

SUMMARY

The raven *Corvus corax* population in the Pólnocnopodlaska Lowland in the years 1982-2003

The paper presents the distribution, number, density as well as the selected aspects of biology and breeding ecology of *Corvus corax* in the Pólnocnopodlaska Lowland macroregion.

The number of the whole breeding population was 900-1100 pairs in the years 1982-1991 and 1100-1300 pairs in 1994-2003. In the examined physiographical areas its density varied from 0 to 13.8 pairs per 100 km² (Tab. 1). Its average value was 7.8 pairs per 100 km².

In the northern Podlasie region *Corvus corax* nests in large forests as well as in almost non-forest areas. Nevertheless, it prefers forests, where 89% of its localities were recorded. The biggest distance between raven's nest and non-forest area was 5 200 m (The Białowieża Forest). It most frequently nests in coniferous forests and in old trees aged over 120 years. The youngest forest with raven localities was only about 25 years old.

The biggest number of raven nests was located on pine trees – 81.5%, on alder trees – 6.4% and on electric wires poles – 3.5% (N=563, Tab. 2). Nests on trees were most frequently located in the top zone of old pines crowns – 42.9% (N=522, Tab. 3). Nests were situated at a height of 6-36 m (\bar{x} =20.1, N=537).

Within the same territory new nests were found at a distance of 10-2300 m (\bar{x} =410 m, N=104) from the previous nest. In 61% of the cases a distance was smaller than 300 m. Distance between neighboring raven pairs was 575-6750 m (\bar{x} =2960 m, N=297). Altogether 13 nests were found only 50-100 m from settlements, including small town and large village fringes.

Breeding season started from the second decade of February to the first decade of May. Its peak intensity falls on the first decade of March – when 29% of all broods were raised (N=266, Fig. 1). Nesting success varied from 38.9 to 90.9% (\bar{x} =74.7%, N=538). On average one pair raised 2.2 young per occupied nest and 3.0 young per nest with successful brood. One brood included 1-7 young. Growing up of 7 young was recorded only once, in 1992 by the town of Hajnówka.

In 34 cases the causes of total loss of young were found. There were: fall of nest – 16 times, predation – 8, fall of tree with nest – 4, frightening away by men – 4, disturbing by non-breeding ravens – 2.