

## SUMMARY

### **Breeding of the Common Crane *Grus grus* in Wysoczyzna Elbląska in 2004-2005**

In 2004-2005 the total number of breeding Common Crane was estimated at 90-120 pairs in Wysoczyzna Elbląska region (420 km<sup>2</sup>, N Poland). This is one of the most numerous local populations of Common Crane in Poland. The majority of pairs bred in the eastern part of the region. Average density was 22-29 pairs per 100 km<sup>2</sup>: 17-22 pairs per 100 km<sup>2</sup> in the western part of the region and 28-37 pairs per 100 km<sup>2</sup> in the eastern part. Local density was 5-10 pairs per 10 km<sup>2</sup>. The least distances between neighboring nests were 150, 300 and 350 m.

Common Crane was absent near Elbląg city, in big agricultural areas in the middle part of the region and at the edges of Wysoczyzna Elbląska (Fig. 1). In this study 11% breeding pairs (N=7) were found in a small wet depression or in a small flooded alder in open agricultural landscape. The majority of breeding pairs (89%, N=55) were found in forest area, of which 73% (N=40) were flooded alder swamp forests. For all breeding sites located in a forest the median distance from a forest edge was 150 m (0-750 m, N=55), from which 2/3 of nests were situated not more than 200 m from the edge (Fig. 2). The mean distance of Common Crane breeding sites from the nearest human settlement was about 680 m (150-1400 m, N=62); 25% nests were located not more than 400 m from the settlement (Fig. 3). The mean distance of breeding site from a car road was 885 m (50-1800 m, N=62); 50% nests were situated 600-1200 m from roads (Fig. 4).

As far Wysoczyzna Elbląska region has not been qualified as an important bird area in Poland and Europe. In 2004-2005 16 breeding species from Annex I of the Birds Directive and 32 Species of European Conservation Concern (SPEC 1-3) were found here. Wysoczyzna Elbląska region is the very important area for breeding woodpeckers: Grey-faced Woodpecker, Middle Spotted Woodpecker and other species like: White Stork, Lesser Spotted Eagle, Common Quail, Corncrake, Stock Pigeon, Barred Warbler, Red-breasted Flycatcher and Red-backed Shrike. In conclusion the author suggests that Wysoczyzna Elbląska should be included as a special protection area of birds into Natura 2000 network.