

# Abstracts

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## PRESENCE OF SMALL RODENT SPECIES IN REPLANTED OAK FORESTS

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Forests are complex ecosystems rich in a variety of plant and animal life. Ecological characteristics of oak forests undergoing reforestation make them appropriate for colonization of different rodent species.

Oak's specific growing technology requires a variety of activities to secure a sufficient number of trees for a period of planned thinning. From the moment of sowing to fully stabilized ecosystem, rodent activities may cause significant losses in replanted oak forests. By damaging roots, root collars or trunks of oak saplings, which is especially evident and visible in early spring, rodents cause unwanted thinning out of oak stands and expansion of clearings. Data obtained so far indicate, that the most extensive damage is caused in plantations up to five years old. Sporadic damage has also been observed in seven or eight year old stands.

In order to maximize effects in preventing economic losses through the expansion of clearings in oak forests under reforestation it is essential to know the population size and species of rodents affecting them.

Presence of small rodent species were monitored for three years in oak plantings of various age. The data revealed the presence of common voles (*Microtus arvalis*), striped field mice (*Apodemus agrarius*), wood mice (*Apodemus sylvaticus*) and yellow-necked field mice (*Apodemus flavicolis*). The age of oak stands was found to affect the numbers of small rodent species. In the first and second years of oak plantation, common voles were dominant over other rodent species. Striped field mice populations expanded and took over the lead in the succeeding years.

Acceptable protection of oak forests from harmful rodent species preceding any protective treatment should therefore include an inventory of present species, knowledge of their biology and competition. Protection measures based on such information should then be prepared and conducted as either preventive or immediately implemented.