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FEATURES OF THE DISTRIBUTION OF THE DORMOUSE (*GLIS GLIS*) ON THE PERIPHERY OF ITS RANGE (USING THE EXAMPLE OF BROADLEAF AND CONIFEROUS-BROADLEAF FORESTS IN THE NIZHNY NOVGOROD REGION)

A.V. Shchegolkov[1], V.N. Yakimov[2], D.M. Krivonogov[3], V.N. Orlov[4]

[1, 3] *Lobachevsky State University of Nizhny Novgorod (Arzamas Branch), Arzamas, Russia*
[2] *Lobachevsky State University of Nizhny Novgorod, Nizhny Novgorod, Russia*
[4] *Severtsov Institute of Ecology and Evolution, Russian Academy of Sciences, Moscow, Russia*
[1] *mister.shegolkov@yandex.ru,* [2] *damselfly@yandex.ru,* [3] *deniskrivonogov@mail.ru,* [4] *orlovvic@yandex.ru*

Abstract. The dormouse is a specialized dendrophilous species, favoring broadleaf forests. A large number of dormouse habitats on the East European Plain have been reduced due to intensive economic activity. As a result, the dormouse is listed in the Red Data Books of 13 regions of the Russian Federation. The aim of this study was to identify factors influencing the presence (or absence) of the dormouse in the forests of the Nizhny Novgorod Region at the northern boundary of its range. Using artificial nests, 25 fragments of broadleaf and mixed-coniferous forests in 11 districts of the Nizhny Novgorod Region were surveyed from 2014 to 2024. The analysis showed that dormice are found only in relict old-growth forests 200 years old or more, avoiding oak forests 150-200 years old. Their presence is influenced by factors such as forest type, stand density, and canopy density. The structure of forest layers is also important. A well-developed understory with a high proportion of common hazel, as well as oak and linden, is essential. No correlation was found between forest fragment size and soil type. The obtained results indicate the need to protect fragments of primary old-growth broadleaf forests, which contain a set of specific characteristics that play a key role in maintaining a stable dormouse population on the northern periphery of its range.

Keywords: common dormouse, stand age, crown density, fragmentation, vegetation structure

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