

Predation and survival in populations of Common hamster in the Netherlands

We have collected survival data of more than 800 hamsters in the Netherlands during a 15-year period. Predation by foxes, birds of prey and small mustelids was the main cause of mortality. Male common hamsters had much lower survival rates during the active season compared to females, which corresponds with the 'risky male hypothesis'. Survival rates of females seems too low for a sustainable population and more optimal environmental conditions are needed. Hamster conservationists need to look at more than only survival rates of adults, it is also important to look at habitat connectivity, effects of weather on reproduction and alternative ways of agriculture management on a landscape scale.

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