

Consequences of Eurasian Woodcock (*Scolopax rusticola*) hunting in Hungary on the population

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Attention is invited in this paper to the researches of the Institute of Wildlife Management and Vertebrate Zoology of the West Hungarian University concerning to the Eurasian Woodcock. Former results have been published continuously in the Hungarian Waterfowl Publications. The first part of the researches finished 2008 pursuant to the act 85/2008 (VII.05) of the Ministry of Rural Development. According to this order the species has a game status, but does not have a shooting season in Hungary.

The Institute of Wildlife Management and Vertebrate Zoology joined 2009 to the Woodcock Monitoring of the Hungarian Hunters' National Association. As a primary purpose of the project surveys are being conducted to improve knowledge of the number of migrating Eurasian Woodcock. Further aim is to understand the effect of hunting on the Hungarian population. On the basis of the previous project results 2009 we prepared a new methodology for monitoring and collecting samples. The new monitoring program started at 2010 with the collaboration of 500 sample gatherer in about 900 sampling points. The quantity of samples is statistical satisfying.

According to literature data (HEPBURN, 1983; FERRAND & GOSSMANN, 2001) we examined the proportion of Hungarian woodcock bag to the total European hunting mortality. We asserted that the ratio of Hungarian shots is insignificant (0,1-0,2%). The major part of the hunting mortality comes from the shots in the breeding and wintering territories (France, Italy, Greece, United Kingdom and Russia).

Results of the analysis of 2449 specimen data show, that the springtime hunting in Hungary is quite selective, because the ratio of hens came only to 16,6%. This is nearly equal to the ratio (21,0%) in the project between 1990-2008 (FARAGÓ-LÁSZLÓ, 2010). Compared to the data from abroad it can be revealed, that the ratio of hens is during the autumn and winter hunting much higher. According to FADAT ET AL, (1991) is the proportion of hens in France 56-59%, in Austria 41% in autumn and 22% in spring (MERAN 1985-1999 cit. FARAGÓ et al. 2000). Because of the Eurasian Woodcock's promiscuity (FARAGÓ, 2002) is obvious, that the springtime hunting does not affect the breeding efficiency as much as the autumn and winter hunting with higher hen losses.

Summarized it can be declared, that the Hungarian springtime hunting of Eurasian Woodcock has been both in quality and quantity a sustainable use without unpleasant consequences on the European population.

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