

Grzywaczewski G., Cios Sz. Distribution and number of Common Crane *Grus grus* L., 1758 in the Poleski National Park

Chrońmy Przyrodę Ojczystą **64** (2): 13–27.

Counts were conducted in the Poleski National Park in 2005–2006, from mid-March till the end of April. In 2005 the counts referred to the Bagno Bubnów and Bagno Staw wetlands as well as the southern part of the external protection zone of the Park and in 2006 to the main complex of the PPN with the total area of 101 km² (Fig. 1). The counts were conducted by 2–3-person groups along transects of 3–7 km about half an hour before the sunrise and 3–4 hours after it. In total, 28–30 territories (couples) of cranes in the Polesie National Park were found (Table 2). Population density was 27.7–29.7 couples/100 km². Territories were situated in water-logged forests (alder forests and *Vaccinio uliginosi-Betuletum pubescentis*) – 13–14 territories (46.5% in average, 29 territories were considered as 100%), in moist meadows – 7–8 territories (25.8%), in peat bogs – 6 territories (20.7%), in fish ponds – 1 territory (3.5%) and at a pool located within arable fields – 1 territory (3.5%) (Table 2). Non-breeding fraction of cranes was estimated in the years 2005–2006 at 110–120 individuals. Together with breeding birds during breeding season in the area of the Poleski National Park about 140–170 individuals of this species were present. The Poleski National Park and its surroundings are crucial areas for cranes as gathering sites before the autumnal migration. The gatherings start in the end of June and last till the turn of October and November. In August 2006, 954–976 cranes were found at gathering sites. As the area of the “Krowie Bagno” wetland is an important gathering place of cranes in the Polesie region, it is crucial to protect this area and include it to the protection zone of the Poleski National Park or to extend the area of “Natura 2000” site together with the prohibition of hunting until end of November. The number of cranes recorded at the gathering sites justifies the joining of the “Krowie Bagno” and the areas between Andrzejów and Hańsk villages to an ornithological refugium of European importance for non-breeding birds.