

# BOOK OF ABSTRACTS

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FORESTS & SOCIETY  
TOWARDS 2050



STOCKHOLM 2024  
WORLD CONGRESS  
26th **IUFRO**  
FORESTS & SOCIETY TOWARDS 2050

Stockholm, Sweden  
23–29 June 2024

## **Raccoon impacts in German forests – status quo and future prospects**

T3.4 Ecological and socioeconomic analysis of invasive species in forest ecosystems under changing environmental scenario

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**Abstract:** Predatory mammals are an integral part of ecosystems worldwide. Sustainable management of these species relies on sound knowledge of biological-ecological relationships. The North American raccoon is an introduced carnivore species in Germany and one of the most omnivorous mammals worldwide. These and other alien species can play a significant role in the eco-lo-gi-cal balance of their newly encountered biotopes, particularly if their habits overlap and com-pete with those of the native animals. Due to a vast in-crease of raccoon numbers over the last years and its continuous expansion, a controversial dis-cus-sion arose regarding the influence of the new inha-bi--tants on indigenous and especially protected species, as well as the poten----tial trans-mission of diseases and parasites.

Despite a high demand for management strategies and recommendations, the development of sustainable and efficient measures often fails due to insufficient knowledge about the species and extensive evidence-based know-ledge about the actual consequences of raccoon settle-ment, primarily in natural land-scapes, is still lacking. Aiming to elucidate the wildlife biology and potential impact of this intro-duced spe-cies, a long-term and integrated research project was conducted from 2006 to 2017 in the north-eastern area of distribution (Müritz National Park; Mecklenburg-Western Pomerania; [www. projekt-waschbaer.de](http://www.projekt-waschbaer.de)). In 16 different sub studies and by telemetric control of 69 raccoons, profound data on the population biology in the allochthonous distribution area was collected for the first time. Based on the hypothesis that raccoons may affect local stock of ecological relevant species through predation, raccoon faecal samples from this semi-natural lowland beech forest were analysed in terms of food ecology and endoparasite infestation, and linked to available resources in the study area, which is a prerequisite for assessing local impact.

The poster highlights the ecological background of raccoon settlement Germany and shows the potential influence as well as future management options.