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Popularity of bull type terriers in Poland in the years 2002–2009

Popularność terierów typu bull w Polsce w latach 2002–2009

Summary. In the last decade it has been observed that more and more fighting dog breeds are kept in cities as companion dogs. The aim of the study was to analyze the stock of bull type terriers in Poland. The study was based on the data of breeding elaborated every year by the Main Board of the Polish Kennel Club (2002–2009). Additionally, quantitative data was analyzed from dog show catalogues from three biggest international shows in Poland. A significant decline in American Staffordshire Terriers popularity (about 42.64%) and in Bull Terriers (about 21.45%) was observed. Observing the breeding animals, the relation of breeding females to registered females increased. Decline in the number of litters per one breeding female was observed in the breeds: American Staffordshire Terrier and Staffordshire Bull Terrier. For the eight analyzed years American Staffordshire Terriers have been the most numerous breed among bull type terriers, in spite of a gradual decrease. A decline of popularity might be linked to cases of serious human and other dogs' injuries caused by bull type terriers. Legal regulations of the European Union countries restrict or ban breeding and possessing of American Staffordshire Terriers and Staffordshire Bull Terriers. This results in the impossibility of showing these dogs at international dog shows in these countries. It might have an effect on the decline of popularity of bull type terriers in Poland among people who are oriented at dog shows.

Key words: bull type terriers, popularity, dangerous dogs, legal regulations, Poland

INTRODUCTION

Dog breeds have been divided by World Canine Organization (FCI – Federation Cynologique Internationale) into 10 groups related to the origin and performance. Terriers belong to group III; however, due to the diversity of dog breeds within that group, it

has been further sub-divided into 4 sections. Section 1 is composed of large and medium-sized terriers, section 2 of small-sized terriers, section 3 of bull-type terriers, and section 4 of toy terriers.

Bull-type terriers can be more often met in the city streets. Also media report more frequently the news on incidents involving this breed dogs that bit people. Pedigree dogs subject to registering by Polish Kennel Club, hence their number is approximately known. The problem that is out of statistical processing, consists in breed-type dogs reproduced by pseudo-breeders and pit bull-terriers imported from USA – breed that is not recognized by FCI, while acknowledged by AKC (American Kennel Club) and more often seen in Poland.

The survey aimed at analyzing the population status of bull-type terriers in Poland in reference to legal acts and the image of these dogs in other countries.

MATERIAL AND METHODS

Material for present survey consisted of data from breeding documents that have been worked out annually by Main Board of Polish Kennel Club and related to the breeding in Poland. The materials contain information on all registered individuals, stud dogs, breeding females, litters, and number of puppies born every year.

The paper also uses data from list on four bull-type terrier breeds from section 3: American Staffordshire Terrier, Bull Terrier, Miniature Bull Terrier, and Staffordshire Bull Terrier, originating from 2002–2009 [ZG ZKwP 2010].

Another source of information on popularity trends of particular breeds were catalogues from breed dogs presentations. The catalogues are published during each dog show in a form of a booklet and contain data on every presented dog, its name, birth date, fur cover color, origin, registration number, and PKR [Polish Pedigree Book], as well as list of breeders. In this study, the catalogue data for 2002–2009 from three the largest international dog shows organized in Katowice, Warsaw, and Poznań, are presented. The Katowice Show is one of the earliest international fair held in spring (March). The Warsaw Show is organized in summer – June, whereas the Poznań Show falls in November, which ends the show season in Poland. Comparisons take into account the total number of bull-type terriers presented at a given show with no division into sex or show classes [Katalogi Wystawowe Katowice, Poznań, Warszawa, 2002–2009]. All data were collected in a form of tables and figures. In order to determine the dynamics of population changes within analyzed breed dog group during given period, the absolute increase was calculated and presented as linear plot.

RESULTS

Within analyzed period of time, a considerable decrease of American Staffordshire Terriers popularity by almost 1000 animals was observed, which makes up 42.64%. The lowest number of this breed dogs was registered in 2009. Bull Terriers were also less popular, because their number dropped between 2002 and 2009 by 204 dogs (21.45%). Instead, the increase of population could be recorded for two other breeds. Number of Staffordshire Bull Terriers increased by 260 individuals, i.e. by 207.88%. In the case of

Bull Terriers, a systematic increase of interests in that breed could be observed by 2007, when their number increased almost ten times as compared to 2002. After the decrease of Miniature Bull Terriers registered in 2008, a re-increase of the breed interests occurred in subsequent year (Tab. 1).

Table 1. General number of males and females of bull terrier type registered in the Polish Kennel Club 2002–2009

Tabela 1. Ogólna liczba psów i suk ras terierów typu bull zarejestrowanych w ZKwP w latach 2002–2009

Breed/Rasa	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009
American Staffordshire Terrier	2139	2014	2100	2101	2001	1258	1497	1227
Bull Terrier	951	763	740	838	800	591	805	747
Bull Miniature Terrier	6	6	8	17	20	59	39	51
Staffordshire Bull Terrier	241	287	330	406	480	378	437	501

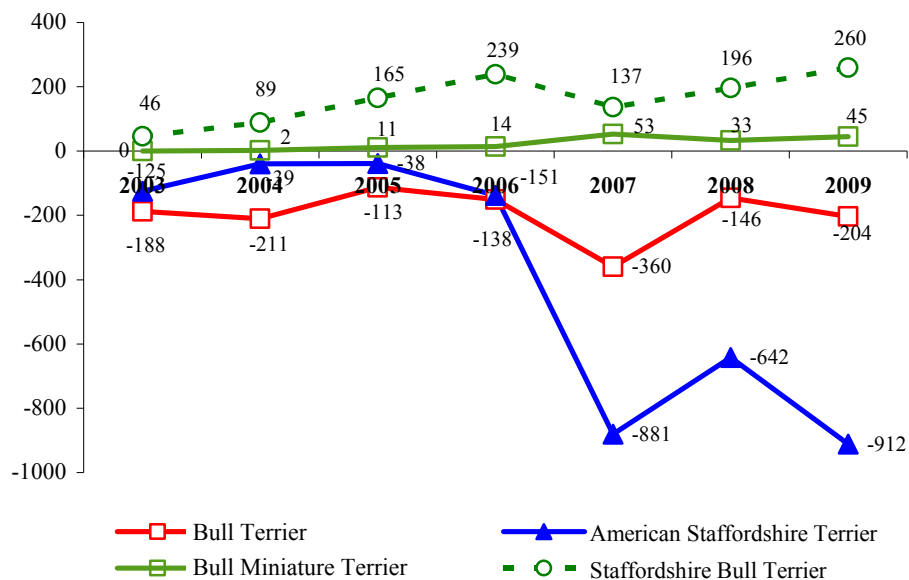


Fig. 1. Dynamism of change in number of bull terrier type dogs 2002–2009
Ryc. 1. Dynamika zmian liczebności terierów typu bull w latach 2002–2009

Figure 1 presents the dynamics of bull-type terriers population changes in Poland in 2002–2009.

Popularity of the breed was also confirmed by its presence at important international shows. The Katowice Show is the largest spring one (Fig. 2).

Despite of yearly decrease of terriers number presented at shows since 2004, the American Staffordshire Terrier breed enjoyed the largest popularity. Number of presented Bull Terriers and Staffordshire Bull Terriers was much lower, although in 2007, number of Bull Terriers was almost the same as that of popular American Staffordshire Terriers. An increase from a null presence in 2002 to 9 representatives in 2009 occurred in the case of Miniature Bull Terrier breed. The Staffordshire Bull Terrier breed showed a slight increasing tendency within eight analyzed years during the Katowice Show.

Like in Katowice, the american staffordshire terrier breed enjoyed the greatest popularity within bull-type terriers group during Warsaw Show (Fig. 3).

None of remaining dog breeds had similar population size as that of American Staffordshire Terriers at that show. Bull Terrier and Staffordshire Bull Terrier breeds kept their popularity at uniform levels. In the case of Staffordshire Bull Terrier breed an increasing tendency has began since 2004, while alternate increases and drops in the number of dogs announced for the Warsaw Show were observed for Bull Terriers, though the largest decrease was recorded in 2005. Similarly to small number of Miniature Bull Terrier breed dogs in Poland, the presence of this breed at Warsaw Show was also at the lowest level with no apparent increasing nor decreasing tendencies.

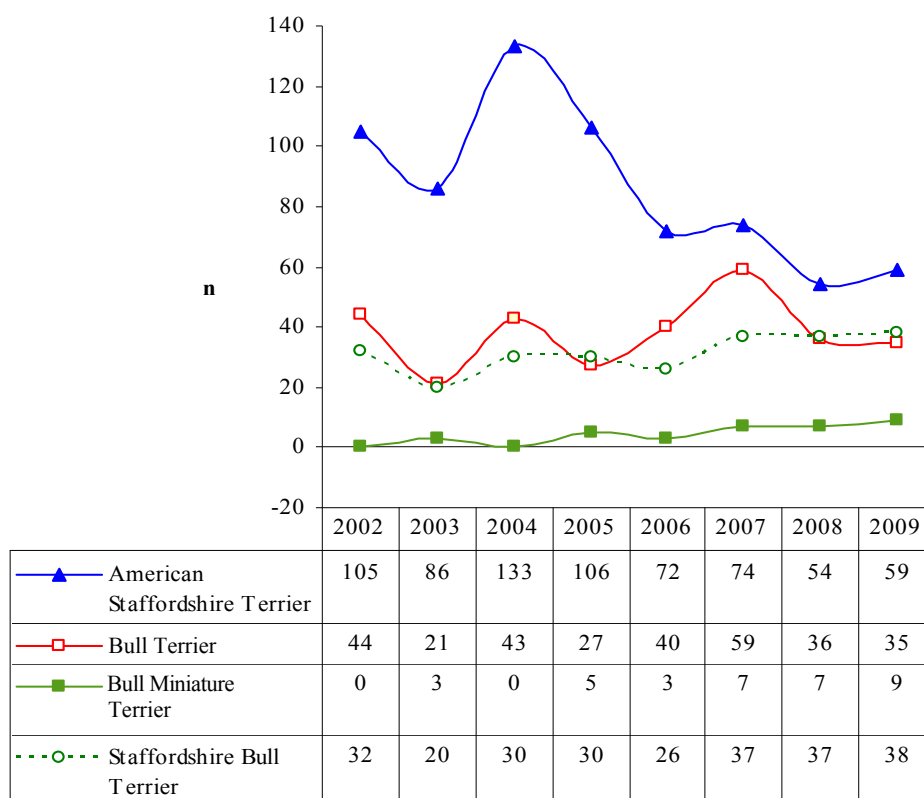


Fig. 2. Number of dog of bull terrier type shown in Katowice 2002–2009
Ryc. 2. Liczba psów poszczególnych ras z grupy terierów typu bull wystawianych w Katowicach w latach 2002–2009

Like in both previously described cities, the Poznań Show also unveiled a systematic decrease of presented American Staffordshire Terrier breed dogs number in 2002–2009, although it was still the most abundantly represented bull-type section breed. The Staffordshire Bull Terrier and Bull Terrier breeds maintained at similar levels. The lowest number of both breeds were presented in 2004. Miniature Bull Terriers were exhibited in small number also during the Poznań Show (Fig. 4). The exception was 2006, when World Dog Show was held, therefore very dramatic increase of presented dogs could be recorded for all breeds, which was associated with enormous rank of the show and large number of presented dogs from abroad.

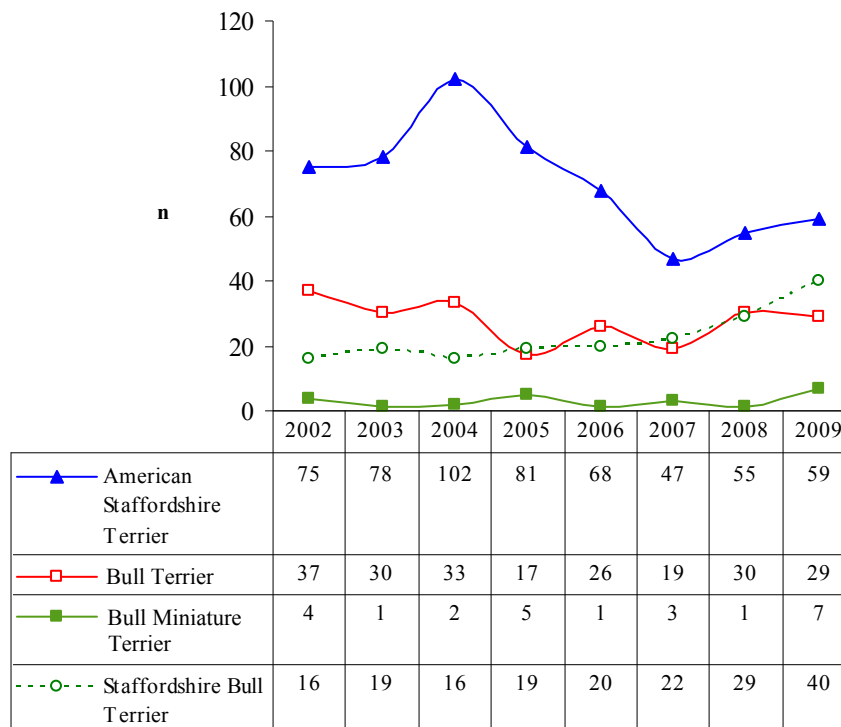


Fig. 3. Number of dog of bull terrier type shown in Warszawa 2002–2009

Ryc. 3. Liczba psów poszczególnych ras z grupy terierów typu bull wystawianych w Warszawie w latach 2002–2009

Despite of remarkable decrease in American Staffordshire Terrier dogs number, the share of breeding females within total number of registered females increased. In 2002, breeding females of that breed made up 32.2%, while 38.2% in 2009. Similar situation was recorded for Bull Terrier breed, for which breeding females made up 32.8% of all females registered in 2002 by Polish Kennel Club, and 40.6% in 2009. For Staffordshire Bull Terriers, number of breeding females increased along with the population increase

from 39.6% in 2002 to 44.5% in 2009. The inverse dependence was observed for Miniature Bull Terrier, for which number of breeding females decreased from 50% in 2002 to 47% in 2009 at almost 10-fold increase of registered females (from 4 in 2002 to 38 in 2009). The largest drop of breeding females number within discussed breed was recorded in 2007, when breeding females made up 30.2%.

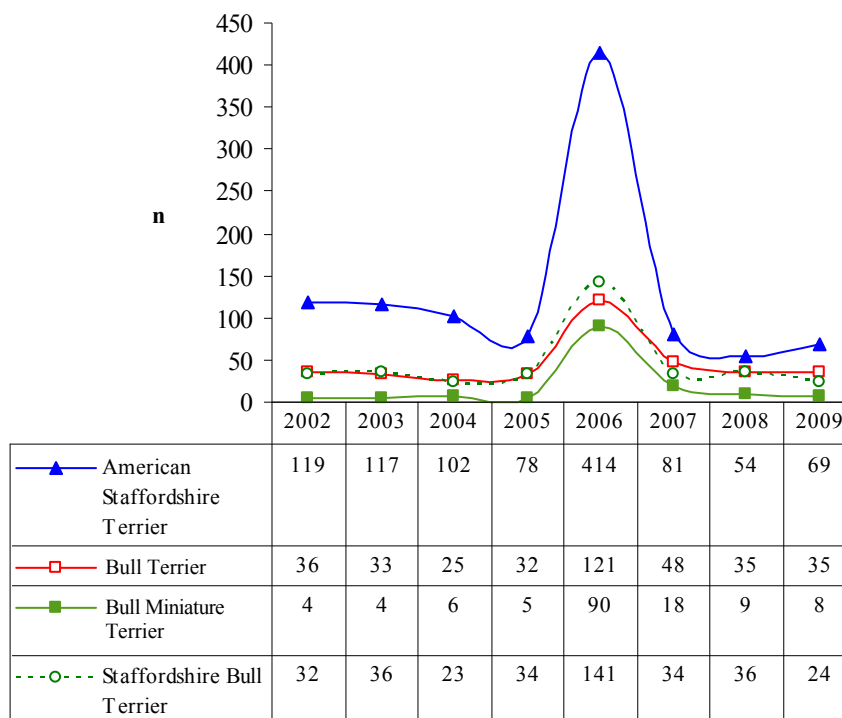


Fig. 4. Number of dog of bull terrier type shown in Poznan 2002–2009

Ryc. 4. Liczba sztuk poszczególnych ras z grupy terierów typu bull wystawianych w Poznaniu w latach 2002–2009

According to Regulations for Pedigree Dogs Breeding in Poland, a breeding female can have a single litter per year [ZG ZKwP]. The reproduction parameters also reflect a given breed popularity. Number of litters per a single breeding female within analyzed period for particular bull-type terriers groups is presented in Fig. 5.

For American Staffordshire Terriers, a gradual decrease of litter number per a single breeding female was observed, whereas number of puppies per a single breeding female decrease as well from 2.5 in 2002 to 1.5 in 2009. For Bull Terrier breed, number of litters per a single breeding female slightly oscillated, while the increase of the number of puppies per a single breeding female from 1.4 in 2002 to 1.8 in 2009 occurred. Slight oscillations in litter number with decreasing tendency were also found at Staffordshire Bull Terriers; number of puppies per a single breeding female also decreased (from 2.1 in

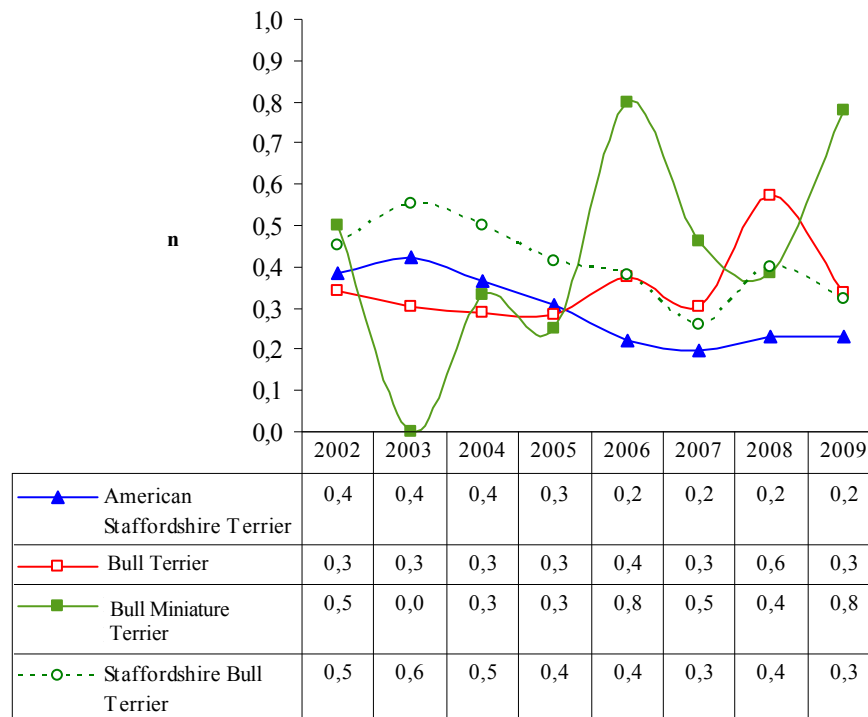


Fig. 5. Number of litters per one breeding female 2002–2009

Ryc. 5. Liczba miotów przypadających na jedną sukę hodowlaną w latach 2002–2009

2002 to 1.6 in 2009). The greatest changes were recorded for Miniature Bull Terrier breed with increasing tendency in 2009. The largest increase of the puppies number per a single breeding female was also noted for that breed: from 1.0 in 2002, through no litter and born puppies in 2003, up to 3.4 in 2009, which can indicate a systematic increase of miniature bullterriers popularity.

DISCUSSION

In many countries, bull-type terrier breeds are referred to as „pit bull” and the notion quoted by legal acts stands for dangerous dogs. On the other hand, numerous publications use „pit bull” term to describe fighting dogs – not particular breed. Reserach carried out in USA revealed that dogs referred to as „pit bull” are responsible for major part of biting people with serious consequences [Collier 2006]. In many American States, keeping the American Staffordshire Terrier dogs and „pit bull” dogs is restricted or even prohibited [Weiss 2001].

Studies upon the image of „pit bull” type breeds created by media indicated their misunderstanding, not only due to biting cases, but also because of dog fights. Media also describe these dogs owners as dangerous and vulgar (gang members, drug dealers, etc.), about 20% respondents see them that way. In opinion of almost 45% polled, pit bulls are the most dangerous dog breed in America [Cohen and Richardson 2002].

Study performed in Australia revealed that among 46 breeds (including hybrids) responsible for attacks at people, Staffordshire Bull Terriers ranked the highest (5th place) making 9.7% attacks, Bull Terriers ranked at 6th place (9.7% attacks), and American Staffordshire Terriers at 14th place (5.1% attacks) [van der Kuyt 1999].

Research conducted in USA on the analysis of serious dog's attacks at people during 20 years revealed that pit bull type dogs and Rottweilers were responsible for over a half of fatal cases [Sacks *et al.* 2000].

In Poland, it is also thought that the popularity of pit bulls among mafia and sub-culture identifying with these dogs personality and mental properties, affected their number increase.

In Germany, possession, breeding, and importing dogs of all bull-type terriers is strictly prohibited [BMF, Hülsenbush 2005]. In France, the bull-type terriers form the first category of dangerous dogs, hence they cannot be reproduced, sold, nor imported. An owner of the first category dog has to be at least 18-years-old, be a person without criminal record, while dog has to be registered in a mayoralty, and have a certificate of a training [Ministère de l'Intérieur 2009].

Polish legal regulations referring to dangerous dog breeds do not include bull-type terriers; only pit bull terrier, that is not recognized by FCI, is on the list, which makes the breed is out of any statistics, because the obligation of registering dogs from the list of dangerous dogs is not, unfortunately, obeyed. Cases of biting and even fatal biting people by bull-type terriers, publicized by media, refer mainly these breed hybrids of dogs in breed type with no documented origin. Crossbreeds of American Staffordshire Terriers with pit bull terriers appear more often. In many countries, bull-type terriers have to take social tests [Bräm *et al.* 2008]. These breeds have not any additional breeding requirements in Poland (except from the exterior assessment during the show). The bull-type terriers are not subject to mental tests as similar as many other breeds, thus excessively aggressive or timid individuals may hit the breeding. The necessity to exhibit a dog at least at three shows to breeding classification may somehow exclude this problem providing that FCI show judges would disqualify such a dog if it shows an aggression.

Due to an increasing rage for combat breeds in 90's, a significant increase of that group dogs has been recently observed in Poland. The American Staffordshire Terrier became the most popular breed both for breeding and at shows. The Staffordshire Bull Terrier and Bull Terrier have been less popular, whereas only several dogs of Miniature Bull Terrier breed were present by 2004. A prominent decrease of bull type terrier population occurred in 2007. Negative media's opinion and created image of a "murderer-dog" resulted in lowered interests in larger bull-type terrier breeds.

It should be on mind that bull-type dog breeds have been bred for fighting on arenas against bulls and other dogs, therefore their common name „pit”. Thus, some features, that help them in that „performance”, i.e. disturbed pack relations (not respecting the other dog's subordination gestures) and low pain sensitivity, which makes these dogs aggressive for other representatives of the same species, have been fixed. Study made by Duffy [Duffy *et al.*

2008] revealed that pit bull terriers showed serious aggression for other dogs in 20% of cases. Dense and strong body conformation and well-developed and muscular jaws make that the dog may cause wide body injuries. Despite of the fact that it can be a good family company when led by an experienced guide, it cannot be forgotten about the primary goals of the breed and behavioral features inherited after its ancestors.

CONCLUSIONS

1. Despite of remarkable decrease of both registered and exhibited number of American Staffordshire Terrier dogs, it is still the most popular breed among bull-type terriers.

2. Despite of the decrease of animal population within American Staffordshire Terrier and Bull Terrier breeds, the share of breeding females in the total number of registered females increased, which has positive influences on breeding future and quality of that breed dogs.

3. Number of registered and exhibited larger bull-type terrier breeds decreased (American Staffordshire Terrier and Bull Terrier), while that of smaller breeds (Staffordshire Bull Terrier and Miniature Bull Terrier) increased.

4. The bull-type terriers may play the role of accompanying dogs when led by an experienced and responsible guide.

5. Polish Kennel Club should take into consideration to impose the bull-type terrier breed dogs the obligation of making the mental tests to breeding qualifications not to allow for reproducing dogs with disturbed behavior (aggressive and timid).

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Streszczenie. W ostatnim dziesięcioleciu zaobserwować można coraz większą ilość psów ras bojowych utrzymywanych w miastach jako psy towarzyszące. Celem pracy była analiza stanu pogłowia terierów typu bull w Polsce. Materiał do badań stanowiły dane z zestawień hodowlanych opracowywanych corocznie przez Zarząd Główny Związku Kynologicznego w Polsce (lata 2002–2009). Dodatkowo przeanalizowano dane ilościowe z katalogów wystawowych z trzech największych wystaw międzynarodowych w Polsce. Zaobserwowano znaczny spadek popularności american staffordshire terrierów (o 42,64%) oraz bull terrierów (o 21,45%). Analizując dane dotyczące zwierząt zakwalifikowanych do hodowli, zaobserwowano zwiększenie udziału suk hodowlanych w stosunku do zarejestrowanych, natomiast spadek ilości miotów w przeliczeniu na jedną sukę hodowlaną w rasach american staffordshire terrier i staffordshire bull terrier. Przez analizowanych 8 lat, pomimo systematycznego spadku nadal najliczniejszą rasą wśród terierów typu bull były american staffordshire terriery. Spadek popularności może być związany z nagłaśnianymi przez media przypadkami pogryzień ludzi i psów przez psy tej rasy. Regulacje prawne w krajach Unii Europejskiej zabraniają lub ograniczają hodowanie i posiadanie american staffordshire terrierów i staffordshire bull terierów, co powoduje, że pokazywanie psów tych ras na wystawach w krajach ościennych jest niemożliwe. To również może mieć wpływ na spadek popularności terierów typu bull w Polsce wśród osób nastawionych na karierę wystawową swoich psów.

Słowa kluczowe: teriery typu bull, popularność, niebezpieczne psy, regulacje prawne, Polska