

Acoustic communication and its variability in selected populations of ground squirrels of the genus *Spermophilus* (abstract)

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The thesis deals with vocalizations produced by Eurasian ground squirrels of the genus *Spermophilus*. It is mainly focused on inter-species and intra-species variability in acoustic structure of alarm calls which are emitted in presence of predators.

The major part of the thesis deals with intra-species variability in acoustic structure of the alarm calls in five Eurasian ground squirrels, *Spermophilus citellus*, *S. taurensis*, *S. xanthoprymnus*, *S. suslicus* and *S. fulvus*. It has been confirmed that the alarm calls of these ground squirrels show a high level of species specificity. The thesis further describes another vocalizations produced by three Eurasian ground squirrel species, *Spermophilus suslicus*, *S. citellus* and *S. fulvus*., and shows that with the exception of the alarm calls, vocal repertoires of these three ground squirrels are remarkably similar. The last part of the thesis deals with individual distinctiveness of the alarm calls of three Eurasian ground squirrels, *Spermophilus citellus*, *S. taurensis* and *S. xanthoprymnus*. It has been shown that the alarm calls of these species have a significant potential to encode information about caller identity.