Research

Effect of patch size on habitat loss in sedge warblers Acrocephalus schoenobaenus in the Middle Nida Wetlands (southern Poland)

Wojciech Bielański, Wojciech Solarz, Tadeusz Zając

Institute of Nature Conservation, Polish Academy of Sciences Mickiewicza 33, 31-120 Krakow, Poland, e-mail: tzajac@iop.krakow.pl

Abstract

The pattern of wetland vegetation dynamics was documented during a long-term study (1996-2003) of a sedge warbler population in the Middle Nida Wetlands. Areas of reedmace *Typha latifolia*, which was preferred by sedge warblers, showed the highest rate of decrease among all land cover types. The rate of decrease depended primarily on water depth, although in places only temporarily filled with shallow water, original patch area was also important, with small patches (usually chosen for breeding) decreasing more rapidly than large patches in relative terms. Each year the settlement pattern of sedge warblers followed the new vegetation layout.

Key words

Habitat selection, fragmentation, wetland vegetation dynamics, habitat loss, extinction, Typha latifolia.