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Raven *Corvus corax* ecology in a primeval temperate forest

Ekologia kruka *Corvus corax* w naturalnym lesie nizinym strefy umiarkowanej

ABSTRACT: Several field studies on common ravens *Corvus corax* were carried out between 1985 and 2004 in Białowieża Primeval Forest (E Poland), one of the best preserved lowland temperate forests in Europe. The surveys focussed on spatial aspects (nest site selection, territory size, territory use), reproduction (breeding success) and foraging patterns (food habits, carrion use). Nests ($n = 87$) were regularly distributed over the entire forest and located in coniferous forest. More than 90% of the nests were built in pines *Pinus sylvestris*. On average, 61.5% (SD ± 15.4) of all breeding pairs were successful, rearing 2.8 (SD ± 0.18) fledglings per year. The occupied raven territories covered 14.1 km². Inside the territory boundaries, more than 76% of the exposed baits ($n = 57$) were used by ravens, even under dense forest canopy. Adult ravens were highly efficient in locating carrion; 79.2% of the exposed baits were detected and used by ravens within the first 24 hours after exposition. Ravens scavenged carcasses ($n = 214$), mainly of ungulates, intensively during the coldest months, abruptly decreasing the use of carcasses when spring arrived and other food resources became available. Diet analysis showed that carrion and plant material were the dominant food items of ravens in Białowieża Forest. Up to 82% of the analysed pellets con-

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