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Volume 28, 2018 - [Issue 3](#)

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# Spatial and temporal separation between the golden jackal and three sympatric carnivores in a human-modified landscape in central Bulgaria

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Pages 172-179 | Received 27 Mar 2018, Accepted 23 Jul 2018, Published online: 05 Sep 2018

Cite this article <https://doi.org/10.1080/21658005.2018.1504406>

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## ABSTRACT

The range of the golden jackal (*Canis aureus*) in Europe has expanded from southern regions northward and westward, raising concerns of increased competitive interactions with other carnivores. In Europe, the jackal is most common in Bulgaria, where it co-occurs with several other carnivore species. We investigated the spatial occurrence and daily activities of golden jackals and three smaller sympatric carnivores: the red fox (*Vulpes vulpes*), the European badger (*Meles meles*) and the stone marten (*Martes foina*). Using camera trapping in spring and summer in a human-modified landscape of central Bulgaria, we ascertained that red foxes were separated from jackals spatially, whereas badgers and martens were active at different times of the day. We suggest that differences in resource partitioning between jackals and the three smaller

carnivore species were associated with a variation in resource use patterns (e.g., food or microhabitats). Our findings indicate that spatial/temporal separation allows smaller species to avoid direct confrontations and agonistic competitions with jackals, resulting in successful co-occurrence.

#### KEYWORDS:

Canis aureus

competition

ecological niche

intra-guild interaction

spatial niche

temporal niche

## Acknowledgments

The authors would like to thank two anonymous reviewers for their fruitful comments on the draft and Enago ([www.enago.jp](http://www.enago.jp)) for the English language review.

## Disclosure statement

No potential conflict of interest was reported by the authors.

## Additional information

### Funding

The study was conducted as an international partnership agreement between Trakia University and Tokyo University of Agriculture and Technology. The study was supported by Japan Society for the Promotion of Science [JSPS KAKENHI JP26257404] for HT and YK.

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