

## THE SCIENTIFIC CONFERENCE „BIRDS OF THE CITIES” ZIELONA GÓRA, 14-16 SEPTEMBER 2012

Broadly defined synurbization of birds and its protection was the theme of the conference, which took place in Zielona Góra on 14-16 September 2012. The conference was organized by *Polish Zoological Society and Faculty of Biological Science* of the University of Zielona Góra. The conference evoked a large interest caused mainly by growing problems of birds protection in the cities, which result from habitat damage during thermal efficiency improvement, buildings renovation, infill building and also inadequate modification of green areas, which endangers biodiversity in urban environment. On the other hand, colonisation by birds in this relatively new environment, allows us to monitor the changes occurring in their biology and behavior on microevolution level. Thanks to the conference people of great experience who have investigate city birds for decades and also young nature scientists who fight for birds protection in cities were able to meet. The meeting allowed the exchange of experiences during lectures and also behind the scenes.

On Friday afternoon on 14 September the meeting began with multimedia presentation titled “Birds of Middle Oder Valley” prepared by the well-known nature photographer Grzegorz Sawko. Bird portraits were interlaced with photographs of changing seasons at the Oder. The presentation was received with great applause. Even more popularity was enjoyed by Ludwik Tomjałójć (Museum of Natural History at Wrocław University) presenting a scientist’s impression from a month trip to Siberia – little known place on the Earth. Undoubtedly, every ornithologist would like to see a real taiga and add to his list new bird species in those difficult to access places.

The official opening of the Ornithological Section of Polish Zoological Society was made on Saturday 15 September by professor, PhD Janusz Gil the Deputy Rector of Science. It is worth mentioning that such honoured scientist as prof. Maciej Luniak, prof. Jan Pinowski and prof. Ludwik Tomiałójć, who do researches on birds in human estates, took part in the conference. Each of them received a certificate of appreciation awarded by president of Ornithological Section of Polish Zoological Society from the hands of Vice-rector.

The first plenary lecture concerned the review of the European avifauna in cities atlas (Maciej Luniak from Museum and Institute of Zoology at Polish Academy of Sciences). A discussion about methodology of gathering data and grid usage aroused a large interest. The following plenary lecture given by Ludwik Tomiałójć was based on researches, which he had conducted in Wrocław and Legnica for over 40 years. Nowadays, when grants last on average 1 to 3 years, not many people may pride themselves on such long data collecting period. It enabled him to analyze changes occurring

in central parks avifauna under conditions of different predators' pressure (Dun Crow, marten).

An important presentation highlighting the problem of bird protection in cities to all legal intents and purposes was given by Paweł Dolata, lawyer and enthusiast for birds (southern Great Poland, OTOP – Polish Society for the Protection of Birds). Knowledge of the law allows for simple effective enforcing from City Halls and enables investors to perceive birds in cities and to introduce impact minimization and environmental compensation when it comes to various investments.

The next presentation discussed behavioral adaptations of birds colonizing cities (Piotr Tryjanowski, Krzysztof Dudek from Poznań University of Environmental and Life Sciences).

Jerzy Bańbuda (University of Łódź) relying on long-term researches presented the impact of urban habitat on breeding conditions of Great Tit and Blue Tit as compared to forest population.

Great interest was aroused by the presentation on the influence of big cities on migration distance of Great Tit *Parus major* (Brygida Manikowska-Ślepowrońska, Jarosław Krzysztof Nowakowski, Bird Migration Research Station at Gdańsk University). It was proved that big cities have an influence on migrating birds and some of them are facing the dilemma of whether to winter in the city or migrate further. Whether birds in cities should be fatter, which may encourage them to changes in their migration behavior, was also discussed.

Martin Hromada (University of Zielona Góra) and Piotr Tryjanowski pointed in their presentation titled "Condemned to success" at the necessity of broadening geographical researches on birds in cities. These migrating birds, which we observe in spring and summer in our cities, spend autumn and winter for example in Africa. How does the synurbization of those birds proceed there?

The presentation titled "The fatality cause of House Sparrows and Eurasian Tree Sparrows in Warsaw's parks and country areas" prepared by prof. Jan Piniowski brought out a discussion about the importance of research on birds physiology inhabiting various environments. An interesting summary concerning long-term changes in breeding birds population in Lower Silesia was presented by Zbigniew Jakubiec (University of Zielona Góra). Later on, Karolina Chosińska (University of Zielona Góra), Zbigniew Jakubiec and Leszek Duduś presented ideas on the subject of fattening birds in human estates.

Persons studying cities ecology are waiting for the beginning of a settlement of Common Raven in human estates. It will entirely change the composition of city avifauna. For that reason, with a large interest awaited for the presentation of first data concerning synurbization of that species in Poland. In conclusion it was stated that the Common Raven has already started settling in some city outskirts (Dorota Zawadzka, Grzegorz Zawadzki from the Committee of Eagle Protection).

One of the presentations concerned Common Kestrel *Falco tinnunculus* population inhabiting across eastern border in Grodno (Dzmitry Vintchevsk, Siargey Sakowicz, APB BL Belarus). Apart from breeding biology, details on nourishment of urban Common Kestrel was discussed.

On the last day of the conference the meeting inaugurated Andrzej Węgrzynowicz (Museum and Institute of Zoology at Polish Academy of Sciences) discussing population biology of House Sparrows and Eurasian Tree Sparrows in Warsaw. He presented data on changes conditioned by the availability of nesting places. For House Sparrows buildings were important whereas for Eurasian Tree Sparrows nesting boxes were important. Other lectures presented by speakers summarized current knowledge about particular species or bird groups occurrence in cities. Dawid Sikora presented data concerning birds grouping in open areas of Wilanów in Warsaw and Adam Zbyryt (PTOP – Polish Society for the Protection of Birds) discussed the issue of Rooks in the largest cities in the Podlasie province.

The paper closing the conference given by Marcin Bocheński (University of Zielona Góra) and Michał Kuźmiak (University of Zielona Góra) titled “Bird fatality on transparent acoustic baffles in Zielona Góra” raised a lively discussion about the impact of these baffles on birds, examination methods of this issue and protection problems related with the topic.

During the poster session were presented over 20 posters which gave the opportunity to discuss and exchange scientific and practical experiences in environmental protection.

Abstracts of speeches and posters are available on Polish Zoological Society and Faculty of Biological Science website.

It is worth paying attention to the fact that the conference took place during the Wine Fest – a well-known event for which Zielona Góra is famous for. Many participants of the conference after a solemn dinner in Haust Brewery indulged in the Wine Fest and had an occasion to taste all kinds of wine.

All participants found the meeting to be important and worthwhile and spent in a nice and pleasant atmosphere. Once more one could see that birds in the cities constitute a challenge for modern researchers and environmental protectors.

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