

3.

MAMMALS

THE FAUNA OF SZIGETKÖZ 1.



The Szigetköz is the area bordered by the Great Danube and the Moson-Danube and is the largest island in Hungary. The area, interwoven with watercourses, has developed an extremely rich flora and fauna.

THE BIOLOGICAL BALANCE

If the biological diversity (biodiversity) of an area is decreased, it can lead to a breakdown of the ecosystem. Today, unfortunately, the loss of biodiversity has become a worldwide phenomenon. This is why the European Union has created Natura 2000, a network of 26,000 protected areas, which aims to protect and enhance biodiversity.



Main causes of loss of biodiversity:

- Changes in land use (deforestation, monoculture, urbanisation)
- Pollution (air, water, soil)
- Destruction of natural habitats
- Appearance of invasive species (e.g. Eastern Grey Squirrel)
- Global warming, climate change, greenhouse effect



What can we do about it?

- Protect existing green spaces!
- Plant diverse, preferably native plant species!
- Collect waste separately!
- Reduce the use of plastics!
- Protect natural habitats!
- Build shelters for animals from natural materials!
- Reduce greenhouse gas emissions!
- Use a bicycle or walk! Do not waste energy!

European Hare (*Lepus europaeus*)



Red Squirrel (*Sciurus vulgaris*)



Central European Wild Boar (*Sus scrofa scrofa*)



Red Fox (*Vulpes vulpes*)



It occurs in open deciduous forests, agricultural and grassland areas. It is easily frightened. Its large ears, big eyes, and long legs help it to escape from danger. It is able to change direction quickly on any terrain, thanks to the fine fur on its feet.

A common inhabitant of our wooded parks. Usually, it can be found at the canopy level of the trees. It has the characteristic of chewing on pine cones. We can detect its presence from the dropped pine cones. It is a protected species in Hungary.

It prefers alluvial forests and dense shrublands, but will even forage in the city. It is omnivorous and explores its surroundings by rooting.

The Fox is found almost everywhere, as its natural habitat has become more restricted, and sometimes it searches for food in the cities. These mysterious, clever animals have become popular characters in fairy tales. Recent research suggests that they use the Earth's magnetic field to locate their prey.

Curiosity of Szigetköz...



Red Deer (*Capreolus capreolus*)



Roe Deer (*Capreolus capreolus*)



Northern White-breasted Hedgehog (*Eurosciurus rubicatus*)



It prefers deciduous forests interspersed with meadows. Hungary's largest ruminant, biungulate game. The males have antlers, which can grow up to 8-10 kg. They shed their antlers at the end of each winter and regrow them each spring.

It occurs in alluvial forest, forest edges, and agricultural areas. Bucks can be distinguished from does by their antlers. The deer of our fairy tales is a very charming, kind animal, but in reality, it does not need human help, so never take an abandoned fawn home!

It can be found in wooded, shrubby areas as well as in populated settlements. It starts looking for food at dusk, which consists mainly of earthworms and snails, but also eats fallen fruit and sometimes eggs. Its spines are thickened fur formations. It is a protected species in Hungary.

DID YOU KNOW?

Tundra Vole (*Microtus oeconomus*)
 In Hungary, it occurs in three areas of the Transdanubian region, one of which is Szigetköz. It occurs mostly in high-altitude areas (floodplains with shallow water or only intermittently covered with water). A protected animal threatened with extinction.



22 MAY: INTERNATIONAL DAY FOR BIOLOGICAL DIVERSITY

In 2001, the United Nations (UN) designated 22 May as the International Day for Biological Diversity. This great day was celebrated in our country for the first time in 2004. Celebrate the day with a picnic, discover the flora and fauna of your surroundings, walk around the AgriNatur paths.



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