

THE RETROSPECTIVE ANALYSIS OF PREVENTION AND CONTROL OF RABIES IN LITHUANIA 1995–2002 WILDLIFE

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Summary. In 1995-2002, 2313 cases of rabies were registered among wild animals in Lithuania, with the majority of cases being registered in foxes (1065 cases, 46%) and raccoon dogs (996 cases, 43%). Within the last 3 years rabies among foxes and raccoon dogs increased significantly (3 and 6 times respectively), compared with the period from 1997 to 2000.

During the last 3-5 years the fox population has been growing very fast (from 12650 in 1995 to 28300 in 2001), while the increase in raccoon dog population was 3 times higher than that in foxes (from 6100 in 1995 to 22900 in 2001). During the period of 1995-2001 the number of hunted wildlife in Lithuania increased, with minimal influence on the real rabies situation in the country.

During the 1995-2000, oral rabies vaccination (ORV) using more than 820,000 baits with SAG-1, Lysvulpen (in 1998) and Rabifox (in 1999-2000) vaccines was carried out to prevent wildlife rabies in Lithuania. During that period vaccines were distributed over 8000 km² (15-25 baits/per km²) in 27 of 44 districts of Lithuania. Distribution of rabies vaccines/baits was carried out twice per year (during April-May and October-November). The total cost of the rabies prevention campaign in wildlife was 746.730,9 EUR (685.760 EUR for the vaccines and 60.970,9 EUR for their distribution). The cost of ORV per 1 km² was estimated to be 28,3 EUR.

Keywords: prevention, rabies, control, wild animals.