

Small Mammal Trapping Summer Camp in Ukraine in 2019



In Summer 2019 we aim to organize a Summer Camp involving volunteers. The goal is to collect data about the presence and abundance of different mammals (mainly small mammals), that would help to collect new data and represent it in National Mammal Atlas and in the EMMA2.

Where?

Ukraine, Zakarpatska oblast (province), CGRS grids 34UFU1, 34UFU2, 34UFU3, 34UFU4.

When?

July 2019, 14 days.

What?

Small mammal live-trapping using box-traps and pitfall traps, possibly camera trapping and nest-boxes for dormice.

The Summer Camp would include trapping in four grids, two being in Ukraine (34UFU1 & 3), and two other cross-boundary. 34UFU4 covering Romania and Ukraine (almost equally) and 34UFU2 covers 3 countries: Ukraine (~40%), Hungary (~50%) and Romania (~10%). Such cross-border position of these grids is an opportunity to welcome participants from neighboring countries. Combined with the help of volunteers from other countries (Western European) this would allow us to gather sufficient information on as many species as possible.

We have chosen Zakarpatska Region for several reasons:

1. It is close to the border thus it would be easy for participants from other countries to come there.
2. Roads here are of acceptable level (unlike some other regions of Ukraine).
3. The transboundary position of some of the grids should be an additional motto for mammal-mappers from Hungary and Romania to come and participate in joint activities,
4. These grids are not well-studied and fresh data is missing for them.
5. The infrastructure here would allow to gather data almost simultaneously for at least 3 grids (Beregove, Mukachevo, Irshava, Vinogradiv).
6. There is a large diversity of landscapes that leads for a necessity of making lot of trapping in different habitats which would results in good diversity of species. Landscapes include floodplains, agriculture, pastures, meadows, forests in the lowlands, different types of Carpathian forests and subalpine and alpine meadows in Carpathians.
7. This is a moderately developed touristic region which means that it may be easy to find accommodation if necessary for some participants.
8. In Mizhhirya (34UFU3) there is a student biological camp of Uzhgorod University, that we could also use for our needs and even possibly attract some of the students to study mammals.

Approximate timeline for Summer Camp

1 day – arrival of participants to Uzhgorod (capital of Zakarpatska oblast)

2-7 days – trapping in the Tisa lowlands triangle between Mukachevo–Beregove–Vinogradiv (main-roads M-23, M-24, H-09).

8-13 days – trapping in the Carpathian Mountains with base camp in the town of Mizhhirya.

14 days – end of Summer Camp.

What do we have already

4x4 vehicle (compact), 80 box-traps (mainly Shermans), 250 pitfall traps, some camping equipment, some scientific equipment, 2 Camera traps, 2 GPS units.

What should we need

Additional cars (1-2 at least) – participants should either come by their own cars or we would need to rent them.

100-200 additional box-traps (and transporting tough bags for them, especially for the mountain areas)

Some camping equipment: large tent as a field lab, folding furniture (2 tables, chairs), tents, mats, sleeping bags and tableware for coming participants.

Some scientific equipment: Pesola spring scales (60g 2-3 Pcs), working gloves, nitrile gloves.

As we won't normally have access to electricity supply, it would be better for participants to have hand-held GPS devices (other than smartphones, as those would run out of power very soon) and supply of batteries to them.

Headlamps, rubber boots and raincoats for every participant.

How it should all work in the field?

We aim to organize field camps during the expedition, with food cooked on open fire and sleeping in tents. Thus all coming participants should be prepared for this.

There should be 2-3 key skilled persons (let's call them supervisors) who would be responsible for management of trap-lines in the field. Unskilled volunteers would join supervisors to set out the traps in the evening and to check the traps in the morning. The volunteers could swap between supervisors every day. Additionally, some people would have to stay in the field camp to do some tasks: either scientific (prepare collected specimens, write down labels etc.) or camping tasks (i.e. help to cook dinner, collect firewood etc.). All of these tasks should be spread equally between all participants, without any discrimination on sex, gender, age, nationality, qualification.

During collecting small mammals each supervisor would have protocols to follow. Common and easily identifiable species would be released at cite of capture. Hardly identifiable and deceased specimens would be brought to field lab and prepared for DNA sampling and museification. Skins and skulls would be deposited to the Ukrainian National Nature History Museum in Kyiv. As the Summer Camp is a scientific project first of all, volunteers and other participants should understand and respect this.

For more information contact Mikhail Rusin: mrusin@list.ru