus capreolus* (196), and *Vulpes vulpes* (169).

The top 3 species based on the amount of CGRS grids filled are *V. vulpes* (36), *M. musculus* (33), and *Lepus europaeus* (29).

Unfortunately, not all of the data contributors were able to come to visit the Conference. During the Conference, 30-35 people were present (including those who did not provide data). During the Conference, several new species coordinators were assigned.

The materials sent by participants will be published, compiling the presentations and the posters presented during the Conference. Unfortunately, due to delay by the publisher (and the fact that many participants send their materials just a few days before the conference), it will be printed at the beginning of June. The online pdf version will be available for download from UkrBIN website before that date.

The Ukrainian Mammal Mapping Conference was possible thanks to the support of The Habitat Foundation, the European Mammal Foundation and the Dutch Mammal Society (South-Holland mammals working group). Many of the books given as presents to the winners of the contest were donated by Moby Dick Antiquarian, The Netherlands.