

Abstract

Today, the issues related to the presence of bears and wolves in the Czech Republic are more frequently discussed due to their occasional occurrence. The significant part of the public still considers these predators dangerous and they even think that a man is supposed to be their potential prey. A lot of surveys confirming this have been already taken, but none of them was focused on the views of primary and secondary schools students. As they are a part of the school education system, their views on the large carnivores should be mainly shaped by it. A questionnaire-based survey was used to find the attitudes of students. The first part of the questionnaire focused on the students' opinions about the dangerousness of predators, its reasons and common wolf presence in the Czech Republic. The second part of the questionnaire is focused on the domestic dog, which has wolf origins. It deals mainly with the attitudes of students to selected dog breeds, dog domestication awareness and views on the so-called "fighting breeds". This work has been aimed at identification of attitudes of the primary and secondary school students from different regions of the Czech Republic to the selected predators. The survey was also taken at primary schools in the High Tatras Mountains, an area where all the large predators still live and never have been exterminated by man. The results of this survey show that pupils' knowledge about predators' dangerousness is biased. Students considered the large predators dangerous to man much more frequently than adults. More than one third of the surveyed students think that wolves are aggressive and they can attack man on every occasion. Even more than one half of them have the same opinion about bears. The results of this work are intended to show the students' awareness of our predators and could be useful in educational programs related to reintroduction of large carnivores back into the wild.

Key words: European brown bear, grey wolf, Eurasian lynx, red fox, domestic dog, carnivores, dangerousness of carnivores, domestication, dogs breeds