

Systematic and Ecological Survey on Coccidians (Apicomplexa: Eucoccidida) in European Ground Squirrel (*Spermophilus citellus* L.) (Rodentia: Sciuridae) from Bulgaria

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Abstract: The study based on 109 examined coprological samples from the European ground squirrel (*Spermophilus citellus*) from 10 localities in Bulgaria shows the presence of 4 species of Eucoccidians: *Eimeria citelli* Kartchner & Becker, 1930 (Prevalence: 92.7%), *E. callospermophilli* Henry, 1932 (Prevalence: 66.6%), *E. cynomysis* Andrews, 1928 (Prevalence: 14.6%) and *Klossia* sp. (Prevalence: 6.3%). Data on coccidian invasion, depending on the age and sex of the hosts, as well as the problem of mixed invasions, are discussed. A more detailed morphological and biometrical description of *Klossia* sp. oocysts is given and the problem of parasitism of this species in vertebrate hosts is also discussed.

Key words: Coccidia, *Eimeria*, *Klossia*, *Spermophilus citellus*, prevalence, ecology