

Analyzing human-wildlife interactions in shared landscapes

Department: Sustainable Development

Research group: Environmental Sciences and Energy & Resources

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Project description

Conflicts between humans and wildlife are a key sustainability and conservation issue for rural areas worldwide. In the Carpathian mountains on the Czech-Slovak border, the return of large carnivores has brought new challenges for sheep farmers. Alongside predator attacks on livestock, agricultural damages to pastures and orchards caused by wild boar and deer also add to conflicts between humans and wildlife. At the same time, land use change and increasing tourist activities in the forest may impact wildlife presence in the landscape. In this project, we study the effects of land-use change and other anthropogenic factors on wildlife distributions. Camera traps, placed in both forested areas and on agricultural land, record the presence of animals and levels of human activity. The Bright Minds assistant will (i) assist in the processing of photographs collected by the camera traps. This includes identification of wildlife species and the recording of other parameters of each encounter logged by the cameras; and (ii) run a preliminary analysis to identify patterns of wildlife presence based on land use type (forest/pasture) and the presence of humans and domestic animals. Expect wildlife photographs from funny to majestic, and experience a window into life in a European forest! The preliminary analysis will inform the design for a field-based study to monitor wildlife on agricultural land in the study region in summer 2023.

If the developments in the Covid-19 situation requires severe reaching restrictions, the project can be continued working from home with remote access to the data and with online meetings with the supervisors.

Job requirements

We are looking for a motivated student with an interest in wildlife and human-nature interactions. Experience with statistical analysis is useful but not a requirement.