

## SUMMARY

### **Water and marsh birds of fishponds in Ligota town during the last decade of the 20th century**

Fishponds in Ligota town are situated in western part of the Upper Vistula Valley (Dolina Górnej Wisły), within the area of Bielsko-Biała district. There are about 20 reservoirs with total surface of about 160 ha, whereas the whole study area is approximately 280 ha (Fig. 1). The fishponds are, to a small extent, overgrown by rushes (mostly *Phragmites australis* and *Typha* sp.). Three isles are situated on the Hałcnowiec Pond. The Goczałkowicki Reservoir is located in the vicinity of the study area. The fishponds are fed by two streams: Jasienica and Wapienica.

Systematic observations were carried out in the years 1995-1999, while quantitative research of water and marsh birds were effected. Altogether 120 counts took place (Tab. 1). Number of nesting species was estimated basing on prescriptions published by Borowiec et al. (1981) and Ranoszek (1983).

Nesting of 32 species related to water-marsh environment was recorded during research on the fishponds in Ligota (Tab. 2). *Nycticorax nycticorax* dominated among other birds – its share was nearly 30%. Moreover, *Larus ridibundus*, *Anas platyrhynchos*, *Aythya fuligula* and *Aythya ferina* were numerous. Breeding localities of endangered and potentially endangered species on European scale (according to Tucker, Heath 1994) were recorded in the study area. Besides above mentioned *Nycticorax nycticorax* and *Aythya ferina*, there were: *Ixobrychus minutus*, *Ciconia ciconia*, *Anas strepera*, *A. querquedula*, *Tringa totanus*, *Alcedo atthis*, *Locustella luscinioides*, *Acrocephalus palustris*, *A. scirpaceus* and *Emberiza schoeniclus*. Worthy of notice is the Polish variety (*immutabilis*) of *Cygnus olor* which was recorded in the area. Information about non-breeding birds are given in the text.

The fishponds in Ligota were very important as a nesting place of big part of *Nycticorax nycticorax* Polish population (Tomiałojć 1990, Betleja 2001, Tomiałojć, Stawarczyk 2003; Tab. 3). The fishponds in Ligota are a part of the Upper Vistula Valley (Dolina Górnej Wisły) which is a bird site of European rank (Heath, Evans 2000). Therefore, permanent monitoring of the area is necessary.