

Part 3.5. Interspecific relations. Dogs and rats. Dogs and cats.

3.5. Interspecific relations of stray dogs as actual examples of the laws of the urban environment.

The relationships of stray dogs with other animals reflect the general patterns that have been shown above. Man-made ecological niches and the possibility of filling them create situations in which certain behavioral scenarios and environmental relationships are realized.

3.5.1. Dogs and rats.

Interspecific relationships depend both on the food preferences of the two species (in this respect, one species can be a source of food for the other or compete with it for food) and on the features of the spatial division of the joint urban habitat (that is, on how much the living spaces of species, their ecological niches intersect). When considering interspecific relations, it is necessary to take into account that periodic direct contact of individuals of different species (in the form of predation - persecution and eating by one animal of another, or direct competition for food) may not be the main factor characterizing the mutual influence of the populations of these species. Indirect, indirect relationships may be more important for populations as a whole. This is exactly what is the case in the relationship between stray dogs and gray rats – species whose ecological niches are quite noticeably separated spatially (despite the close proximity), and the source of food can be the same.

a. Rat hunting. The ratio of stray dogs to gray rats at the level of individual individuals varies from almost complete indifference (dogs and rats can simultaneously eat food offered by dog guardians from the same vessel) to active hunting of dogs for rats.

Our observations in Petrozavodsk showed the presence of periodic hunting interest of dogs in rodents in open areas. So, dogs chased and caught rats that came to the surface on asphalt sites, sometimes in the grass. Periodically, dogs try to catch a spotted rat under the snow. Dogs are particularly interested in mousening in open areas during intense spring snowmelt and immediately after it, during this period they try to get rodents (rats, as well as other rodents, for example, voles) in melting snow passages. A rodent, if it can be caught, is not always eaten – that is, there is an

incomplete predation (see below the relationship between stray dogs and cats). Young dogs sometimes like to play with a dead rat (often killed not by them, but picked up), dragging it in their teeth.

The extremely small importance of rodents as a food resource for stray dogs was shown by a study conducted in Kazan. E. Shamsuvaleeva during the opening of the stomachs of 125 dogs caught and killed by the city trapping service in the first half of 2004, did not find the remains of rats and mice. The basis of the diet was food waste (Shamsuvaleeva E.M. Features of the ecology of dogs in Kazan and its environs. Abstract of the dissertation for the degree of Candidate of Biological Sciences. M. 2009).



Photo 1. Mouseing a stray dog in winter. Petrozavodsk.



Photo 2. Bushes dug in the spring by dogs in search of rodents in the park of Petrozavodsk.

Hunting behavior of stray dogs in relation to rats is not always observed. Sometimes researchers in individual cities do not fix it at all. Thus, omsk authors M. Makenov, B. Sidorov and G. Kassal (2006) note that they have not observed it for several years: "for 2001-2006 - the period of visual observations of 554 pariah dogs (as the authors call stray dogs - V.R.) and 103 packs of these animals have never recorded an active attack of dogs on rats (in contrast to cats)" (Makenov M., Sidorov B. and Kassal G. Biotic relations of dogs-pariahs with gray rats and other animals // "Veterinary pathology" No. 2 (17), 2006).

b. "Co-eating" - joint eating of food, purposefully provided to dogs by people. However, the relationship between dogs and rats is much more diverse and complex and at the population level can be quite favorable for rodents. When studying permanent rookeries, begging areas and other places of social activity of dogs, traces of rats staying there were often recorded. Thus, an expressive example of cohabitation of stray dogs and rats was recorded at the shelter-den of a large pack in one of the Petrozavodsk industrial zones.

The accumulation of rats was observed under a railway car removed from the wheels, converted into a pantry by road workers - there was also a permanent shelter-den of a pack of stray dogs (6-7 individuals) and pack periodically brought offspring. Rats were observed both in the daytime and in the dark, at the same time there were up to three rodents in sight, they actively moved in the dog den under the car and on the site next door, often near the puppies. If there are solitary rats or groups of them in the field of view during daylight hours, it is possible to draw an estimated conclusion about the very high population of this room (site) with rodents (see Karaseva E.V., Telitsyna A.Yu. Methods for studying rodents in the field. M.: Nauka, 1996). Thus, in the car and the adjacent rooms and underground communications, apparently, there is a large accumulation (colony) of gray rats. This is facilitated by a plentiful local forage base.

Rats, trying not to contact directly with adult dogs, actively searched for and ate the remains of food brought to the den by the guardians of dogs, as well as the remains of food from food packages (bags, cans, etc.), which the dogs themselves dragged into the den. The rats partially ate a dead puppy that died in the den (apparently from toxocariasis) and a dead cat killed and brought to the den by the pack's dogs. There were no cases of dog harassment of rats in the vicinity of the car during the observations. The crampedness of the den itself, the numerous narrow crevices and burrows of rats along its periphery, the dense herbaceous vegetation in the neighborhood, the adjacent small technical rooms and underground communications would make the capture of rats a difficult task for dogs, if they were even actively interested in this kind of hunting (an example of the spatial separation of ecological

niches).



Photo 3. Puppies of a gregarious stray dog in the den under the wagon.



Photo 4. A rat in the same den heads to the remains of the guardians' offerings (the puppies are hidden in the depths of the hole)



Photo 5. Two rats deep in the den under the wagon.



Photo 6. A cat skull found in a den. (A dead cat recently killed by dogs was found in the same den.)



Photo 7. A dead cat in the den.

In another case, there was a close proximity of rats with a single conditionally supervised dog that lived on a construction site. The guardians built for her an improvised insulated booth from construction debris, boards, pieces of plywood, which in several layers overlapped the living chamber of the kennel. Between these "overlaps" and lived rats, a total number of at least 15 individuals, feeding on the remains of the offerings of guardians - it turned out this when disassembling the booth.

There was even a simultaneous feeding of a rat and a stray dog from the same tray, on which the dog guardians brought food. While the dog ate bread soaked in milk on one side of the tray, the rat pulled the pieces from the other.



Photo 8. Joint consumption of food by a stray dog and a gray rat. Petrozavodsk.

c. "Freeloading" - rats benefit from dog gathering. As mentioned, rats can not only eat after dogs the remains of food brought by people – they can also benefit from the independent activity of dogs to get food. Stray dogs regularly search garbage containers, actively digging into them, taking out bags of garbage from there, tearing and shaking them. Sometimes the containers just flip over. This makes the food from them much more accessible to rodents, which find it difficult to get to food waste along the high walls of garbage cans. In addition, rats can feed on scraps brought by dogs to the den.

By the way, rats eating dog feces was noted. This corresponds to some observations of the American researcher A. Beck, who showed the possibility of joint feeding of stray dogs and rats: "In addition, sanitary and epidemiological workers and local residents in the area of my study observed rats eating dog feces, and, indeed, rats are

most often found in alleys with a high level of contamination with dog feces. Garbage from upside-down and dog-gutted containers and feces appear to be important components of the rat food chain" (Beck A. The Life and Times of Shag , a feral dog in Baltimore // Natural History . 1971. vol .80, P .60-61.)

Thus, rats here act as one of the sides of "commensalism" in the form of co-dination and freeloading - the relationship of species, when only one of the partner species benefits from the vital activity of the other. In this case, rats benefit from coexistence with dogs, for the dogs themselves, the presence of rats does neither direct harm nor direct benefit.

d. Other forms of influence. Regarding the competition of dogs and rats for resources, it can be pointed out that such interaction of these species seems to be limited to situations where there is no feeding of dogs by guardians, and garbage is equally accessible to both rats and dogs (for example, village containerless cesspools, landfills, etc., where rats do not depend on the mining activities of dogs).

Another important aspect in interspecies relations is the indirect, indirect influence of dogs on rats by suppressing the number of representatives of another species, namely cats (see below). For rodents, the proverb is justified in this regard: "The enemy of my enemy is my friend." That is, an additional factor favoring rats is the extermination by stray dogs (primarily pack dogs), street cats - both homeless and possessed on free range. Passing through yards at night and destroying cats, dogs return to their daily permanent beds ("daytime"), leaving yards at the disposal of rodents. The deratization function of cats does not require much explanation - moreover, the stronger than in dogs, the effect of hunting cats on rats and mice is helped by the smaller size of the cat (contributing to penetration into basements and other voids) and a lower tendency to wide movements (contributing to the concentration of hunting efforts in a small area). Of course, not every cat is able to hunt adult rats, but provided that there are a lot of cats, there are always individuals in their environment who are motivated and able to do this. As with dogs, young animals adopt hunting techniques from adults – making them more effective hunters. In addition, any cat is dangerous for pups and house mice. It is known that residents of rural areas actively use possessive and "conditionally supervised" cats to protect their homes and outbuildings from rodents. In the old days, small holes were made in the doors of all outbuildings in the Russian North for the passage of cats; and in England and the United States there is even a special term - "barn cat" (barn cat) for a special ecological "subtype" of these animals, which farmers traditionally kept and keep in their farmstead in order to combat rodents. Something similar is sometimes observed in cities: for example, in Petrozavodsk, residents of one of the apartment buildings on Pushkinskaya Street used a colony of stray cats as a shield against rodents, protecting stocks of potatoes and other products stored in the

basement in individual sheds. (Indeed, in the locations of cat colonies, the presence of rats by home residents is less common.) The mentioned colony of cats was almost completely destroyed by a pack of dogs that penetrated the basement.

So, for dogs, rats are rather an accidental, "optional" prey, which they hunt not for food, but for temporary pleasure. And this does not cause serious damage to the rat population. The core of the rat kingdom - various narrow dungeons and burrows - are unattainable for dogs. (In other words, their ecological niches are quite spatially separated.) In addition, the lifestyle of urban stray dogs is accompanied not so much by competition with rats for food, but, on the contrary, by the appearance of a large amount of food waste available to rats. As already mentioned, it can also be bags of garbage torn apart by dogs, from which pieces accessible to rats fell out. These may be the remnants of the abundant offerings of people - dog "guardians". So numerous rats become freeloaders of individual dogs and whole packs at the places of their permanent dislocation. The fact that some rats become dog prey is a sign that there are a lot of rodents in the city and they feel confident in allowing themselves to walk in the "open air", the only place where they are vulnerable to dogs. So, in Moscow, during the CNVR program, against the background of a large number of stray dogs, an abundance of rats was observed - which even the ideologist of the program A.D. Poyarkov had to admit, who associated this phenomenon with abundant guardianship feeding of dogs, from which rats also fall.

Findings:

- despite the close proximity of the habitats of gray rats and stray dogs in the urban environment, the main shelters of rats are inaccessible to dogs (relatively small overlapping of ecological niches in spatial terms);
- Dogs and rats partially share the food base among themselves, while competition for it occurs only under certain conditions of relatively equal availability and scarcity of food resources;
- There is periodic hunting of dogs for rats, however, confined mainly to open stations (undeveloped space between buildings, lawns, etc.), hunting is often of a game nature and is not accompanied by eating prey, in all likelihood usually does not represent a factor limiting the number of rat populations;
- There are a number of environmental factors associated with dogs, apparently locally favorable for the rat population: 1. commensalism of two species (in the form of co-dining) near dens and shelters - rats eating the remains of handouts to dogs by humans, as well as dog feces, 2. commensalism of two species (in the form of freeloaders), when one of the forms of dog food production is potentially favorable for rats - gathering, or rather, searching for food in dumpsters, accompanied by

pulling, tearing and shaking plastic bags with garbage, 3. a by-product of the predominantly playful (incomplete) predation of dogs in relation to a species dangerous to rats - namely the destruction of cats. These circumstances obviously lead to the maintenance of a significant number of rats in the habitats of dense canine urban subpopulations.

So rats, paying tribute to dogs with their individual representatives, win by population.

Therefore, in general, the fear that with a decrease in the number of stray dogs, the number of rats will increase is untenable. After all, in this case, the food base of rodents is more likely to decrease than grow; and the decrease in competition with dogs or the weakening of the pressure of predation by dogs will hardly be noticed by the rodent population due to their already weak impact. In addition, in the event of the disappearance of packs, the number of cats on the streets will increase (where conditions allow). Observations in cities with a relatively small number of stray dogs (Karelian Kondopoga) do not give grounds to talk about the dominance of rats there.

Similar trophic assistance was observed in the relations of dogs with another synanthropic species - the gray crow (sometimes jackdaws, pigeons, sparrows). The crows consumed food (garbage) that spilled out of the bags torn apart by the dogs. Synanthropic birds willingly consume half-eaten dog food - offerings of guardians on city streets.

3.5.2. Stray dogs and cats. The ecological niches of dogs and cats overlap in space much more noticeably than the niches of dogs and rats. The reason for this is the relatively large size of cats and their lifestyle (the need for periodic access to the surface even in the presence of shelters in basements).

a. Ecological and behavioral characteristics of the relationship between stray dogs and cats.

In some cases, the relationship between stray dogs and cats is mutually neutral, especially with a low population density of stray dogs - dogs (usually solitary, with a low degree of ferality, conditionally supervised) coexist with cats (stray or possessive) in the same yard. In this case, dogs from an early age are familiar with cats, animals are mutually relatively socialized. Living in the same territory, they receive food from the same people, or on the same dumpsters. Such coexistence is also characteristic of owner dogs and cats in rural settlements. Dog attacks on cats occur but are

comparatively rare; especially dangerous are excited males during dog weddings; the hunting of individual dogs for cats is also regularly noted. Cats, for their part, can show aggression towards dogs - when a foreign dog invades the cat's habitat, especially cats with kittens. But with the relatively high population density of stray dogs, and especially with the pack structure of subpopulation of stray dogs, dog hunting for cats is the predominant type of relationship between species, which has a real impact on the number of one of them.

As already mentioned, in many Russian settlements, a characteristic feature of the social structure of subpopulations of stray dogs is the presence of permanent dog groups - packs. In cities and rural areas, packs of dogs constantly attack domestic and stray cats walking in yards. (If the subpopulation of dogs consists of solitary animals, the danger is less).

In form, such behavior is hunting, but without eating prey ("incomplete predation", as defined by the Omsk biologist M. Makenov). The complete definition of predation as one of the types of interspecies (biotic) relations is "the ecological interaction of two species, when organisms of one species are killed and eaten by organisms of another." Predation is the process of transferring organic matter (and therefore energy) from one organism to another through a food chain. For the vast majority of stray dogs (all environmental types of conditionally supervised and semi-feral, both pack and solitary), it is not energetically significant, since most of the diet they receive from other sources. But by recognizing the present, complete predation (i.e., with eating prey) of dogs in relation to cats as a trophic interaction as a relatively rare occurrence, we cannot conclude that it is rare for dogs to hunt cats without the purpose of eating. Namely, killing without eating is the main form of attack in which cats die. Dogs usually do not eat them, but, having killed and played, throw them.

Apparently, this can be considered as one of the forms of game hunting behavior, so characteristic of higher predators. It develops, apparently, on the basis of the innate desire of wolves (and their descendants of dogs) to pursue and "try on the tooth" an animal that is a potential prey in size and behavior, for example, running away and small. (For details, you can refer to the capital works of Y.K. Badridze on the hunting behavior of dogs). Chasing, capturing a victim, and playing with killing are themselves sources of such positive emotions that they do not require additional reinforcement in the form of eating – especially if the predator is relatively full or, perhaps in the city, simply "does not know" that the killed body is edible. (As Badridze showed, puppies fed ready-made "lump" food simply do not realize that there is something edible under the skin of the victim, unless there is significant damage to the skin and bleeding from wounds.) Needless to say, dogs in the city are accustomed to garbage, and not "steamed meat".

Maybe the excessive "puppy" playfulness of dogs also plays a role. According to some authors, including those who studied stray dogs, for example, Alan Beck, when

domesticating, a person preferred less aggressive and more playful individuals, who to a greater extent retained the "puppy" behavior, that is, characteristic of the early stages of development.

Only the early socialization of the dog into cats, for example, when living together in the owner's apartment, can partially prevent the pursuit and destruction of cats by dogs. For stray dogs, the possibility of such socialization is very limited. In addition, often, recognizing individual "own", "familiar" cats, stray dogs that grew up with them in the same yard, nevertheless, can attack strangers outside the central zone of their habitat.

(Of course, you can come up with fantastic ways out of the situation that do not require the complete elimination of neglect, however, they require a slightly different level of technology than the current ones. For example, the total introduction of special microchips into street cats and dogs, which track the mutual location of animals with the help of radio signals and suppress, for example, with the help of unpleasant impulses, the desire of dogs to approach the cat at a dangerous distance. Theoretically, this is quite possible, as shown by the experiments of the same Y. Badridze, who weaned wolves returning to nature, to hunt livestock with the help of electric shocks from an electrified collar. By the way, it will be possible to control other aspects of animal behavior in this way, providing the functions of an absolute bodyguard. But, alas, we live in a world where such dreams are still beyond the horizon of the future. In addition, I am afraid that by that time some apologists for the evolving radical biocentrism will see such mechanisms as unjustified interference in the privacy of animals and a "violation" of their rights. Such a paradox is also possible. But back to our not at all fabulous, but very unsightly reality.)

Such deadly "games" in conditions of high density of dogs can not but be massive. As already mentioned, especially dangerous for cats is the pack hunting of dogs, when the dogs, having divided, cut off all the possibilities of retreat to the victim. The need for the regular manifestation of such behaviors seems to be dictated by the innate tendency for dogs to create and maintain close groups, while it is important to periodically hone group forms of behavior, such as hunting. Beginners master and consolidate the techniques of penning prey, focusing on the behavior of experienced animals. This leads to more efficient food extraction. In nature, this has a biological meaning, and in the city it works idle, and only leads to an increase in the number of dogs that know how and love to drive cats and even specifically look for them for this. In the natural environment, the behavior of animals usually meets the ecological feasibility, in the city - artificial education - we see serious violations of this rule.

So, it's just hunting for hunting's sake. From the point of view of biotic trophic relations at the population level, dogs gain almost nothing from this "entertainment" – another example of the meaninglessness of the homeless existence of domestic animals. They do not receive substances and energy from cats (since this is mostly

not predation for eating, which we have already found out). Is it possible to consider this as a useful competition for food for dogs - in the form of a competitive exclusion of a species occupying a similar ecological niche? But such interaction is insignificant, often the advantage obtained for dogs is minimal, especially if the main share of the dog's food is obtained by begging on the streets and from their guardians-"dog owners", and cats - from guardians-"cat owners", that is, the food resources of the two species are markedly different. Therefore, rather, we have here a more extraordinary version of the relationship. Such interspecies interaction— the suppression of one species by another without any gain or loss to itself — is sometimes called amensalism, applying it mainly to the plant world (e.g., suppressing one plant by another when it is shaded). By the way, some authors argue that this term in its etymology is not an antonym of "commensalism", but comes from the Latin word *amens* - "insane"; the term is quite adequate for the consequences of the ill-considered introduction of CNVR. Such a unilateral influence in relation to species of large animals is quite rare in natural conditions. Its danger is that there is no feedback between the prey species and the hunter species; in extreme cases, the hunter may very much undermine or completely exterminate the prey population, but he himself will not "feel" this (or feel it indirectly if the victim played an important role in the stability of the ecosystem, occupying an important place in the trophic chains).

Needless to say, given the extremely simplistic nature of the relationships between species in the urban animal community, the mass destruction of cats will not have even an indirect environmental impact on dogs. The only negative consequence for stray dogs lies in another sphere - socio-psychological, since the destruction of cats (often in front of their owners and guardians, including children) does not add love among the population to stray dogs (which there is repeated evidence).

And one more negative point. The urban "amensalism" of dogs towards cats tends to last indefinitely. The tragedy of the situation is not that dogs can once and for all catch all urban street cats, and, therefore, the destruction will be stopped, but that such a rather massive death can last and last. Often, dogs greatly reduce the number of cats on the streets, but do not destroy them completely. There is a process similar to lawn mowing or partially effective municipal trapping (see part 5.1). Cats are an even more prolific species than dogs. In the conditions of overproduction of possessive cats, many animals are thrown into the streets. In the urban environment, shelters (uncovered basements, attics) are preserved, where discarded cats are able to reproduce. Therefore, the flow of young cats to the streets – that is, subsequently into the teeth of dogs – will still continue.

This phenomenon is well illustrated by the studies of E. and S. Ilyinsky in Moscow - observations of cat colonies (Ilyinsky E. A., Ilyinskaya S.O., Dogs, as dominant predators in urban ecosystems. // "Veterinary pathology", No. 2 (17), 2006). With the appearance of numerous packs in residential areas, where cat colonies were located

in the basements of high-rise buildings, a mass death of cats from attacks by stray dogs began to be observed. The size of the colonies decreased, some were exterminated completely. Dogs watched cats out of the hallways leading out of the cellars. If the flock has the opportunity to get directly into the basement, the death of the colony occurs almost immediately.



Photo 9. A young cat killed by dogs. The abdominal cavity was opened. Petrozavodsk.

b. Forms and methods of hunting. As already mentioned, pack hunting is the most common type of dog hunting for cats. More often it occurs at night, when the flock leaves the core of its habitat ("daytime", a place of constant lying down and daytime activity) and begins to comb through the surroundings (being in the "buffer" zone). Dogs often know the locations of cat colonies and include them in their itinerary. Sometimes a pack can stay for several hours at the basement, guarding cats.

Obviously, the most vulnerable cats are located on the surface of the earth (openly moving around their habitat), as well as enthusiastic about hunting rodents or searching for food in containers. Dogs take advantage of their greater stature, often noticing cats much earlier. However, chance encounters are also common, when a cat unexpectedly encounters dogs, for example, exploring bushes or a garbage site. Seeing a cat, the pack usually immediately rushes into pursuit, often scattering, trying to cut off the escape routes of the victim. Invisible to the cat, the initial hiding of the victim is less common and characteristic of solitary dogs. When throwing, experienced dogs follow ahead, the young learn from their example. Hunting causes extreme excitement in dogs, a cat captured by one dog tries to intercept other members of the pack, sometimes "dragging" a still living animal among themselves. / p Throwing and chasing a cat, and its further dragging and dragging is accompanied by a characteristic bay "hunting" bark of the pack (although the first phases of the pursuit can take place in silence). If the cat manages to climb a tree - dogs bark at it there, sometimes for several hours; if the tree (or pillar) is low - try to jump to the cat. The cat, hidden under the car, they try to pull out, climbing up after it. Sometimes the cat, having escaped from the dogs (to a tree or to the basement), dies later - from extensive internal bleeding. As a rule, long-dead prey is not played - sometimes thrown on the spot, but can also be dragged away - up to the "day".

Killed cats often do not have particularly noticeable external injuries - except for the coat peeled and crumpled by dogs (owners or passers-by who found the cat the next morning sometimes think that the cat was hit with a stick or hit by a car). In winter, the snow near the dead cat is dotted with dog tracks. At the autopsy, puncture penetrating wounds of the chest cavity, ruptures of internal organs are usually detected. If the cat was dragged longer - usually a wound on the back is found; or an incomplete attempt at eating - an open abdominal cavity.

In addition to pack hunting (usually at night), there is also an individual one - as already mentioned, some solitary dogs can be especially addicted to it. They are especially dangerous for kittens. Although in cities where there are no packs (the "threshold of pack formation" has not been crossed), individual hunting does not have the character of a serious population impact on cats - by the way, there is usually a significant part of stray dogs that are former owners, often socialized into cats in the owner's house. In such cities, you can often observe the joint feeding of dogs and cats from the same guardians, or joint presence on dumpsters (something similar was observed by A. Beck in the American city of Baltimore in the 70s).

In addition, both pack dogs and loners (more often females) can bring dead cats into the dens of puppies (a relic of the parental behavior of wolves). So, in the Filyovsky Park of Moscow in the spring of 2008, for almost two weeks in a booth (or next to a booth) with puppies of one of the packs living there, a dead cat was found daily (once two were found). Similar behavior was observed in Petrozavodsk. Puppies rarely eat cats (except for feral dog puppies).

Cats remain relatively safe only in the centers of vast residential areas with dense buildings, where flocks from their outskirts rarely wander, or in settlements where flocks for one reason or another are absent. Contributes to the relative safety of cats and increased mosaic environment - a classic example - manor buildings with individual yards, fenced fences.

Outside large settlements, the victims of dogs are often cats brought by the owners in the summer to the country - if a pack of dogs or their descendants was formed in the summer village or near it. The lack of high fences in suburban villages additionally makes cats very vulnerable.

The contrast between cities (medium and small), where there are numerous dog packs and cities where there are none, is often clearly visible even to an unsophisticated observer - by the presence of the last cats on the streets. When comparing two cities in Petrozavodsk and Kondopoga in 2006, it turned out that in Petrozavodsk (where packs of dogs are common and in residential areas where they penetrate from industrial zones), the population density of street (both owner and stray) cats is approximately three times less than in Kondopoga, a city where there were no dog packs. In Petrozavodsk, in residential areas with buildings of different

numbers of storeys, the density of subpopulation of stray dogs was 17.5 individuals per square kilometer. km., Among them there were packs, in addition, at night residential areas were visited by packs from industrial zones. Under these conditions, the population density of street cats is 14.5 individuals per sq. km. According to surveys of guardians of stray cats and owners of domestic cats, the main threat to the life of cats was precisely the attacks of packs. In Kondopoga, in a residential area similar in nature, the population density of stray dogs was estimated to be only 4.3 individuals per square kilometer, packs were absent; only relatively numerous solitary free-range dogs were observed. The number of cats on the streets was much greater - 48.5 individuals per square kilometer. km, there were whole clusters of cats (both owner and stray) at the entrances. According to the stories of cat guardians, dog attacks on them were rare, individual solitary dogs posed a danger to kittens.

Hunting behavior, similar to the above, packs of medium and large dogs, sometimes manifest themselves in relation to randomly encountered dogs of small size or other people's puppies - they can be killed with the participation of all members of the pack.

Findings. The nature of dog hunting for cats reflects the already mentioned feature of interspecies relations in the urban ecosystem. Hunting for the sake of hunting, "game hunting", "incomplete predation" are a consequence of the low dependence of the hunter species on the number of victims. After all, like all other significant species of urban fauna, the hunter species (a predator species, in our case - dogs) has the main source of food for human food, and does not depend on the results of hunting. The low energy dependence of the predator on the prey in combination with its predator-high population density (also a feature of the urban ecosystem) can lead to a very significant undermining of the prey population. Especially - if the ecological niches are noticeably overlapped in space (as in dogs and cats, but not dogs and rats), hunting does not require noticeable expenditure of energy, hunting behavior is highly motivated, causes positive emotions, and there are no restraining behavioral factors in the form of early (puppy) socialization of predators on prey. Similarly, stray dogs can affect representatives of wild fauna (in forest parks of large cities, in rural areas). Zoologists and hunters usually emphasize the extremely negative impact of dogs (having food in landfills or directly from people) on wild animals - from hedgehogs and birds nesting on the ground in Moscow to ungulates in different regions of the world and juvenile seals on the White Sea. And not always dogs even kill the victim directly. Typical are the observations of game pens by deer dogs in the United States, which led to exhaustion of the victim or her death when hitting a fence or when colliding with a car when trying to escape from dogs crossing the road.