



Oral Presentation

A new task for working dogs: Nature conservation studies

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Abstract

Today, dogs are seen as pets, domestic dogs and best friends of humans. However, they are increasingly being used for other purposes as well. Therefore, it is possible to differentiate between domestic dogs and working dogs. When it comes to working dogs, the first category that comes to mind are police dogs (narcotics, bomb disposal), search and rescue dogs and guide dogs. In addition, sports dogs can also be included in this group (agility, obedience and protection, dog sports with trainers). In addition to all these tasks, dogs are being used more and more in nature conservation studies. In this way, dogs can also help living things other than human beings. In some studies in the field of nature conservation, dogs are used to protect the ecosystem and endangered species. For example, Kangal dogs, which have been used as shepherd dogs in our country for years, are involved in the cheetah protection projects in Namibia. Another area where dogs are used in nature protection is Jack Russel dogs working in areas with high snake and mouse populations, just as cats were taken into homes during the medieval plague period. Breed selection is made in line with the tasks expected from the dogs, taking into account the breed characteristics. The dogs' ability to search for humans, both dead and alive, in earthquake zones and debris fields within the scope of search and rescue efforts is also useful in locating endangered animals and rare plants. Moreover, dogs can detect and identify specific species in animal feces. Thanks to the dogs working in the nature conservation area, in addition to rare plants, invasive plants can also be detected. Dogs can also participate in nature conservation activities in the areas of illegal animal trade and illegal hunting, similar to their common police or military dog duties.

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