
Ελληνικό Ζωολογικό Αρχείο **Hellenic Zoological Archives**

Number 9, November 2018

The book with the scientific papers of the second international symposium dedicated to the golden jackal and related species

2nd International Jackal Symposium
Marathon Bay, Attiki Greece, 31 Oct-2 Nov 2018



With the endorsement of the IUCN Canid Specialist Group



The book includes works on the golden jackal, wolf, coyote, Ethiopian wolf, African wolf, side-striped jackal and black-backed jackal species.



ΕΛΛΗΝΙΚΗ ΖΩΟΛΟΓΙΚΗ ΕΤΑΙΡΕΙΑ
HELLENIC ZOOLOGICAL SOCIETY

T66C5

Thanatological and necroscopic remarks about two suspected poisoned golden jackals (*Canis aureus moreoticus*) from north-eastern Italy.

Stefano PESARO ^{1*}, Paola BERALDO ¹, Stefano FILACORDA ¹, Yannik FANIN ¹, Luca LAPINI ², Paolo BENEDETTI ³ and Marco BREGOLI ⁴

¹ University of Udine, Dipartimento di Scienze Agro-alimentari, Ambientali e Animali, Centro di ricerca e Coordinamento per il Recupero della Fauna Selvatica, Via Sondrio, 2 - 33100 (UD), Italy

² Friulian Natural History Museum, via C. Gradenigo Sabbadini, 22-32, 33100, (UD), Italy

³ Regione Autonoma Friuli Venezia Giulia, Servizio foreste e Corpo forestale. Via Sabbadini 31 - 33100 (UD), Italy

⁴ Istituto Zooprofilattico Sperimentale delle Venezie – SCT4 Udine Via della Roggia, 100 - 33010 Basaldella di Campoformido (UD), Italy

Introduction

In the last decade golden jackal (*Canis aureus moreoticus*) distribution indicates an ongoing expansion in Europe. The species can live under a wide variety of natural conditions and this ecological plasticity allows it to settle large geographic range. Increased presence is recorded in the European area northwards and westwards, including Italy. Italy provides an important habitat for wildlife. Anthropogenic activities threaten many species, as accidental or deliberate poisoning, documented over many years in European countries.

Methods

During the spring of 2018 two golden jackals were found dead in Gorizia province in Friuli Venezia Giulia (FVG) region (north-eastern Italy). Different reproductive packs of golden jackal inhabit this area and the neighbouring north-west Slovenia, where sheep farms are quite widespread.

Two carcasses were found at a distance of about 150 meters from each other within 5 days. In that area, during the week before the findings, the temperature range was 8-29°C with sunny weather. The dead animals, a male and a female both of about one year old, were located in area partially shaded and externally infested by different necrophagous Diptera and Coleoptera species. The insects on carcasses were in different development stages and they were dead or showed nervous symptoms. The animals were submitted to the laboratory for gross pathological analysis; brain, lungs, stomach content, liver, spleen and kidney were sampled for Canine Distemper Virus, Rabies Virus and toxicological investigations; lungs and gastrointestinal tract were collected for parasitological analysis.

Provisional results

The collected carcasses were moderately decomposed at the moment of the necropsy and their body condition score was good. Moderate haemorrhagic effusion in the thoracic cavity and lung parenchyma congestion were predominant pathological features; no lesions were observed in visceral organs but diffuse liver necrosis. The gastric content in one carcass was represented by only five partially digested birds with legs tied by wires (identified as *Coturnix* sp.), while in the other there were some bird portions (the same bird species), broken bones and hair of a scavenged mammal, at present still under study.

* stefano.pesaro@uniud.it

Body condition score, post mortem findings, entomological features and gastric content aroused the suspect of poisoning. While toxicological analysis is in progress (not yet available for this abstract), preliminary microbiological and parasitological results would support the hypothesis. Furthermore, thanatological and necroscopic findings allowed the recruitment of an anti-poison dog team which found baits consisting in quails hanging on shrubs, at 20-150 meters from the carcasses respectively.

Provisional conclusions

This occurrence is the first description of poisoning as potential mortality cause in Italian golden jackal. The adequate evaluation of the suspected crime scene and the necropsy procedures adopted have been essential for the present hypothesis suggestion. Moreover, the data collected will be very useful for the correct management of this spreading carnivore in Italy and Western Europe.