

REVIEW

Bocheński M., Ciebiera O., Dolata P.T., Jerzak L. Zbyryt A. 2013 – Ochrona ptaków w mieście [Protection of birds in a city] – Regionalna Dyrekcja Ochrony Środowiska w Gorzowie Wielkopolskim – Gorzów Wlkp. pp. 160 – ISBN 978-83-63564-08-7 [in Polish]

The main human environment is and will remain metropolitan agglomerations. The development of urban areas normally involves the absorption of natural and semi-natural areas such as rural fields and forests. With the appearance of towns, various groups of animals arise in the urban environment. The most noticeable and the best examined group which occupies the majority of city areas is undoubtedly birds. Bird populations became a persistent element of towns. They nest and reside in many environments, from green areas, through water, to most anthropogenic places such as buildings, including living estates. Urban environments provide unique features for birds, including a positive human attitude toward birds, fewer natural predators, an abundance of anthropogenic sources of food, greater accessibility to nesting places and hideouts and better wintering conditions. City growth carries certain risks for birds living among people, e.g. intensive traffic, territory penetration by domestic animals and urban pollution. Impoverishment of breeding areas due to building renovation, deforestation and intentional destruction of certain birds' nests is becoming a major problem. Birds nesting in towns, in dense populations can become troublesome for citizens. The greatest problem posed is from the faeces of birds, which nest colonially (Rook *Corvus frugilegus*), which perform large flights to roosting sites during winter (*Corvidae*) or forage in flocks during the day (Common Starling *Sturnus vulgaris*). Birds' faeces contaminate cars, benches and other elements of the urban infrastructure. A separate problem is posed by Rock Pigeons (*Columba livia f. urbana*) which may be transmitters of parasites and zoonosis.

“Is it possible to alleviate these problems? Is it possible to reconcile people with birds? Can we help birds living in our cities?”

The Authors of the new book titled “Ochrona ptaków w mieście” (“Protection of birds in a city”) published by Regionalna Dyrekcja Ochrony Środowiska (Regional Directorate for Environmental Protection) in Gorzów Wielkopolski poses these questions at the beginning of the book. According to the Authors, the main objective of this popular science book is to introduce birds and any relevant issues to the citizens which live in cities. This comprehensive 160 – page book written in five chapters raise many aspects of birds and human interactions in the urban environment. The city ecosystem is briefly described in the first chapter. The lengthy second chapter concerns birds in urbanised environments. It introduces factors, which affects functioning of bird populations in cities (nourishment, nest sites, daily foraging and night resting places)

and also characterizes typical urban environments. This chapter also has a comprehensive review of selected bird species occurring in cities, providing information on status, distribution, number and trends, elements of breeding biology, migration and wintering, scavenging, nourishment and specific risks in urban populations. The third chapter presents descriptions of dangers affecting birds living in cities, both natural and anthropogenic. The next chapter discusses existing acts and laws relating to city birds. It also raises the issue of thermal efficiency improvement and greenery clearance in cities. The last, fifth chapter, is a description of methods and opportunities of helping birds, from complicated planning and formation of habitats in cities to feeding of birds. It is worth mentioning

that the Authors include a subsection at the end of each chapter with an additional bibliography covering many of the topics raised in that chapter.

In summary, this book is a valuable source of information concerning the birds living in cities and many issues resulting from their occurrence in these environments. Data included in this book may be useful for many social groups, from office workers and managers to “common” citizens. Everyone who is concerned about the animals living in cities and human interactions with these wild animals will find this book a valuable source of new information and well worth reading.

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