

SUMMARY

About the occurrence of the smooth snake *Coronella austriaca* Laur. in Zgorzelecko-Osiecznicka Forest

The smooth snake *Coronella austriaca* belongs to the most rare and declining species of snakes in Poland and its numbers and area is rapidly decreasing not only in Poland, but also in all Central Europe. Currently *Coronella austriaca* is located mainly in the south and west of Poland.

In 1996-2005 the new localities of *Coronella austriaca* was found in Zgorzelecko-Osiecznicka Forest, in the west part of the extensive managed forest complex named Bory Dolnośląskie. The area of Zgorzelecko-Osiecznicka Forest is of over 40 000 ha. The observations from 1996-1999 were described in another papers. On 19th July 2001 one individual was found killed on a highway near Bielawa Dolna village. In 2003-2004 two new localities of *Coronella austriaca* were detected in the north part of Puszcza Zgorzelecko-Osiecznicka, in the forest inspectorate of Ruszów. One of this observations was an individual on the forest road between Jagodzin and Polana and the second one was an adult individual in the wood on north-east from Polana village. On 17th July 2004 another young individual of *Coronella austriaca* was found killed on a forest road near the main complex of Parowa Fishponds. On 19th and 25th August 2005 one young individual and 3rd September 2005 one adult smooth snake were observed near the Przejęśław village. There are many additional notices from the workers of the National Forestry and local inhabitants about observations of the smooth snake, but this data require field verification.

According to this data and especially observations of young individuals *Coronella austriaca*, Puszcza Zgorzelecko-Osiecznicka seems to be an important refuge of the snake in the region. The populations of this species seems to have the suitable conditions to survive in the area because of poor developed industry, traditional extensive agriculture and occurrence of this species of lizards, which are the main food of the smooth snake. The main threats to the populations of *Coronella austriaca* in Zgorzelecko-Osiecznicka Forest are the development of transportation infrastructure in this region and afforestation of wastelands and inner-forest meadows.