

GROWTH AND SURVIVAL IN PIGLETS

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During five years (1985 to 1991), 299 Wild boar piglets between 2.5 and 19 kg were caught, sexed, weighed, marked using eartags and released in an enclosed reserve managed by the Office National de la Chasse (Chizé, West France, 2,660 ha, Fig. 1).

The aim of our analysis was to determine whether survival rates of Wild boar piglets depend on their growth rate. We constituted 14 groups of piglets based on sex, year of birth and weight at marking.

We then analyzed for each group the relationship between growth and survival estimated using recent capture-mark-recapture-models. We found high monthly survival rates (higher

than 0.85) whatever the sex, the year or the weight at marking. On the other hand, the daily growth rate was highly variable (from a loss of 10 g/die to an increase of 109 g/die). As expected from the high stability of piglet survivorship observed in this study, we did not find any relationship between growth and survival for piglets (Fig.2). These results strongly contrast with previous studies that usually report a marked positive relationship between growth and survival in young ungulates like Red deer, Roe deer or Reindeer. This suggests that Wild boar (and Suidae in general) could exhibit a different demographic tactic relatively to ruminants.



Figure 1 - Location of the study area.

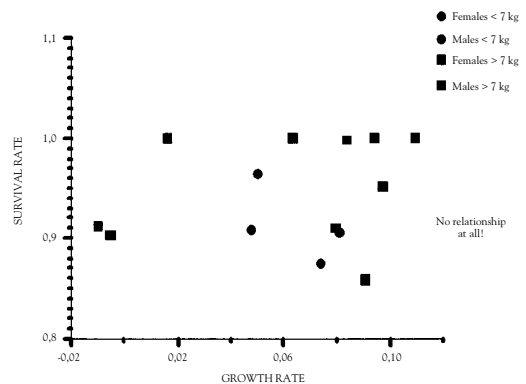


Figure 2 - Relation between growth rate and survival rate in piglets.