

Unsuspecting immigrant or ecological threat – a long-term fieldwork study on the introduced raccoon in Germany

Berit A. Michler¹, Frank-Uwe Michler¹, Siegfried Rieger², Mechthild Roth¹

¹Group of Wildlife Research, Institute of Forest Botany and Forest Zoology, Technical University of Dresden

²Group of Wildlife Biology and Hunting Techniques, Faculty of Forest and Environment, Eberswalde University for Sustainable Development

Alien species like the North American raccoon can play a significant role in the ecological balance of their newly encountered biotope. Against the background of a vast increase of raccoon numbers in Germany within the last years, a controversial discussion arose regarding the influence of the new inhabitant on indigenous species and the potential transmission of diseases and parasites. Extensive knowledge about the effects of raccoon settlement, primarily in natural landscapes, is lacking entirely so far. Aiming to elucidate the wildlife biology of this introduced species, a large perennial project has been initiated in the northeastern area of distribution (Müritz National Park; www.projekt-waschbaer.de). Within 16 different sub studies and having 69 raccoons under telemetric control profound data on the population biology could be ascertained for the first time. The talk will introduce the project along with the key topics of the study and focus on the nutritional aspects of research