



ACTIVITY AND MOVEMENT PATTERNS OF DISPERSING WOLVES

I. Kojola, S. Heikkinen, J. Suutarinen

*Finnish Game and Fisheries Research Institute, Oulu Game and Fisheries
Research, Tutkijantie 2 E, FI-90570 Oulu*

We examined seasonal and diurnal activity pattern and road use by dispersing wolves (*Canis lupus*) in Finland, by collaring pup and yearling wolves with radio and GPS-GSM transmitters in easternmost Finland. Dispersal went by unimodal seasonal fashion; wolves depart their natal territories in spring (March-May). We could analyze details of movement behaviour for GPS-collared wolves ($n = 15$ individuals). The dispersal phase (time from the last position inside the natal territory to the first position inside the new territory) ranged between 6 – 289 days, the length of the travelling route (at 4 hours interval) ranged from 122 to 3 950 km and the dispersal distance from 60 to 470 km. Similar to territorial, resident animals, dispersing wolves go by pronounced daily rhythm. The distance travelled is longest in the night (between 20 and 04 hours), however, there is lot of variation between individuals: some wolves show striking, while some only moderate differences between night and day. Resident wolves are known to use small forest roads as movement routes but that was not the case with dispersing wolves. When dispersal took less than one week, wolves moved straightforward to the final destination but in long-term dispersal movement the destination was straightforward only during the last days of dispersal phase.

