

WILD BOAR (*Sus scrofa* L.) HUNTING IN SOUTH-WESTERN PYRENEES (SPAIN): PRELIMINARY DATA

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Abstract: We have elaborated from 144 hunting battues of the 1990-91 hunting season the approximate density of the population, its census and a description of the hunting activity. Minimal density was an average of 3.1 (SE 0.8) for every 100 ha of wooded surface. Hunting efficiency was 20%.

Keywords: Wild boar, *Sus scrofa*, Suidae, Population, Density, Europe.

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1. Introduction

The Wild boar is an autochthonous species in the study area (Western Spanish Pyrenees) and has been present there for centuries. Since the late sixties its populations have increased and today it can be considered as abundant, with an important ecological, sociological and economic-environmental relevance.

The aim of this preliminary work is to present the first data of Wild boar abundance in the area, to determine its population structure and to describe the hunting activity in a given hunting season.

2. Material and methods

The study area was in the Western Aragonese Pyrenees, with 60,285 hectares. The territory comprises the National Hunting Reserve of Los Valles, managed by the Regional Wildlife Service, three shooting preserves, managed by local hunters and a non managed hunting area. Woods occupy approximately 33,000 ha and consist of the following species in order of importance: Scots pine (*Pinus sylvestris*), White oak (*Quercus humilis*), Beech (*Fagus sylvatica*), Fir (*Abies alba*) and Holm oak (*Quercus ilex*).

Other wild ungulates in the area are Roe deer (*Capreolus capreolus*) and Pyrenean chamois (*Rupicapra p. pyrenaica*). The only predator living in the area is the brown bear (*Ursus arctos*), with a relict population.

We have elaborated from 144 hunting battues inquiries, carried out during the 1990-91 hunting season by eight groups of hunters specialized in Wild boar hunting, the approximate density and census, a description of the hun-

ting activity and the population structure. The age of the boars was determined using tooth eruption and wear, and weighing crystalline lenses from a sample of 38 individuals. Density estimates are based on the number of boars seen during the battues.

3. Results

3.1. Density and census

Habitat	Number of battues	Density (boars/100 ha)	Standard error
Holm oak	22	3.0	2.5
White oak	29	3.1	2.2
Scots pine	70	2.8	1.1
Beech	23	4.2	1.4
TOTAL	144	3.1	0.8

As wild boars occupy mainly wooded habitats, multiplying the average density by the wooded surface, the total census for the area would be approximately 1,023 boars.

3.2. Hunting activity

Hunting efficiency, that is the number of killed boars in comparison with the total boars seen, was 20% which agrees with similar studies. Hunting is carried out mainly in battues (91% of the killed boars), during weekends and holidays (83% of the battues), in December essentially (46% of the battues). The average number of hunters per battue was 12.4, dogs were 5.3 and the driving hunters were 2.7, on an average surface of 158 ha.

3.3. Sample structure

Age (years)	Males	Females	Sex-ratio	X^2	P level
0-1	7	4	1.75	0.81	0.36 NS
1-2	9	8	1.12	0.6	0.81 NS
>2	3	7	0.42	1.6	0.21 NS
TOTAL	19	19	1	0	1 NS

The structure of the sample shows a 1:1 sex-ratio. 74% of the examined animals were less than two years old.

4. Acknowledgements

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